

ABSTRACTS

Michał Glowala: Substances, Tendencies, and the Will

What my hand is doing is not necessarily what I am doing, because the motion of my hand may be a matter of involuntary muscular spasm; this seems impossible in the case of the will: what my will is doing is necessarily my own action. What is the nature of this contrast between the will and other powers and parts of substances? There are two main answers here: (i) The agent has a complete causal control over his will (as opposed to other powers and parts); (ii) Some powers (including the will) are intrinsic to substances in such a way that the exercises of these powers are necessarily actions of these substances, and this intrinsicity is to be understood in noncausal terms. There is a debate between (i) and (ii) both in contemporary philosophy of action and in late scholasticism (Lowe and the XVIIth century Thomists embrace (ii), while O'Connor and the XVIIth century Jesuits embrace (i)). This debate seems crucial for the understanding of substances (as opposed to their powers and their parts) as real subjects of agency.

I would like to defend a version of (ii) by sketching a theory of substance according to which some tendencies are tendencies of substances (as opposed to their powers and parts) in a pretty strong (although not a causal) sense.

Mariusz Grygianiec: A Transcendentist Approach to Persistence

Although persistence through time is customarily regarded as one of the criteria of substancehood, it itself has been the subject of considerable philosophical controversy. The metaphysical debate between perdurantist and endurantists has not thus far resulted in a unanimous settlement. In my paper, I will argue that there is, in the endurantist family, a distinctive position called transcendentism which is best suited to answer some difficulties encountered by endurantists. Its basic tenet is that for an object to exist at a time is for it to be involved (to participate) in occurrents that are weakly located at that time and, consequently, for an object to persist through time means for it to be involved in occurrents that are weakly located at different times. I will also try to show that transcendentism is in a position to adopt certain theoretical devices typically used by perdurantists, and as such it can be viewed, at least at a methodological level, as a specific reconciliation of two competitive camps. The overall message of the paper will be the idea that even if we were inclined to abandon the classical notion of substance, our ontology would still require the notion of a continuant, i.e. a thing which persists through time and remains one and the same at all times at which it exists. Transcendentism seems to conform to this idea.

Christian Kanzian: How to Survive as a Substance-Ontologist

In contemporary ontology substance-ontologists seem to be a decreasing minority compared with the increasing number of friends of process-ontologies, trope-ontologies, state-of-affair theoreticians, who declare the end of traditional substance-ontology, and regard “substance” – if at all – as an ultimately superfluous metaphor in the context of a preliminary world description. In my talk I want to resist these mainstreams in contemporary ontology, by showing a way how to survive as a substance-ontologist. I start with an exploration of the motives, why I think that it is worth to survive as a substance ontologist. Then I proceed with standard objections against the acceptance of substances: the bare substrata-objection, the intrinsic change-objection, and the appeal to Leibniz` law. I try to reject these objections but lay the main focus on the hard attacks on substance ontology, which come on the one hand from physicalism and the postulate to take a revisionary stance in ontology, and on the other hand from deflationism in recent metaontology. Against these attacks we

need a robust strategy, which is as radical and strict as possible anti-physicalistic and anti-deflationistic. I will try to present an outline for such a robust strategy.

Kathrin Koslicki: Are Artifacts Substances?

The Aristotelian doctrine of hylomorphism holds that those entities which are subsumed under it are compounds of matter (hulç) and form (morphç or eidos). Matter-form compounds are also commonly classified by Aristotelians as belonging to the ontologically privileged category of substances. Artifacts have long posed a special challenge for hylomorphists who support the classification of matter-form compounds as substances. According to Risto Hilpinen, “[a]n artifact may be defined as an object that has been intentionally made or produced for a certain purpose” (“Artifact”, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Following this characterization, we might conceive of a screwdriver, for example, as an object that is intentionally produced for the purpose of tightening and loosening screws. Given their apparent dependence on the mental states of intentional agents (e.g., inventors, designers, producers or users), one wonders whether artifacts should be recognized as full-fledged matter-form compounds and afforded the ontologically privileged status of substances within a hylomorphic ontology alongside living organisms and other members of natural kinds. If artifacts are so classified, are their forms or essences partially located in the minds of intentional agents? Are they wholes that are structured and unified in the same sense and to the same degree as the members of natural kinds? In this paper, I discuss these challenges posed by artifacts and begin to develop a response to them that is compatible with a realist hylomorphic ontology.

Uwe Meixner: The Substance of Substance

My talk will first give an explication (in Carnap’s sense) of the notion of substance – an explication inspired, but not determined, by the history of philosophy. My talk will then address the question of whether there are substances. It will be shown that there are several good reasons for believing in substances.

Marek Piwowarczyk: No Substances in a Substance

In my talk I want to consider arguments for the old Aristotelian thesis that a substance is not composed of other substances (or, equivalently, that no substance can be a part of another substance). I call it “the Mereological Limitation Thesis” (MLT). The thesis has very controversial consequences: that parts of substances (on all levels of composition) are neither substances nor accidents (attributes); that objects composed of substances (like stones and bikes) are not substances; that a substance to be absorbed by another substance must be destroyed and replaced by a non-substantial part of the latter; that parts of substances cannot travel from one substance to another etc. I will analyze traditional arguments for MLT (from the actuality of substance, from the unicity of a substantial form, from a unicity of the source of action). I think all these reasonings can be reduced to the more fundamental claim that the identity independence entertained by a substance can be saved only if everything which can be distinguished within a substance must in turn be identity dependent on it. My working hypothesis is that this claim is true.

Christoph Rapp: What is substance good for? Some Aristotelian answers

Aristotle’s theory of substance has wide ramifications throughout his philosophy. Most notably,

substances provide the subjects of categorical predication. They are also the persistent subjects of alteration and change. Substances are involved in a core theorem of Aristotle's *Physics*, namely that there is a crucial difference between mere alteration on the one hand and generation and corruption on the other. More than this, each domain of scientific knowledge consists of substances. Particular substances are also needed as bearers of properties that Plato had introduced as independent universals. I will argue though that ultimately the introduction of substances is just one interim step in Aristotle's project of identifying the most fundamental entities. Some types of substance turn out to be more fundamental than others. And, in a way, the essence, being itself more of an *ousia*, is more fundamental than the compound substance

Bejamin Schnieder: Substance and Dependence

Substances have been traditionally understood as entities that exist independently of other entities. Whether this characterisation is suitable, however, depends on how to understand the relevant notion of existential dependence. The talk will discuss this issue.

Erwin Tegtmeier: *Substances, Facts, and the Problem of Complexity*

Aristotle submits to Parmenides' criterion of simplicity and he tries to cope with the phenomena of complexity by grading ontological status. He lowers the ontological status of accidents because of their dependence using another of Parmenides' criterion, namely that of independence. Later Aristotle introduced potentiality to keep a simple substance by allowing for implicit complexity. He also prevented first matter from disturbing the simplicity of substance by denying it any ontological status. In the 14th Century a really simple substance was achieved by Occam by transferring all accidents and even the essence as concepts into the mind. That was a specious solution of the problem of complexity. Epistemology cannot solve ontological problems.

The more satisfactory alternative is to admit explicit complexes. Parmenides argument against complexity is not sound. One can credit Meinong for being the first to make that move. My own ontology (continuing Bergmann) has explicit complexes, namely facts. The other categories are: particulars, universals, and forms. Facts (the only complex entities) consist of particulars and universals and of other facts. Particulars correspond roughly to the first substances of the Early Aristotle. A subcategory of particulars are substances. They are simple although they have temporal and spatial parts. The complexity associated with them comes from facts in which those substances are constituents. The other constituents are the relational universals of being a temporal part and being spatial part. What has temporal parts is a substance. It also has an essence (corresponding to the second substance of the Early Aristotle) which is a non-relational universal.