

**2006 Minnesota Philosophical Society Meeting**  
**University of Minnesota Duluth**  
**Saturday, October 14, 2006**

**8:00 - 9:00 am**

**Kirby Rafters**

**Registration (coffee, juice and pastries).** The annual dues are \$5, lunch is \$10.

**9:00 - 9:50 am**

KPlz 309

Martin Gunderson (Macalester College)

**“Genetic Engineering and the Consent of Future Persons”**

Commentator: Steve Vanderheiden (University of MN Duluth)

The debate over whether germ-line genetic engineering is justified on the basis of the consent or presumed consent of future generations is mired in philosophical confusion. Because of this, the principle of informed consent fails to provide a reason to restrict germ-line genetic engineering. Most recent bioethics ground the consent requirement on individual autonomy. While conceptually coherent, the notion of individual autonomy also fails to provide a reason for prohibiting germline genetic engineering. Moreover, it offers little in the way of useful guidance for regulating genetic engineering. I argue, however, that respect for autonomy in the sense of moral agency—the ability to reflect on moral considerations and conform one’s behavior to those reflections—provides a principle that can be used for a nuanced evaluation of proposals for genetic engineering.

KPlz 312

Richard Berg (Lakehead University)

**“Socrates Invents Ethics”**

Commentator: Kate Gill (St Cloud State)

Just as Thales’ early sixth century B.C.E. claim that the arche (first) of all things is water marks the historical point where the intellectual enterprise of scientific cosmogony begins to separate itself from religion, so two centuries later Socrates’ philosophical career spent questioning the moral knowledge of politicians, poets, craftsmen and others (Apology 22a-23a) marks the point in Greek culture where the rational enterprise of ethics is definitively separated from authoritarian aspects of popular religion. Plato’s dialogue, the Euthyphro, is unique in that regard in being able to claim that it dramatically portrays the exact intellectual moment of this second great philosophical beginning. That being the case, the main task in comprehending the dialogue must be to show exactly where the separation of ethics from religion occurs, just how their separation is accomplished, and with what legitimacy. In other words it needs to be explained just how it is that Plato dramatically represents Socrates inventing ethics. The outcome of this enquiry is not only of historical and logical interest; it also sheds some light on lingering authoritarian elements of current ethical theory.

KPlz 385

Wade Savage (University of MN Twin Cities)

**“Gaps in the Explanatory Gap”**

Commentator: Chang-Seong Hong (Minnesota State University Moorhead)

In extensively cited papers published in 1983<sup>i</sup> and 1993<sup>ii</sup> Joseph Levine argues that “Pain is the firing of C-fibers” and similar psychophysical identifications “leave a significant explanatory gap”, a gap consisting in the inability of the identification and its associated scientific theory to explain why pain and other sensory states have the “qualitative”, “phenomenal” properties they have, the properties that constitute “what it’s like” to be in, to have, to feel pain and other sensory states. Colin McGinn in a 1989 paper<sup>iii</sup> also holds that there is an explanatory gap and doubts that science is capable of filling it. Many philosophers, perhaps most, remain attracted to views such as these. This paper examine Levine’s arguments and finds that none of them manages to describe a genuine explanatory gap. Hence the gaps in the explanatory gap.

KPlz 395

Jovanna Davidovic (University of MN Twin Cities)  
**“Humanitarian Military Interventions: Theory and Practice  
Can Humanitarian Military Interventions be Obligatory?”**

Commentator: Don Scheid (Winona State University)

I argue here that certain species of war, namely humanitarian military interventions (HMIs) can be obligatory, within particular contexts. To start, I look at the notion of HMIs through the lens of just war theory and argue that when a minimal account of *jus ad bellum* implies that an intervention is permissible, it also implies that it is obligatory.

HMIs are defined here as forceful reactions to circumstances “when the violation of human rights within a set of boundaries is so terrible that it makes talk of community or self-determination... seem cynical and irrelevant, that is, in cases of enslavement or massacre.”<sup>1</sup> This definition carries my antecedent that HMIs might be permissible at times. After clarifying the conditions (like just cause and right intentions) under which an intervention is permissible, I turn to the claim that permissibility necessitates obligation in the context of HMIs.

To show this I first argue that an intervention is the minimally decent action whenever it is permissible. Secondly, I go on to show that minimally decent actions are morally obligatory. Thirdly, I argue that performing minimally decent actions is necessary for one to claim a status of a just state.

<sup>1</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 90.

**10:00 - 10:50 am**

KPlz 309

Tanya Rodriguez (University of MN Twin Cities)  
**“Difference and Indifference”**

Commentator: Heather Wainwright (University of MN Twin Cities)

People sometimes resist the idea that racist humor fails on aesthetic grounds, simply because they find it *funny*. They make the case that one can enjoy comic aspects by controlling one’s attention, by attending to the rhythm or delivery rather than its content. This strange sense humor is like the strange pleasure of tragedy. For better or worse (I think for the worse), controlled attention that allows such paradoxical pleasure, be it humorous or tragic, comes only at the sake of empathy. Thus, if I say that a joke is not good because it is racist, it doesn’t necessarily follow that the joke is not funny. What does follow, however, is that appreciating such humor entails a lack of empathy, for it insists upon numbing the heart.

KPlz 312

Kristin Schaupp (University of WI Eau Claire)  
**“Mill’s Evidence for Higher and Lower Pleasures”**

Commentator: Mark Newman (University of MN Duluth)

Recent attempts to defend Mill’s account of higher and lower pleasures have overlooked a critical flaw in Mill’s argument. Mill views the question of pleasure and preference as empirical in nature, but is unable to provide conclusive evidence that would support his claim that most people actually prefer pleasures resulting from higher faculties over pleasures resulting from lower faculties.

KPlz 385

Jason Ford (University of MN Duluth)  
**“Attention and the New Skeptics”**

Commentator: Barton Moffatt (University of MN Twin Cities)

In response to new research into the phenomena of inattentional blindness and change-blindness, several philosophers and vision researchers have proposed a novel form of skepticism: they contend

that we do not have the conscious experience that we think we have. I will show that this claim is not supported by the evidence usually cited in support of it, and I expose what I believe to be the underlying error motivating this position: the belief that consciousness is either focal (what occupies the focus of attention) or non-existent. Once we appreciate the phenomenology of the periphery of attention, we see that we have the resources to place the problematic phenomena in our peripheral experience.

KPlz 395

Matt Frank (University of MN Twin Cities)

**“Is American Patriotism a Vice?”**

Commentator: Eve Browning (University of MN Duluth)

Once we strip away the pomp and circumstance that afflicts certain popular notions of patriotism, there seems to be consensus that patriotism is a virtue. In the philosophical literature, however, there is a common objection to the claim that patriotism is a virtue. The thrust of this objection is that patriotism is no different from nationalism, which requires a willful disregard of other countries and their people. More concretely, if American patriotism would require Americans to illegitimately disregard the welfare of non-Americans, then American patriotism would be a vice. In this paper, I will claim that the moral status of patriotism *is* suspect; however, not for the reason that one might expect. More precisely, I will argue that contemporary American patriotism is a vice, not because it requires Americans to disregard non-Americans, but, ironically, because it requires Americans to disregard the welfare of fellow Americans.

**11:00 - 11:50 am**

KPlz 309

Heidi Giebel (University of St Thomas)

**“Moral Merit, Moral Luck, and Moral Truth”**

Commentator: Mark Barber (Saint Mary's University)

We accept the influence of luck as an obvious fact in many areas of our lives. I was lucky to be born in a wealthy nation rather than an impoverished one; perhaps I was lucky to be born at all. You may have had the good luck of inheriting your mother's keen intelligence or the bad luck of inheriting her health problems. My students, if they are telling the truth, too often are met with bad luck of the sort that prevents them from completing their assignments on time.

It seems intuitively correct that one area—perhaps the only area—of our lives that should be free of luck is that of ethics. My morally evaluable actions and dispositions ought to be the result of my own choices rather than my good or bad luck. The ethical realm deals in praise and blame of our qualities, acts, and/or effects: we think agents are praiseworthy or blameworthy for their virtues or vices, for their actions and inactions, and/or for the consequences of those actions or inactions. It seems odd at the very least, probably unfair, and possibly downright incoherent to praise or blame people for what is beyond their control. But the existence of moral luck would imply that at least some ethically praiseworthy or blameworthy qualities, actions, and/or consequences are beyond the agent's control. So it appears that any ethical theory implying the existence of moral luck is odd, probably unfair, and possibly incoherent, all of which, I take it, are undesirable features in an ethical theory and reasons to believe that the theory in question is incorrect. This paper explores the extent to which the most widely-accepted theories of philosophical ethics do imply the presence of moral luck and argues that in each case the extent is rather unsettling.

KPlz 312

Matthew Meyer (University of WI Eau Claire)

**“Heraclitus and Mythic Language: Unity and Holism at the Birth of Philosophy”**

Commentator: David Beard (University of MN Duluth)

“The one wise: both willing and unwilling to be called by the name of Zeus.” (D. 32, Kahn CXVIII)

Heraclitus is a pivotal figure in the infant stages of what we today call “Western philosophy.” This

paper argues against the usual conception of Heraclitus as merely an early philosopher. Rather, while there are definitely moments of “philosophical” thinking in Heraclitus, he is still ultimately grounded in mythic language, and therefore, mythic thinking. The point of this paper is simple: to show that Heraclitus language still functions out of a mythic perspective.

Toward this end I make two moves. First, I outline the most important aspect which comes out of phenomenological studies of myth, compactness, in its three variations. Second, I show through reference to Heraclitus fragments, that he is still under the sway of these characteristics, and perhaps necessarily so.

The paper concludes according to the consequences of such a realization. For one, the assumption of Heraclitus as a first philosopher breaking away from myth must be questioned. Second, I describe how the value of myth as a language that employs a holistic view of life could be valuable to future philosophy.

KPlz 385

Chang-Seong Hong (Minnesota State University Moorhead)

**“Functional Reduction, Mereological Supervenience, and the Buddhist Thesis of No-Self”**

Commentator: Richard Berg (Lakehead University)

Antireductive physicalists view that self/person and person-properties emerge, or supervene, on their basal properties. The former depend on, but are irreducible to, the latter. Construing person-properties as second-order functional properties, we can show with Kim’s reductionism that person-properties are functionally-reduced to their basal properties. Kim argues that second-order properties are in fact second-order concepts or designators that only pick out properties in the domain of their basal properties. On this line of reductionism, a person is not a real existent. What we conventionally think of as a person is only a concept or a designator. Kim’s functional reductionism supports the Buddhist thesis of no-self.

The supervenience of person on its constituent properties is, if it obtains, mereological supervenience. Kim does not extend the insight of his functional reductionism to mereological supervenience. He recognizes, mistakenly I believe, novel causal powers to mereologically supervenient properties and thereby admits the irreducibility and emergence of macro-level (person-) properties. However, I argue that there is no new causal power or novel property emerging as a mereologically supervenient property. I show in this article how to understand Kim’s view of second-order functional property and revise his argument on mereological supervenience so that we can use these two influential views to defend the Buddhist thesis of no-self: A person is only a concept or a convenient designator of the aggregate of its constituents.

KPlz 395

Doug Knapp (Inver Hills Community College)

**“Using the Issue of Suicide Attack to Assess Some Examples of Compatibility and Incompatibility of Truth, Religious Faith and Evolutionary Adaptation.”**

Commentator:

An example of what it here means for a particular suicide attack to be ‘compatible’ with truth, religious faith and evolutionary adaptation would be the following: first, there is a plausible moral justification (a type of prescriptive ‘truth’ if you will) for such an attack, and, second, this moral justification is congruent with a religious belief or faith, and, third, the act is adaptive in the sense that, among all the military options available, the act is best suited to meet the political goal at hand. From item three we can see that, theoretically at least, there is a type of rationality associated with suicide attack; typically there’s a careful selection of the most appropriate means for meeting a particular political objective. An illustration of ‘incompatibility’ would be a situation where there is not a plausible or compelling moral justification. Alternatively, there might be a compelling moral and religious justification but military failure. Of course there are many ways in which moral beliefs, religious beliefs, and military results might be incompatible. But a particular focus here will be a situation where particular religious beliefs are false, or at least highly questionable, but the belief is adaptive nonetheless. Beliefs in heaven or paradise are examples of this. Now, independent of whether particular religious beliefs are

false but simultaneously adaptive, there is the important question of assessing the weight of religious beliefs or motivations with other nonreligious factors, such as occupation or defense of a homeland, or geopolitical factors. (This involves looking at competing 'truth' claims in the descriptive sense.) Some argue that religion, and Islamic fundamentalism in particular, is the core problem related to suicide attack, and nonreligious issues are secondary. Here it is argued that autonomy and homeland issues are primary, while religious motives are important but ultimately secondary.

**12:00 - 12:50 pm**

**Kirby Rafters**

Lunch and Business Meeting

Buffet Menu: Chicken Wild Rice soup, Salad, Sandwiches, Asst Bars, Coffee, Soda

**1:00 - 1:50 pm**

KPlz 312

Michael Kac (University of MN Twin Cities)

**"So Bad It's Good: Anti-Elitism and Inverted Snobbery in The Arts"**

Commentator: Devora Shapiro (University of MN Twin Cities)

This paper traces the rise of a cult of artistic badness in which ineptitude and incompetence are recast as virtues. I argue that this development can be attributed to three main causes: the Golden Turkey phenomenon (more precisely, failure to recognize its intended spirit), the Cult of Authenticity, and the fallacy of affirming the consequent. As exemplars I offer the filmmaker Ed Wood; the 1960's rock group The Shaggs; some contemporary indie rock; the Concentus Musicus of Vienna; and certain performers of folk music.

The Golden Turkey phenomenon grew up in the wake of Harry and Michael Medved's book *The Golden Turkey Awards*, responsible for making a must-see out of Ed Wood's execrable 'Plan 9 from Outer Space', subsequently elevated by the irony-impaired to the status of work of avant-garde genius. The Cult of Authenticity reduces aesthetic judgment to considerations of adherence to a set of practices (stylistic authenticity) or fidelity to a personal vision (moral authenticity). The bland, bloodless performances of Bach by the Concentus Musicus are deemed automatically good by virtue of their consistency with musicological scholarship; Ed Wood and the Shaggs are deemed automatically good because they refused to compromise their outsider status. The Cult of Authenticity — especially moral authenticity — in turn invites the following argument:

If you're a great artist then you have a distinctive personal vision.

You have a distinctive personal vision.

You're a great artist.

No further comment is necessary to an audience of philosophers.

KPlz 385

Sandra Menssen (University of St Thomas) and Thomas D. Sullivan (University of St Thomas)

**"Prospects of Secular Grounds for Equality and Inalienable Rights"**

Commentator:

Can declarations of equality and inalienable rights be justified without appeal to the divine? We suggest that the prospects of finding a purely secular justification-explanation of a significant declaration of equality and a significant declaration of inalienable rights are poor.

(1) We briefly examine a Lockean (and non-secular) defense of egalitarianism, and on that basis express doubt, along with Jeremy Waldron, that any secular defense is available. (2) We consider a Kantian account of inalienable rights, and argue that prospects of an adequate, thoroughly secular Kantian account are poor. (3) We argue that problems attaching to a secular Kantian justification of inalienable rights appear also in the work of the new natural law theorists (e.g., John Finnis, Germain Grisez, and Joseph Boyle).

KPlz 395

Christopher Moore (University of MN Twin Cities)

**“Art Practice and Aesthetic Paternalism”**

Commentator: Tanya Rodriguez (University of MN Twin Cities)

The relationship between an artist and her audience, mediated by some artwork, can become paternalistic because the artwork can provide the audience a benefit it does not agree will justify the harm the benefit-provision will cause. Since an audience-member may not have forecasted the effect, and since once it's arisen, she can't avoid much of it (she's seen the imagery, she's stuck in the theater, she's psychologically committed to reading to the end of the novel), she claims to be not just wronged, but coerced. Her autonomy has been reduced: the unexpected effect has forced on her something bad she neither would have wanted nor currently wants. The art-world is particularly susceptible to this paternalism-problem both because artists doesn't always know what the audience's expectations are, and because the lack of any credentialing or accreditation program for artists or their art makes it such that audiences will often confront untested and so potentially bad art. Art-institutions actually aim for an ideal where those possibilities of paternalism, in a certain sense central to the art experience—insofar as art values novelty, innovation, and diverse but foreign influences—are diminished.

**2:00 - 2:50 pm**

KPlz 309

Andrew Ward (University of MN Twin Cities)

**Medical Necessity, Needs and Justice: Helping the Medically Uninsured**

Commentator: Susan Hawthorne (University of MN Twin Cities)

In a 2005 article in the Journal of Public Health Management Practice, Sudha Xirasagar, *et.al.*, write that “[U]ninsurance is the most critical health care issue, with approximately 41.6 million, or 14.6%, uninsured, and set to accelerate to unprecedented levels in the wake of substantial unemployment and massive Medicaid cutbacks in most states.” However, even with the considerable attention that the issue has generated in recent years, “public consensus on the best option to expand health insurance coverage has”, as the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured writes, “yet to emerge.” This lack of consensus seems due to a failure to examine the underlying ideological assumptions that play important but often unrecognized roles in the policy debate. As David Atkins, Joanna Siegel and Jean Slutsky write in the context of policymaking about medical procedures such as mammography screening, policymakers “often struggle with medical issues that are the subject of fierce scientific debate. On closer examination, many of these debates are manifestations of conflicting perspectives and values as much as disagreements over the evidence.” The same seems true in the case of the policy debates about how (or whether) to expand health insurance coverage to those people currently uninsured. Assumptions about values drive, at least in part, the crafting and acceptance of health policies, and a failure to appreciate this will lead to continuing debates and the failure to achieve a stable, lasting consensus. It follows from this that it is necessary to provide a clear articulation of a defensible ideological starting point that captures, as far as possible, widely accepted, albeit inchoate, conceptions of values on which to base policy decisions and analyses. To that end, this paper has two principal goals. The first goal is to examine critically the ethical issues involved in policy debates about uninsured people and expanding insurance to include them. The second goal is to formulate a defensible ethical foundation for the creation of policies that addresses the problems faced by uninsured people.

KPlz 312

Patricia Calton

**“The Categorical Imperative as the ‘Son of God:’**

**Kant’s Deontological Reading of the New Testament”**

Commentator:

Kant’s critique of the speculative philosophy of his day is well known. His critique of contemporary theology, in contrast, is rarely appreciated in full. However, Kant argued that theology, informed by the metaphysics of which he was so critical, was the root of a crisis in Western thought that was leading to materialism, atheism, and immorality. Interestingly, Kant does not limit himself to the negative task

of critiquing theology, but offers a philosophical reading of the New Testament. Citing scripture, he gives an alternative account of the Fall, salvation, and the Son of God. Only through familiarity with these features of Kant's "universal rational religion" can we see his epistemological and ethical works in their proper context as essential stages in Kant's larger religious project.

KPlz 385

Tomas Hribek (University of MN Twin Cities)

**"David Lewis and the Motivations for Individualism"**

Commentator: Jason Ford (University of MN Duluth)

The paper analyzes the rationale behind Lewis' rejection of psychological individualism. I start by presenting the anti-individualist argument against Lewis' functionalism that Lewis ignores. Then I consider the reasons that led Lewis to take this argument seriously. In the first place, there is his view that mentalistic terms are non-rigid. Secondly, there is Lewis' concentration on phenomenal states, at the expense of intentional states. I critique both of these parts of Lewis' theory, pointing out its various inconsistencies.

KPlz 395

Sean McAleer (University of WI Eau Claire)

**"On Photographic Transparency"**

Commentator: Christopher Moore (University of MN Twin Cities)

In this paper I discuss Kendall Walton's claim that photographs are transparent in the sense that they put us in perceptual contact with the objects they are photographs of. Walton holds that photographs are, like mirrors, telescopes, and microscopes, aids to vision (251); they are "pictures through which we see the world" (252). In this paper I explain this claim, briefly consider an objection to it, and then defend it with the following very simple *modus ponens* argument (in which 'phonograph' means any sound recording):

P1 If phonographs are transparent then photographs are transparent.

P2 Phonographs are transparent.

C Therefore, photographs are transparent.

P2 strikes me (and everyone I've asked about it) as obviously true, so my main task will be

defending P1, which I do by arguing that the *disanalogies* between phonographs and photographs are not relevant to the question of their transparency, especially the disanalogy between sights and sounds suggested by Stanley Cavell in *The World Viewed*—that objects have and make sounds but do not have or make sights. I then argue that music videos pose a dilemma for those who accept photographic transparency (P2) but deny that phonographic transparency implies photographic transparency (P1).

**3:00 - 3:50 pm**

KPlz 309

Philip Mouch (Minnesota State University Moorhead)

**Illegal Immigration and Business Ethics**

Commentator: Matt Frank (University of MN Twin Cities)

The concern of this paper is to consider some of the concerns surrounding illegal immigration. While there are a number of different facets to this issue, I intend to focus on those aspects concerned directly with business and its responsibilities in addressing problems raised by the issue. It is not the intent of this paper to suggest that business is solely, or even primarily, responsible for responding to all the concerns that are raised by illegal immigration. However, in as much as businesses benefit from illegal immigration, they are responsible for helping to address the problems it raises.

KPlz 312

John Kronen (University of St Thomas) and Jacob Tuttle (Purdue)  
**“Composite Substances as True Wholes: Toward a Modified  
Nyaya-Vaisesika Doctrine Of Composite Substances”**

Commentator: Wade Savage (University of MN Twin Cities)

In the *Categories* Aristotle defined a substance as that which is neither predicable of nor in another. In saying that a substance is not predicable of another, Aristotle meant to exclude genera and species from the category of substance. *A man* is a substance but not *man*. In saying that a substance is not in another, Aristotle meant to exclude property particulars (what the Scholastics called “accidents”) from the category of substance. *A man* is a substance, but not *his color*.

The doctrine of the *Categories* treats substances as simples. Though a particular substance, e.g. Bucephalus the horse, may have parts, it is nevertheless a single thing in the category of substance and, *in that sense*, incomplex in the way a black thing or a running man are not. Black things and runners are complex because they are aggregates of substances and property particulars in the categories of quality and action respectively. But even if a horse is *one* substance and, hence, *an* entity unlike a substance *cum* some of its attributes or a set of substances related in certain ways, a horse is surely made of parts and one may well wonder both how it is related to its parts, as well as *how* its being made of parts coheres with the definition of substance given in the *Categories*. The *Categories* does not tell us how a complex substance such as a horse is related to its parts; it only tells us that its parts are not *in* it in the way its properties are. This makes sense, for while the particular properties of a horse are ontologically dependent on it, *it* would seem to be ontologically dependent on its parts. If that is the case, however, it is hard to see how a horse could be a substance, if a substance is neither predicable of nor *in* another (or *others*).

It is well known that Aristotle tried to solve the problem of how composite substances can be true substantial unities in such works as the *Physics*, and the *Metaphysics*. It is generally agreed that his solution involves invoking the concepts of potency and act. Aristotle’s proposed solution to the problem of how his definition of what a substance is could allow that composite substances exist is fascinating in itself, as are later interpretations of it. However, we do not wish to pursue any of these solutions in this paper. Instead we wish to explore a theory of the nature of composite substances which is based on a different definition of substance from that proposed by Aristotle. This theory was worked out over many centuries by philosophers of the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* school of Indian philosophy, which is one of the “orthodox” schools of Indian thought. We shall argue in this paper that the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* account substance is plausible in itself, provides clear criteria for distinguishing substances from non-substances, and poses no problems in principle for accepting the existence of composite substances. We think that these features of their theory give it certain advantages over Aristotle’s theory (at least if one supposes that Aristotle never gave up on the definition of substance in the *Categories*). Common sense holds that, if there are substances, such things as trees and cats are, but it also holds that such things are not only composite substances but are made of other *substances*. It is this last intuition which Aristotle’s definition of substance seems, on the face of it, to deny and, for this reason, we believe that a theory of what it is to be a substance that allows that some substances are made out of other substances has certain *prima facie* advantages over Aristotle’s theory.

Every metaphysical theory is beset with certain difficulties and it will come as no surprise that this holds of the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* theory of composite substances as well. In this paper we do not have the space to pursue all the difficulties that beset that theory, and will concentrate on the one we think most grave. It is that the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* theory entails that no composite substance *in fact* endures for more than a few moments. Since the intuition that at least some composite substances endure for quite a length of time is at least roughly as strong as the intuitions that there *are* composite substances and that they are *made of other substances*, we believe that this entailment of the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* theory of composite substances is quite grave, perhaps as grave as those that face *any* Aristotelian theory of their nature. Fortunately, however, we also believe that the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* theory can be modified to produce a theory

of composite substances which does not have this entailment and which preserves what is best in the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* theory. The main aim of this paper is to develop this theory and to support the truth of the following conditional: *If there are composite substances, then the modified Nyaya-Vaisesika theory of their nature is a plausible account of what they are and of how they are related to their parts.* Since defending this conditional does not involve arguing for the existence of composite substances nor even for the conclusion that the modified Nyaya-Vaisesika theory of their nature is more plausible than any other theory of their nature, some might claim that the main aim of this paper is not substantial enough to be very interesting. But we believe that anyone who is acquainted with the depths of the difficulties facing a believer in the existence of composite substances would be unlikely to share this sentiment.

A secondary aim of this paper is to better acquaint contemporary philosophers with some of the central concepts, tenets, and arguments of the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* tradition. We hope that our exposition of these will convince readers of the worthiness of this aim.

KPlz 385

Barton Moffatt (University of MN Twin Cities)

**“A Minimalist Account of Biological Information”**

Commentator: David Cole (University of MN Duluth)

This paper introduces a minimalist account of biological information drawing on an ordinary sense of ‘information.’ I argue that the application of a minimalist account of information in different functional explanations produces two distinct, derivative informational applications, evolutionary information and developmental information, or E-information and D-information. These applications both appropriately cover genetic and environmental phenomena. I illustrate this distinction between the informational applications with an example drawn from recent plant genetics and end by arguing that these applications are truly distinct, in that one cannot automatically translate between them.

**4:00 - 5:00 pm**

KPlz 395

**Reception** (wine and cheese)