**METAPHYSICS 2024**

**June 10-14**

**IUC Dubrovnik**

Madelaine Angelova-Elchinova <madelaine.angelova@gmail.com>

Barbara Babič <bbabic@fhs.unizg.hr>

Vito Balorda <vito.balorda@gmail.com>

Boran Berčić <boran.bercic@ri.t-com.hr>

Justin Broackes <justin\_broackes@brown.edu>

David de Bruijn <dmdebruijn@gmail.com>

Antonio Capuano <azc0034@auburn.edu>

Filip Čeč <fcec@ffri.uniri.hr>

Marian David <marian.david@uni-graz.at>

Istok Đorđević <idordevic@ffst.hr>

Ljudevit Hanžek <ljuhan2@gmail.com>

Howard Hewitt <hhh0001@auburn.edu>

Andrej Jandric <andrejjandric@gmail.com>

Tomislav Janovic <tomislav.janovic@gmail.com>

Tyler Olsson <teo0010@auburn.edu>

Davor Pećnjak <davor@ifzg.hr>

Danica Rados <danica.rados@gmail.com>

Michael Watkins <watkigm@auburn.edu>

Matija Rajter <matija.rajter@proton.me>

Kylie Shahar <krs0131@auburn.edu>

Marta Ujvári <marta.ujvari@uni-corvinus.hu>

**Why Should Epistemologists Care about the Metaphysics of Belief?**

**Madelaine Angelova-Elchinova**

University of Sofia

In epistemology, beliefs are regarded as doxastic attitudes towards a proposition. A variety of norms have been proposed about belief-forming. According to the Truth Norm for example, beliefs are aiming at truth and one should not sustain any belief that one has good reasons to think may be false. Thus, the content of any belief is presumed to be propositional. A Knowledge Norm would impose a yet stronger constraint by insisting that one should only believe what one knows to be the case.

I set two consecutive goals in my talk. First, I argue that the aforementioned normative claims about belief-forming are constitutively dependent on particular metaphysical commitments. Each of these claims suggests that beliefs are mental by-products of conscious, reflective type-2 processing. Further, such norms impose an awareness condition and a concept-possession condition concerning the propositional content. Second, I argue that both norms of belief are unacceptable because they entail very strong metaphysical commitments. I propose a different metaphysical approach to beliefs and belief-forming on which beliefs are by-products of perceptive and affective type-1 processing.

**Meaning as Use: Can the Sceptical Challenge Be Met?**

**Barbara Babič**

University of Zagreb

In the focus of my presentation will be the well-known problem of meaning as it was framed and discussed by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) and re-interpreted by Saul Kripke in his *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982). In the traditional view, the meanings of linguistic expressions are abstract transcendental entities which regulate our use of these expressions and to which we have access through our mental states. Moving away from this, as he extensively tries to argue, implausible view, Wittgenstein explores the possibility of equating meanings of words with their use within a particular “language game” and in a particular linguistic community. I will first expose the main tenets of this view, with a special emphasis on the normative (rule-following) features of meaning. I will then, in the second part of my presentation, briefly expose Kripke’s sceptical approach to meaning which to a great degree has determined the way this problem has been approached and discussed in the past four decades. In the third part, I will lay out the two requirements that a non-sceptical solution to Kripke’s sceptical challenge to a theory of meaning has to meet—the constitutional and the normative requirement —and show how they can be met. That is, I will point to the facts and entities that are typically invoked by a non-reductionist vs. a typical reductionist theory of meaning, respectively. Finally, in the fourth part, I will present such a reductionist semantic theory—a theory proposed by Paul Horwich under the label ‘Use Theory of Meaning’ or UTM. In presenting this theory, my focus will be on the conditions of acceptance of linguistic entities within a linguistic community and the “ideal law” corresponding to these conditions and satisfying the previously mentioned normative requirement. I will try to point to potential problems faced by such a theory, but also to some of its potential advantages in the contemporary context.

**Are Metaphysical Explanations Causal?**

**Vito Balorda**

**Boran Berčić**

University of Rijeka

In this paper, we argue that metaphysical explanations (hence MEs) can be causal and non-causal, thus contending that non-causality is not the *differentia specifica* of MEs. According to various authors, such as Jonathan Schaffer (2017) and Anna-Sofia Maurin (2019), MEs are typically characterized as non-causal explanations. However, we believe that MEs are often causal explanations, particularly when considering examples from classical works by Gilbert Harman (1965) and Michael Devitt (1991). Moreover, we outline and examine a canonical example of a ME, i.e. the Euthyphro’s dilemma. We argue that both horns of this dilemma can be reconstructed as causal explanations. Lastly, we offer an alternative *differentia specifica* of MEs, namely their inter-domain character, which is evident in metaphysics through distinctions such as facts and values, mental and physical, concrete and abstract, and actual and possible, among others.

References

Devitt, M. (1991). *Realism and Truth*. Princeton University Press.

Harman, G. (1965). The Inference to the Best Explanation. *The Philosophical Review*, 74 (1): 88-95.

Maurin, A-S. (2019). Grounding and Metaphysical Explanation: It’s Complicated, *Philosophical Studies,* 176(6): 1573–1594.

Schaffer, J. (2017). Laws For Metaphysical Explanation. *Philosophical Issues,* 27, *Metaphysics.*

**Locke, from Hume to Aristotle: How Locke returns to Substances**

**Justin Broackes**

Brown University

Most people look in Locke for a single (even if unstable or unattractive) view on Aristotelian Substances. In fact, however, if one looks at Locke's earliest and his latest writings on the subject, there is a huge and fundamental change. The earliest writings show a remarkably well-worked-out view of a type we now tend to think of as Humean; the latest show something like a return to Aristotelian Substance as a subject of predication, that is not itself predicated of any other thing. (Some of the very same phrases may recur after 30years, while -- because of differences in the surrounding material -- having a significance almost completely opposite to what they had earlier!) I will explore the change, and the argumentative motivations Locke may have had for it; and some of the reasons why the reversal has been so little noticed for so long.

**Kant’s Material Conception of Sense**

**David de Bruijn**

Auburn University

Hylomorphic language plays an important role in Kant’s account of cognition. As interpreters have emphasized, Kant associates the form of cognitive states with the spontaneous activity of the understanding, while sensation (Empfindung) is characterized as the matter of cognition (R619 AA 15: 268). In this paper I provide a new understanding of Kant’s characterization of sensation as material. Following Leibniz, I argue that Kant’s use of matter should not be associated with constitution, but rather with passivity. I argue that appreciating Kant’s Leibnizian heritage leads to the conclusion that Kantian Empfindungen are logically and conceptually posterior to enformed cognitive states. Empfindung is a passive aspect of a cognitive state, rather than an independent state. In turn, I argue this point has significant implications for the disagreement between conceptualist and non-conceptualist interpretations of Kant.

**Reflections about Belief and Essence**

**Antonio Capuano**

Auburn University

In “A Puzzle about Belief” Kripke holds a simple thesis: “the puzzle is a puzzle” (1979: 125). My main thesis is also a simple one: Kripke’s is not a puzzle. It is a positive finding – a theorem if you like – about the limits of the language of indirect discourse in describing the cognitive life of thinkers. In particular, the true report “Peter believes that Paderewski has musical talent, and that Paderewski does not have musical talent” does not distinguish between someone like Peter who is rational but does not realize that there are not two individuals called “Paderewski” and someone like Peter\* who realizes that there is only one individual called “Paderewski” but is irrational. The same goes with necessity contexts. Although in such contexts, co-referential names can be substituted salva veritate, they also fail to distinguish between substances that have different natures.

**Humean Conceptions of the Laws of Nature and the Consequence Argument**

**Filip Čeč**

University of Rijeka

According to the consequence argument (van Inwagen 1975) if determinism is true, then our acts are consequences of the remote past and the laws of nature and therefore we are unable to act otherwise than we in fact do. The argument relies on the premise that the laws of nature are not up to us, and that premise has been challenged by various Humean perspectives regarding the laws of nature, most famously by David Lewis in his paper “Are We Free to Break the Laws?” (Lewis 1981). I intend to explore how to interpret Lewis’s argument, his distinction between the weak and the strong law-breaking ability, the similarities between Lewis’s approach and the approach offered by Beebee and Mele (Beebee and Mele 2002), and question whether the metaphysical commitments of the Humean approaches can be used to question the appropriateness of the Humean critiques of the consequence argument.

References:

Beebee, Helen, and Alfred Mele. 2002. “Humean Compatibilism.” *Mind* 111 (442): 201–23.

Lewis, David. 1981. “Are We Free to Break the Laws?” *Theoria* 47 (3): 113–21.

van Inwagen, Peter. 1975. “The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism.” *Philosophical Studies* 27 (3): 185–99.

**The Conceptual and the Real**

**Marian David**

University of Graz

Quite a few philosophers distinguish (plausibly) between concepts, on the one hand, and properties, on the other hand: “Properties are wordly, concepts are wordy.” (David Lewis) Moreover, some philosophers maintain (fairly plausibly) that there are cases where there is, or we have, a concept, but there is no “corresponding” property. Candidates might be: jade, pain, good, identity, truth. This raises a puzzle. Say you hold with respect to some concept-term, e.g. “good” and some item X:

 1. There is the concept good.

 2. X falls under the concept good.

 3. There is no such property as being-good.

From 2 it would seem to follow that X is good. However, because of 3, we have: nothing exemplifies the property being-good, from which it would seem to follow that it is not the case that X is good.

The talk presents reflections on this puzzle.

Is it a real puzzle?

How can it be (how is it usually) resolved?

**Potency and Act in Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas**

**Istok Đorđević**

University of Split

The concepts of potentiality and actuality are crucial in the metaphysical frameworks of Aristotle and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Aristotle's examination of these concepts, notably through the term dunamis delineates distinct senses: from the inherent power of an object to induce change to its connection with the concept of energeia (activity, actuality). Aristotle illustrates this relationship by analogizing activity to potentiality, such as comparing waking to sleeping or sight to closed eyes (1048b1–3). He emphasizes the importance of energia for understanding his theory of substance, closely tied to the notions of matter and form. Given Aristotle's prioritization of form over matter, he also prioritizes actuality over potentiality, as reflected in his distinction between different forms of priority – in account, time and substance (1049b4–5).

Frede's (1994) examination of the concepts, dunamis and energia highlights that for each type of dunamis there is corresponding actuality. His analysis is directed towards examination of 'actuality' relevant for substance. Kosman (1994), analysing first and second actuality suggests that in the case of substance being (ousia), there is no clear distinction as substance is always actively being itself. Witt (1994; 2003) investigates Aristotle's assertion that actual being precedes potential being in substance. Cohen and Reeve (2021) emphasize the significance of the term dunamis in connection to energeia suggesting its translation as potentiality.

 Saint Thomas Aquinas expands upon Aristotle's theory of potency and act by linking them to the concept of being. According to his interpretation, being enables potency to become actualized. This concept of being is pivotal in understanding Aquinas's theology and his interpretation of metaphysics. Compared to Aristotle's theory, Aquinas's interpretation of potency and act offers a deeper understanding of cosmic order and divine providence. (Edward Feser, 2014.)

The purpose of this presentation is to conduct a comparative analysis of Aquinas and Aristotle's teachings on actuality and potentiality, aiming to identify similarities, differences, and potential challenges associated with these concepts. Through this exploration, we seek to gain insight into how these influential philosophers approached these fundamental principles and how their ideas intersect or diverge.

References:

1. Cohen, S. Marc and C. D. C. Reeve, "Aristotle’s Metaphysics", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/>.

2. Frede, Michael, 1994, “Aristotle’s Notion of Potentiality in Metaphysics Θ,” in Scaltsas, Charles, and Gill 1994, pp. 173–194.

3. Kosman, L. A., 1994, “The Activity of Being in Aristotle’s Metaphysics,” in Scaltsas, Charles, and Gill 1994, pp. 195–213.

4. Witt, Charlotte, 1994, “The Priority of Actuality in Aristotle,” in Scaltsas, Charles, and Gill 1994, pp. 215–228.

 –––, 2003, Ways of Being: Potentiality and Actuality in Aristotle’s Metaphysics, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

5. Ross, W. D., 1924, Aristotle’s Metaphysics, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

6. Feser, Edward., 2014, Scholastic Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction, Editiones Scholastice.

**Aristotle’s *Tyche* and Real Luck**

**Filip Grgić**

Institute of Philosophy Zagreb

In everyday use, when we characterize an event as lucky, we both describe and evaluate it and assume that it has both a descriptive and an evaluative component. The descriptive component ofa lucky event is its having certain properties––of being unpredictable, unexpected, incredible, etc.; in short, of being chancy. Its evaluative component is its having a positive or negative value––its being an instance of good or bad luck.

 Contemporary philosophical theorizing about luck has mainly focused on the descriptive component. Three main approaches have been distinguished. According to the modal approach, an event is lucky if it is modally fragile, i.e., if it is such that it could easily not have happened.

According to the probabilistic approach, an event is lucky if it was unlikely to happen. According to the lack of control approach, an event is lucky if the person involved had no control over whether it would happen. There are also some hybrid accounts.

 Much less attention has been paid to the evaluative component, or significance condition of luck as it is usually called. This is not to say that the significance condition has not been a subject of discussion; everyone who proposes to offer a comprehensive analysis of luck includes something about the significance condition. The point is that the significance condition has been discussed much less systematically. The basic idea is simple: to count as lucky, an event must be lucky *for someone*, which means that it must be significant for someone. To be significant for someone is to satisfy or frustrate a person’s interests, values, desires, goods, etc. However, it is not clear what exactly it is that a lucky event satisfies or frustrates, whether it is something subjective or objective, whether the agent herself must attribute significance to the event, or whether someone else can do it on her behalf, etc.

 Consideration of the significance condition pulls in two opposite directions: either into subjectivism and relativism about luck, which may result in the admission that luck cannot have the philosophical use attributed to it, or into eliminativism about the significance condition, which may result in an account of luck that does not do justice to the common usage of the term. In this talk, I will discuss whether contemporary philosophers of luck can benefit from considering Aristotle’s view of luck (*tyche*). I will offer a cautiously affirmative answer. Aristotle develops an objective account of luck that avoids problems plaguing contemporary theories, especially those concerning the significance condition. However, the use of Aristotle’s analysis in the context of current debates is limited due to at least three reasons: (1) Aristotle’s analysis depends on his peculiar understanding of teleology, which in turn presupposes a specific conception of the good that is difficult for many to accept today; (2) Aristotle’s analysis requires unexpected and sometimes strained explanations of our everyday attributions of luck; and (3) it seems that Aristotle does not treat cases of good luck and bad luck symmetrically.

**Metaphysical Problems of Perception: The Case of Sense-data**

**Ljudevit Hanžek**

University of Split

According to sense-data theorists, all cases of perception involve an awareness of a non-physical object (sense-datum), which has those sensible properties (color, shape, perhaps depth) that it appears to have. This is so because whenever it appears to someone that there is an object which has a perceptible property P, there really does exist an object which has that property, even though the subject might be mistaken or confused about the nature of that object. Furthermore, the basic metaphysical structure of the good cases (veridical perceptions) is identical to those of bad cases (illusions, hallucinations), which means that the explanation of the way things seem to the subject has to be identical in both types of cases (Jackson 1977, Robinson 1994).

I will anaylze the aforementioned claims, and arguments used to strengthen them, and claim that they are far from persuasive. Specifically, I will argue that some form of adverbialism or qualia theory provide satisfactory explanations of the metaphysical structure of experience (Tye 1975, Tye 1984, Papineau 2014) and that sense-data are problematic with regard to their non-physical nature, their relation towards objective physical space and the issues of indeterminacy. Finally, I will comment on the metaphilosophical aspects of the debate about sense-data, and examine the question of whether the debate is essentially philosophical or scientific in nature.

References:

1. Jackson, Frank (1977) *Perception: A Representative Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Papineau, David (2014) ''Sensory Experience and Representational Properties'', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. 114, Oxford University Press.
3. Robonson, Howard (1994) *Perception*, Routledge.
4. Tye, Michael (1975) ''The adverbial theory: A defence of Sellars against Jackson'', *Metaphilosophy*.
5. Tye, Michael (1984) ''The Adverbial Aapproach to Visual Experience'', *The Philosophical Review*, XCIII, No. 2

**Rule, Nature, and Function in Plato’s *Republic***

**Howard Hewitt**

Auburn University

In the ideal city of Plato’s *Republic* every citizen is happy and every citizen is just.  All the citizens are happy because they are doing that work for which they are naturally suited.  This makes the refusal, or reluctance, of the philosopher king to rule in the ideal city puzzling.  Many critics see the reluctance of the philosopher king to rule, and his willingness to do so on the grounds that it is just, as a moment where Plato gives up an axiom of Greek moral thought: that a virtue must profit its possessor.  This would mean that in the middle of the *Republic*, Plato produces a counterexample to its thesis that justice profits the just.  I give a different account of the philosopher king that explains both why his ruling in the ideal city conduces to his happiness--why it profits him--and also why he is reluctant to do it that is consistent with the thesis of the *Republic*.

**Humeanism and Idealised Laws**

**Andrej Jandrić**

University of Belgrade

The mainstream view about the metaphysical status of laws of nature is the view inspired by the writings of David Hume and advocated by David Lewis. According to Humeanism about laws, laws are mere regularities in the Humean Mosaic, which contains information about the point-size instantiations of perfectly natural properties and their spatio-temporal relations. Laws are thus true universal generalisations, which are grounded in their instances. They are distinguished from accidentally true generalisations by belonging to the best system for our world, i.e. a system of truths which best balances informativeness with simplicity. However, many scientific laws are idealisations: they apparently concern non-existent entities, such as, for example, frictionless plains, ideal gases or incompressible fluids. Idealised laws immediately raise a problem for the Humean account, since they cannot be grounded in their instances, as there are no such instances. Lewis (1986) considered them as truthlike fictions, which are, strictly speaking, false at our world, but useful because of being true in worlds close to ours. Stathis Psillos (2002) suggests that Lewis’s Best System Account is, after all, able to accommodate idealised laws. In his view, these laws can be added to non-idealised laws in the best system, since they increase the system’s informativeness by supporting true counterfactuals, while at the same time not diminishing the system’s simplicity. Recently, Toby Friend (2022) has proposed a new way to be Humean about idealised laws. Friend claims that idealised laws are meta-laws about (first-level) non-idealised laws, which are, in their turn, grounded in their instances. I will argue that all these attempts to reconcile Humeanism with idealised laws face considerable difficulties and are, ultimately, unsuccessful.

**Phenomenological Protologic Re-Examined**

**Tomislav Janović**

Croatian Studies, Zagreb

Generally speaking, the project of Husserlian phenomenology can hardly be regarded as successful. Despite being decently represented in the philosophical community, it is not part of the philosophical mainstream and its influence fades with time. Nevertheless, Husserl’s Nachlass, together with the critical commentaries of his immediate followers, still offers a wealth of interesting ideas and perspectives which, explicitly or implicitly, re-appear in the current discussions on a whole range of topics and fields—from metaphysics and epistemology to philosophy of mind and philosophy of logic. One of the more interesting among these ideas is the notion that the purely perceptual (“prepredicative”) experience can serve as a “justificatory ground” not only for mind’s higher-order (“predicative”) achievements—primarily judgements (either linguistically articulated or merely mentally entertained)—but for logic itself. In the present contribution, I intend to (1) examine what this kind of justification exactly means and how it is to be carried out, and (2) consider some actual implications of the genealogical approach to the “philosophical clarification” of logical concepts. One of the more obvious issues, which will barely be touched upon, is the relation of actual human experience (including reasoning) to logical norms (e.g. in the context of the debate over psychologism and normativism).

**The Perceived Fit between Music and Movement**

**A Multisensory Account of Dance as a Novel Feature Type**

**Tyler Olsson**

Auburn University

Whether you are a sophisticated critic or an untrained spectator, when it comes to our experience of dance, we are generally able to appreciate the way a dancer’s bodily movements fit the music. Our experience of dance thus lends itself to a range of crossmodal judgments, that is, our perception of dance enables us to make claims that purport to be about how bodily movements which can be visually seen fit together with aspects of the music which can be heard or felt. But we are not determined to perceive every case of fit unproblematically. That it is possible one may fail to initially perceive a fit that others claim ought to be viewable suggests that there is a normative dimension to this phenomenon. In this article, I argue that we can explain the source of this normativity with a multisensory account of dance. More specifically, I argue that dance is a novel feature type, a feature of perceptual experience that is essentially multimodal. The basic perception of dance, which grounds more sophisticated forms of judgment concerning crossmodal fit downstream, is the actualization of a unique multisensory capacity that non-inferentially tracks a real, fundamental connection between music and movement.

**God, Abstract Objects and Constructivism**

**Davor Pećnjak**

Institute of Philosophy Zagreb

God is the most perfect being and traditionally, creator of anything that is distinct from Him. So, anything that is ditinct from God, completely depends on God for its existence. But there are so called abstract entities such as numbers, sets, propositions, relations, possible worlds etc. and for most of them, if not for all, it seems that they are necessary, outside space and time. So, it seems that they have their reason of being in themselves, and so that they are independent of God. So the question is how to reconcile the existence of God with the existence of the so called abstract objects. I will survey several theories and arguments, concerning mostly mathematical abstract objects, such as theistic activism, theistic conceptualism, nominalism, etc., and I will try to offer a scetch of a constuctivist solution. Constructivists and intuitionists in the mathematics and philosophy of mathemathics argue that there should be a procedure that explicitly renders any mathematical entity and that only those entities for which there is a procedure, exist. So, I will argue that God constructs and has procedures for rendering mathematical, and possibly, other abstract entities, and so that they are dependent on Him and that they exist in this constructivist sense.

**The Ontological Status of Geometrical Objects in Aristotle's Metaphysics**

**An Overview of Interpretations and Implications**

**Danica Radoš**

University of Split

Aristotle's teachings on mathematics and the ontology of mathematical entities are scattered throughout his corpus rather than concentrated in one treatise. However, it is commonly accepted that in Book M of the Metaphysics, Aristotle addresses the question of whether or not mathematical objects exist and whether or not they exist in sensibles. Aristotle explores the ontological nature of mathematical objects, such as lines, numbers, and figures. The presentation, however, will focus primarily on geometrical objects and examine the problems surrounding their existence within the metaphysical framework, paying particular attention to M. 3, where Aristotle addresses this issue.

Aristotle's dense text presents a difficult challenge. Different interpretations have arisen, reflecting varying ideas on the ontological status of geometrical objects. In Lear's perspective, simple geometrical properties can be found in sensibles, but geometrical objects themselves are regarded as fictional constructs. This viewpoint attributes mathematical fictionalism to Aristotle. Mueller (1970; 1990) interpreted geometry as the study of entities that are distinct from the sensory world yet somehow derived from it. According to Corkum (2012), this places Mueller on a literalist interpretation, with the main thesis being that there is some overlap between the mathematical and physical realms. Pettigrew (2009) proposes that geometrical objects are studied as potential or actual parts of sensibles. Katz (2019) challenges this interpretation, attempting to show that Aristotle's mathematical objects exist as properties of sensible substances, or, as she refers to them in more recent work (2022), "kooky objects." The purpose of this presentation is to analyse the aforementioned claims and arguments in the context of Aristotle's writings. The aim is to highlight the complexities within the metaphysical framework of the philosophy of mathematics.

**Gloss**

**Clara Ragan and Michael Watkins**

Auburn University

It is common to think that anything we see we see in virtue of seeing colors. But there is also the intuition that gloss or finish is not a feature of color; the intuition seems to be that gloss stands between us and color. After looking at some motivations both for and against thinking of gloss as a feature of color, we present some empirical considerations for why it is not. We then suggest a way of thinking about gloss according to which, although gloss is not a feature of color, it is nonetheless true that we see gloss only in virtue of seeing colors.

**Metaphysics as Conceptual Engineering**

**Matija Rajter**

University of Rijeka

In her 2017 paper titled “What are we doing, when we do metaphysics?” (in Giuseppina d'Oro and Soren Overgaard, eds. Cambridge Companion to Philosophical Methodology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) Amie Thomasson presents us with two conceptions of the work we can be thought of as doing in metaphysics: the ‘heavyweight’ conception of metaphysics and the expanded conceptualist account. According to the ‘heavyweight’ model what metaphysicians are essentially trying to do is to uncover deep and fundamental facts about the world. On the expanded conceptualist approach, on the other hand, the metaphysician is engaged mainly in descriptive and normative conceptual work, essentially in conceptual engineering. Thomasson argues that the expanded conceptualist approach offers us a legitimate picture of the work that metaphysicians can do, while at the same time avoiding problems facing a ‘heavyweight’ account of metaphysics. In this talk I will argue that Thomasson’s picture of metaphysics as conceptual engineering represents not only an interesting attempt to demystify the methods of metaphysics but is also capable of presenting an answer to the most common criticism pointed towards the practice of conceptual engineering in general, namely (1) Strawson’s challenge, (2) the Lack of unity objection and the (3) Externalist challenge.

**Sexual Difference (?) in Conway’s Ontology**

**Kylie Shahar**

Auburn University

It seems uncontroversial to say that the best way to describe Conway’s (1631-1679) *Principles* is as a treatise that is engaged with the metaphysical, ontological, and theological debates of her time. In other words, it’s not a piece we look to for insights into socio-political debates of the seventeenth-century. Nevertheless, Conway does make claims about sexual difference in the *Principles* that are worth our notice. Indeed, it seems that Conway’s *prima facie* views on sexual difference entail a sexual hierarchy, where males are on top—and that this is baked into her ontology. This leaves her in a bit of a bind for it not only leaves her looking like an anti-feminist, but also like she’s violating the overarching egalitarianism of her ontological commitments throughout the text. In this paper, I will draw out this apparent tension, work to ameliorate it, and then show how my reading differs from those already on the table in the secondary literature. In so doing, I offer a reading of sexual difference in Conway that brings her otherwise traditionally metaphysical text into conversation with socio-political debates.

**Constitution vs Predication**

**An Essentialist Reply to the Modalist Challenge**

**Márta Ujvári**

Corvinus University of Budapest

The purposeful slip of tongue from *essence* or substantial form to essential *properties* in the modalist reconstructions of essentialism creates the illusion that new essentialism is a sort of de re necessity. To dispel the illusion one has to show why coming about under a kind and also being of that kind is not a *property* of the instances of that kind. The distinction between constitution under a form *and* the predication of properties (essential, accidental and propria) to individual substances constituted by their forms affects the outcome of the dispute between the modalists and the essentialists. Further, propria called ‘necessary accidents’ by the Aristotelians have a close connection to essences. Since essence according to the new essentialists does not have a necessary status (‘necessary’ in the logical sense or in an unqualified sense), one has to explain how essences are related to ‘necessary accidents’. One can explain this relation by relying on the metaphysical notion of necessity that still needs some sharpening. Lastly, the role of particularized immanent sortal forms will be considered by suggesting that these forms can fill out a gap in a universalist account of sortal essences.