



University of Graz – Department of Philosophy
University of Zagreb – Center for Croatian Studies
Society for the Advancement of Philosophy – Zagreb
Center for Advanced Academic Studies Dubrovnik



AUSTRO-CROATIAN PHILOSOPHICAL SYMPOSIUM
AND WORKSHOP MEETING

*Identity in the Context of Practical and
Theoretical Philosophy*

Dubrovnik 2012

PROGRAM &
PAPER ABSTRACTS

April 12–13, 2012

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Thursday, 12 April 2012

9:00–9:30 Opening of the symposium

LUKAS MEYER, *Head of the Institute of Philosophy University of Graz*

ZVONIMIR ČULJAK, *Head of the Center for Croatian Studies*

9:30–11:00 Session I

UDO THIEL
Enlightenment Conceptions of Personal Identity

FILIP GRGIĆ
Temporal Parts and the “No-Change” Objection

HARALD BERGER
The Concept of Identity in Late Medieval Nominalism

11:00–11:30 Coffee break

11:30–13:00 Session II

DUŠKO DOŽUDIĆ
The Metalinguistic View of Identity Statements

NORA KREFT
Personal Identity in Plato’s *Theaetetus*

ANA BUTKOVIĆ
Naturalistic Account of Rational Intuition

13:00–14:30 Lunch break

14:30–16:00 Session III

TOMISLAV BRACANOVIĆ
The Moral Self and Its Brain: The Case of Deontology

ALEXA ZELLENTIN
Historical Emissions & Rectificatory Justice

LOVORKA MAĐAREVIĆ
What Does Love Reveal About Our Identity?

16:30–17:00 Coffee break

17:00–18:00 Cooperation-Workshop Part I

Plenary Session - Possibilities for Cooperation - Establishment of Workgroups

19:00–19:00 Cooperation-Workshop Part II

Workgroups

20:00 Conference dinner

Friday, 13 April 2012

9:00–9:30 Cooperation-Workshop Part III

Plenary Session - Report of the Workgroups

9:30–11:00 Session IV

AMELIE STUART

Do We Need To Know The Identity Of The Poor For A Duty To Help?

TOMISLAV JANOVIĆ

Personhood, Identity, and Applied Ethics

BARBARA REITER

Identity, Autonomy and Contingency

11:00–11:30 Coffee break

11:30–12:30 Session V

LUKAS MEYER

The Identity of Past and Future People

CLAUDIA REITINGER

Theories of rights & the identity of future people

12:30–14:00 Lunch break

14:00–15:30 Session VI

ZVONIMIR ČULJAK

Responsibilism and the Identity of Cognitive Character

HARALD STELZER

Why should I care for you? Identity and moral obligation in the context of universalism and particularism

TVRTKO JOLIĆ

Group Identity and Responsibility

15:30–16:00 Coffee break

16:00-16:30 Cooperation-Workshop Part IV

Plenary Session - Clusters of Interests - Establishment of Network-groups

16:30-17:30 Cooperation-Workshop Part V

Network-groups

17:30–18:30 Cooperation-Workshop Part VI

Plenary Session - Report of the Network-groups
Preliminary Cooperation Agreement (Document)

18:30–19:00 Closing of the symposium

20:00 Conference dinner

Abstracts

The Concept of Identity in Late Medieval Nominalism

HARALD BERGER

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Among the many passages in Aristotle of an authoritative rank for medieval philosophy there are also some regarding the concepts „same“ and „other“ (Greek „tauton/heteron“, Latin „idem/aliud“), e. g. *Metaphysics*, V.9, 1017b27-1018a19; *Topics*, I.7, 103a6-39. Within the framework of Aristotelian hylemorphism the problem of identity is not that urgent: It is the essential form that accounts for persistence over time. Within the Christian framework the problem is discussed on two levels, viz. the supernatural of the Resurrection (is it *numerically* the same body which is resurrected at the Last Judgement?) and the natural one. According to recent research (H. A. G. Braakhuis, R. Pasnau), particularly interesting pertinent ideas emerge with late medieval nominalism, in William of Ockham, John Buridan and others. It is this current which, according to Pasnau, forms the background for early modern developments up to Locke. In this talk I shall present and discuss the different senses of “numerically the same” (*idem numero*), the difference between permanent and successive things, and some other relevant notions in 14th-century nominalism.

The Moral Self and Its Brain: The Case of Deontology

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Naturalistic research projects like the neuroscience of morality, evolutionary moral psychology and social intuitionist theory raise challenge to and attempt to revise traditional philosophical accounts of the nature of moral reasoning. One of the most serious naturalistic challenges is faced by deontology. Whereas deontology is typically portrayed as the non-consequentialist, universalizable and rationally motivated moral decision making, a number of neuroscientists and moral psychologists reverse this picture and claim “that deontological judgments tend to be driven by emotional responses and that deontological philosophy, rather than being grounded in moral *reasoning*, is to a large extent an exercise in moral *rationalization*” (Greene). This is a serious threat not only to deontology as the unique philosophical doctrine, but also to the way most people experience morality (so called “moral phenomenology” which is in many respects deontological). After outlining the basics of this naturalistic turn in the science of moral reasoning, I will examine which features essential to deontology are particularly endangered and which defense strategies deontologists have at their disposal. I will try to show that the most reasonable deontological defense is not to dismiss naturalistic approaches altogether but to utilize some of their theoretical and conceptual inventory (e.g. the distinction between ultimate and proximate psychological mechanisms or the distinction between adaptations and evolutionary byproducts) in order to retain both deontology and naturalism.

Rational Intuitions from an Epistemological Perspective

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The component of knowledge, to which the a priori / a posteriori distinction primarily applies, is justification. The main question is then how can we justify propositions which are said to be known a priori. Contemporary debate focuses on a variety of rationalist's and empiricist's accounts which are trying to give an explanation of our a priori knowledge and/or justification – the former by establishing the existence of rational intuition as a source of such justification, and the latter by denying it and adopting alternative solutions. Neither proponents nor opponents of the rational intuition offer convincing arguments for their position. I will try to defend the existence of rational intuition from the naturalistic standpoint and argue that certain epistemological kind of moderate naturalistic approach is not committed to the denial of the a priori. Moreover, I will explore whether it has better standing in this debate than rationalism and empiricism, that is whether it can give better explanation of rational intuition as the source of a priori justification and knowledge.

Responsibilism and the Identity of Cognitive Character

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Various versions of contemporary responsibilist virtue epistemology (by L. Code, J. Montmarquet, L. Zagzebski and others) assume that knowledge derives from stable dispositions to produce true beliefs. According to responsibilists, these dispositions are like intellectual virtues, and constitute what is usually labeled as virtuous “cognitive character” or virtuous “epistemic character”. In this paper responsibilist approach is confronted with skepticism concerning the existence of moral character as a consistent and robust collection of moral virtues (e.g. by J. Doris and G. Harman). If skepticism about moral character is right, then responsibilist virtue epistemology, analyzing and explaining knowledge by means of the analogous idea of cognitive or epistemic character, faces analogous difficulties. Moreover, some examples will be provided to show that having a responsibly or conscientiously produced true belief, or a true belief produced by a virtuously motivated cognitive agent, is neither necessary nor sufficient condition for knowledge.

The Metalinguistic View of Identity Statements

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Departing from standard Fregean/descriptivist and direct reference treatments of identity statements, and related informativeness and substitutivity failure puzzles, a number of authors argued that identity statements have *metalinguistic* content or metalinguistic truth conditions. To *say* that Cicero is Tully, according to them, amounts to saying something as: names ‘Cicero’ and ‘Tully’ refer to the same thing; and it is *true* that Cicero is Tully iff names ‘Cicero’ and ‘Tully’ refer to the same thing. In my talk I consider a number of arguments against the thesis that identity statements have metalinguistic content, *if such content is to be taken as their propositional or semantic content*. In doing so I side with direct reference theorists, and claim that an identity statement ‘*a* is *a*,’ and its pair ‘*a* is *b*’ (where ‘*a*’ and ‘*b*’ are coreferential singular terms), have the same propositional content: every identity statement says that a particular object is self-identical, and what they say is true iff the particular object stands in identity relation (to itself and no other object). As for the informativeness and substitutivity failure puzzles, I place them outside the domain of semantics, and adopt a *weakened* version of the metalinguistic view to deal with them. According to it identity statements do have metalinguistic content, and the puzzles arise in virtue of it, but their metalinguistic content is not their propositional content, and as such it has nothing to do with their truth conditions. That *a* is *b* would be true even if singular terms ‘*a*’ and ‘*b*’ never existed; without coreferential singular terms, however, identity statements would never extend our knowledge, nor would we be in a position to consistently/rationally consent to ‘*F(a)*’ and discard at the same time ‘*F(b)*.’ We *can* consistently believe that ‘*F(a)*’ says something true, and ‘*F(b)*’ something false, although we *cannot* but to believe that *F(b)* if we believe that *F(a)* (given ‘*a*’ and ‘*b*’ are coreferential).

Temporal Parts and the “No-Change” Objection

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According to some philosophers, things change by having temporal parts. For instance, a book changes from being open to being closed by first having a temporal part that is open, then a temporal part that is closed. Thus, change is variation between, or succession of, temporal parts of an object. A standard objection to this view is that such a variation or succession is not change at all. I will discuss main versions of this objection and try to show that it is not convincing.

Personhood, Identity, and Applied Ethics

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According to Derek Parfit (*Reasons and Persons*, p. 273), “the fundamental question about persons is a choice between two views”: the Non-Reductionist or Substance View and the Reductionist View. In the last quarter of the 20th century – due to a series of well-known counterarguments and counterfactual cases which it has not been able to handle – the Substance View has fallen in disrespect. In addition to these conceptual difficulties, an evolutionary explanation, supported by some empirical (neuroscientific) findings, has recently been offered (Farah & Heberlein, 2007) as to why our common sense is so attracted to the Substance View, i.e. why we are so prone to the illusion that we are stable, persistent substances with clear-cut identity conditions. The aim of my paper is twofold: (1) to elucidate the relation between the descriptive (metaphysical) and the normative (ethical) concepts of person in the light of the mentioned empirical findings together with some insights of behavior explanation theory; and (2) to examine some implications of these findings for applied ethics.

Group Identity and Responsibility

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There is a wide agreement that identity is a necessary condition for responsibility. In the case of the individuals that mean that a person can be held responsible only for his own actions. Things get much more complicated when it comes to relation between identity of group persons and responsibility of individual members of the group for the actions taken in their name. In the first part of the presentation I will give an account of conditions for the identity of group person who is composed of many individual human beings. This account centres on a normative concept of identity according to which a person's identity is formed by his or her commitment to achieving overall rational unity. In the second part of the presentation I will argue that only those group persons that achieve overall rational unity are to be held responsible for their actions. In addition I will argue that individuals cannot be held responsible for group's actions in virtue of their being members of the group, but only as enactors of the group's plans.

Personal Identity and the Refutation of Relativism in Plato's *Theaetetus*

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In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Socrates and Theaetetus discuss Protagoras' relativist doctrine that 'man is the measure of all things'. Together, they consider quite a few counter-arguments against Protagoras, among them an argument designed to expose his relativism as logically self-refuting. Whether or not their refutation is successful has been a matter of great controversy – I am going to argue that it fails. However, even though there does not seem to be a logical flaw in Protagoras' position, Socrates shows that it amounts to a performative contradiction to defend it: putting forward a philosophical position and rational thinking in general requires the assumption of the involved parties' identity over time; but Socrates convincingly argues that Protagoras' doctrine is incompatible with this assumption. After outlining (what I believe to be) Socrates' critique of Protagoras, I am going to end with some general reflections about relativism and personal identity.

What Does Love Reveal About Our Identity?

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According to some authors, romantic love can have the effect of making two people “become one” in a sense that they “form a coherent and seamless unity” (Solomon). One obvious question which arises with respect to this account is whether one can preserve individual autonomy within a loving relationship. On the other hand, it is often argued that love can “delineate our shapes as persons”. Love has certain authority, namely authority which stems from our “essential nature” and requires that we care for those we love (Frankfurt). The close connection between love and identity is also visible in our saying that we love someone because he/she is “special”. What this means is that this person is unique and could not be replaced by someone else. However, this does not accord well with the fact that our reasons for loving someone may lie in some particular features which could also be found in other people. The idea is that it is hard to understand how to justify our love. In this paper I explore these various ways in which love affects one’s identity.

The Identity of Past and Future People

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Who are the people to which currently living people relate to as past and future persons? In answering this question I consider the epistemic situation in which currently living people stand with respect to past as well as future people. Further, I analyze ways in which these persons' identities can be considered contingent upon currently living persons' decisions and actions. Furthermore, I examine the questions whether and in what sense past, current and future people can be understood to share an identity. Finally, I will suggest what our understanding of the identities of past and future persons implies for the normative relations in which currently living people can be said to stand to both of them.

Theories of Rights and the Identity of Future People

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It is sometimes argued that it is wrong to address our concerns with regard to future people in the language of subjective rights. Future people, so the line of thought, are not individuals as they have no personal identity. Future people do not exist and who they will turn out to be is in most cases indeterminate. Without individuals there are no subjective rights. I will argue that the ascription of rights to future people does not depend on their (fixed) identity. Neither for will theorists nor for interest theorists the fixed or known identity of people is a necessary condition for the ascription of subjective rights. While will theorists have troubles in explaining why future people have rights because they see the most significant formal feature of a right as being exercised, interest theorists can ascribe rights to future people because they define the function of rights in securing well-being for the right holder through the protection of their interests. Thus, one can argue that future people will have rights on the basis of interests all human beings have in common and that people living today have correlative duties towards them although their identity is unknown.

Identity, Autonomy, and Contingency

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One of the main insights of Care Ethics has been that fragility and thus contingency have to be considered in an ethical theory. But what is the normative significance of this general anthropological truth? How our lives go often decisively depends on contingent factors whose impact on our lives we cannot or cannot fully control. And still it is those contingent factors that make us the unique individuals that we are. Does this take our autonomy away from us? Does this compromise our identities as persons? Only if, I will argue, autonomy is understood as control of circumstances. In my contribution I will try to figure out the normative significance of the contingent factors in our lives. I will propose that an acknowledgement of our neediness and lack of control over how our lives go should lead to a re-interpretation of the concept of justice as a framework that enables individual human development. The capability to face and to handle contingency does play a crucial role in a good human life. Thus we should understand autonomy as a dynamic equilibrium that we as persons are able to achieve.

Why Should I Care for You? Identity and Moral Obligation in the Context of Universalism and Particularism

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From a communitarian perspective responsibility rests on communal relations, the identification of the individual with the community and the solidarity between its members. Universalistic positions are criticized for ignoring these relations and for leading to a neglect of particularist interests as a source of moral motivation. As I will argue communitarians repeat part of the criticism of particularism based on attributes of personal identity that can make a relevant difference in applying moral principles. Contrary to other kinds of particularism the communitarian position does not put the emphasis on individual autonomy and individual interests but on the constitution of individual identity by communities as well as shared communal interests and moral standards. To understand the position of a communitarian particularism one has to reconsider the communitarian account of individual identity and the underlying philosophical-anthropological assumptions. I will outline and criticize the communitarian position and argue for a differentiated universalist position.

Do We Need to Know the Identity of the Poor for a Duty to Help?

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In the discussion about global justice most theorists would agree that an adequate standard of living should be guaranteed for all men, the absence of severe poverty is included in this mutually shared agreement. But beyond this, various problems and questions arise – for example concerning the question of duties and responsibilities in connection with severe poverty, and how such duties can be theoretically justified. One way to think about this issue could be to argue for a certain duty to help those suffering from severe poverty, for example by redistributing certain goods and resources. Is it necessary for helping adequately, and in order to establish a permanent just economic global order to know who the severe poor actually are?

Enlightenment Conceptions of Personal Identity

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The issue of personal identity in the form in which it is so widely discussed today originates in the debates of the seventeenth and especially eighteenth centuries. Although, unlike the present day debates, enlightenment discussions about the issue often relate to theological issues (immortality, resurrection), it has been argued that “for all the transformation of our motives, indeed of our general philosophical theory ... the debate on personal identity has hardly moved on since the innovations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (Michael Ayers). This paper discusses, first, some general features of the enlightenment debates about the topic. Second, it examines in particular materialist attempts to deal with personal identity. Perhaps surprisingly, the development of materialist thought, at least in Britain, results in a denial of numerical personal identity, combined with the claim that such identity is not even required for a plausible account of self-concern.

Historical Emissions and Rectificatory Justice

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The industrialised world has been emitting large amounts of green house gasses and thereby caused changes to the climate. As a result some non-industrialised suffer severe burdens. Many theorists on climate justice argue that the question of how to deal with this clearly unfair distribution of benefits and burdens is too complex for applying principles of rectificatory justice. While they acknowledge the intuition of the claim “You broke it, you fix it,” they argue that given that the initial emitters are no longer alive and might also not been blameworthy for their emissions it is not at all clear who is the “you” obliged to fix it. In particular it is controversial whether states are appropriate units of moral responsibility here. Furthermore, there are question as to what it means to “break” the climate and to “fix” the resulting damages. In this paper I concentrate on the first problem arguing that the relevant act causing climate change is not emitting but rather failing to install a global scheme for safe emissions and that this gives reasons to consider states as the relevant units of responsibility.