

Singular Contingency: Leibniz and his Analytic Commentators

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Revisiting the possibility of singular contingent truths, i. e. *de re* contingent truths about individuals in Leibniz's system is particularly relevant for contemporary analytic metaphysics given the interest of the latter in the possibility of free will.

Singular contingency is explicated by Leibniz in various ways and analytic commentators also suggest their interpretations. On the basis of Adams's systematization of these various ways, in this talk I add some new items in view of recent trends in the Leibniz-interpretation. I consider these readings from the perspective how they cohere with the complete-concept notion of individuals and the predicate-in-the-subject principle of truth, both central to the Leibnizian system. I shall argue that the existence-based explanation of singular contingency, suggested by Russell and revived by Curley, coheres well with the Leibnizian system and it is not vulnerable to serious possible objections.

Here I contribute with the notion of 'weak contingency' emerging from this position. To anticipate, I argue that 'weak contingency' is capable for avoiding determinism but not powerful enough to accommodate human freedom.

ZVONIMIR ANIĆ

"AGENCY AND AGENT-CAUSATION"

At least since Anscombe and Davidson, contemporary philosophical theories of action have tried to define what agency is and what kind of a causal history it requires by focusing on one of its subspecies – intentional action. I start by giving an account of agency as a capability or a disposition and analyse what are its manifestation conditions. I argue that it is a capability imputable only to an agent as a whole, manifested by an agent as a whole but enabled by the continuous coordinated workings of its parts. Agency, then, is rather an ubiquitous phenomenon, and not something distinct of humans. Similarly, intentional action is rather a complex subspecies of agency in general but not something different in kind. In conclusion, I argue that no reductive account of a causal history of agency can be given, and that agency just is agent-causation. Therefore, the concept of agency needs to be taken either as a conceptual primitive or abandoned as untenable.

ARE NATIONS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS?

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The idea that nations are social constructs can be spelled out in the following way: individuals *a, b, c, ...* form a nation *A* iff they believe that they form a nation *A*. The idea is that the existence of a nation can be reduced to a set of beliefs. However, it seems that there is something *factive* about the nations, something that can not be reduced to any set of beliefs, something that holds no matter what we think about it. Now, the question is whether the relation *x is A* (individual *x* is of nationality *A*, or individual *x* belongs to a nation *A*, or *x* is an *A*) holds no matter what we think about it or it holds just because we think it does. I propose the following constructivist definition of nationality: *x is A* iff (1) *x* believes that he is *A*, (2) others believe that *x is A*, (3) *x* believes that others believe that he is *A*. In this paper I will try to show that this definition holds and that we can successfully explain away apparent counterexamples: cases where one *discovers* his true nationality, that is, cases where *prima facie x is A* no matter what he or anybody else thinks about it.

Marin Biondic

Value Judgments of Causing to Exist and Never Come to Existence-

About Whom We Talk

In this article I will examine value talk about nonexistent people, especially about “people” who are in the state of not-yet-in-existence and “people” who never existed. Is it good or bad for such “people” that start to exist or not exist forever? First of all, is such question meaningful? Can we say, meaningfully, that nonexistence is good or bad for “somebody” who never came into existence? About whom we talk in such cases? Where is the referent? Who is that “somebody”? Who are those “people”? Is our utterance in such cases completely meaningless? Or there is a meaning in such value sentences, but we should be very cautious when we formulate such sentences and when we speak of value of existence and nonexistence. Some prominent philosophers, as Derek Parfit, think that we can meaningfully talk about value of existence versus nonexistence. But in addition, David Benatar thinks that “it is better never to have been” exactly on the asymmetry between presence and absence of goods/bads for existent people and nonexistent “people”. In this article, I try to defend position that there is a meaning in some kind of value judgments of existence versus nonexistence for people, and that Benatar’s position is plausible position. In the other words, our value judgments of existence versus nonexistence are meaningful if they have proper referent, and it is far from clear that value of existence is positive.

Should an event causal libertarian settle a torn decision?

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In this paper I will examine various ways in which the event causal libertarian can address the disappearing agent objection. I will argue that the objection rests on a notion of settling that presupposes agent causal powers and for that reason the event causal libertarian should reject it and accept that some residual arbitrariness will be present in his ontological setup.

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Non-Factualism About Abstract Objects

ABSTRACT: This paper argues for a non-factualist view of the abstract-object debate. In other words, it argues that there's no fact of the matter whether abstract objects exist. Roughly, the argument for this conclusion is based on an argument for the claim that the thesis that abstract objects exist is catastrophically imprecise and indeterminate—so imprecise and indeterminate that it lacks truth value.

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Grounding Arithmetic

Over the last fifty years, the Platonism/nominalism debate in the philosophy of mathematics has been dominated by the meta-ontological stance according to which one (and maybe the) central problem is whether numbers really exist. Schaffer (2009) and others claim, on the contrary, that questions about existence should be replaced by questions about metaphysical *grounding*. Even though this framework should be relevant to all the areas of metaphysics, there have still been few attempts to apply it to the philosophy of mathematics. The aim of this paper is providing a grounding construal of one of the most important problem in metaphysics of mathematics: the fundamentality of the natural numbers. In order to do that we explore two proposals in philosophy of mathematics (viz. structuralism and neo-logicism) as case-studies and we discuss a specific problem arising from out account, that is, the problem of the grounding overdetermination of arithmetical facts (see Rosen 2011). At the end, we suggest a solution which points to a form of meta-structuralism.

Telepathy and Physicalism

Dr Sam Coleman

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The thesis is that, once the notion of telepathy is suitably unpacked, physicalism needs telepathy - oddly enough! I discuss a theory of consciousness that allows for telepathy, and discuss possible real life cases of the phenomenon, in the form of the conjoined Hogan twins. It is ironic that hard-headed 'scientific' philosophers would reject something as supernatural that their naturalism is quite committed to: namely, the idea that, like all else, the contents of minds are in principle intersubjectively accessible.

Phenomenal Sorites and Unconscious Qualia

David Pitt

In phenomenal sorites cases a series of samples of different colors is such that adjacent members are colorwise indistinguishable but non-adjacent ones are not. I argue that in such cases chips have colors that are, in their contexts, not consciously perceived. I then consider a subjective series of samples and argue that by parity of reasoning we should conclude that some of them have phenomenal colors that are not consciously perceived. Hence, phenomenal properties (qualia) can be instantiated unconsciously. I offer this argument in defense of the consistency of the claim that thought contents are phenomenally constituted with the possibility of unconscious thought.

Vague Fictional Objects

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Everett (2005 and 2013) argued that a fictional realist (i.e. a philosopher who believes that there are fictional objects) is committed to fictional objects' vague existence, which is unintelligible according to Everett himself, and therefore to be avoided. Thomasson (2010) claimed instead that a fictional realist (as herself) is just committed to linguistic vagueness, preventing Everett's objection. Contra Thomasson, I contend that the realist is committed to fictional objects' ontic vagueness and, contra Everett, I defend vague existence against the charge of unintelligibility.

Compatibilism, Emergence, and Downward Causation

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Several philosophers in recent years (including D. Dennett, J. Ismael, and N. Murphy) have suggested that we can make progress in understanding free will if we adopt a more sophisticated understanding of physical reality, including recognition of emergence, downward causation, and/or an improved understanding of causation and natural law. In this paper, I focus on the version of this argument provided by Murphy and Brown, which rests on emergence and downward causation. They give an account of free will which, they recognize, resembles various compatibilist accounts, especially that given by Dennett. However, they argue that Dennett's version is unsatisfactory because it arguably provides for only 'as if' intentionality and 'as if' acting-for-reasons. They suggest that in order to get genuine intentionality and acting-for-reasons into the picture one needs to appeal to downward causation. They argue that there's a perfectly, natural, non-spooky, understanding of downward causation to which we can appeal to do this work.

However, I argue that they are mistaken in this view. Someone who thinks that a Dennett style account does not fully account for free will will think the same about their account. Their understanding of downward causation is indeed consistent with a naturalistic understanding of the world, but it won't satisfy anyone who is not already convinced by compatibilism.

In short, then, the account does not do any work in helping us understand free will. Those who are already convinced by some compatibilist account don't need it; those who are not won't be persuaded.

