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Abstracts

Two Formalist Approaches to "Explanation" in Natural Sciences

Mansur Nasiri

There are several problems in matters concerning scientific explanation, the most important of which is offering a definition of explanation and classifying the different approaches taken in offering a model for scientific explanation. In this paper, we will go through the current approaches to explanation while presenting a definition of it. In their discussions about explanation, philosophers of science do not pay very much attention to the general classification in the current views about explanation, but as we will see, examining these views and their divisions will greatly help in understanding these discussions. Therefore, we divide the current views about explanation into two general classes: formalistic and non-formalistic. Our discussion in this paper is specific to two formalist methods of explanation.

Keywords: explanation, formalist method, Popper, Hampel, Salmon, causal explanation.

Legal Epistemology from the Perspective of Muslim Scholars

Ahmad Deylami

The concepts of right and obligation, of lawful and unlawful, and of good and bad are the most focal ones in the philosophy of value, particularly in the philosophy of law and ethics. They are mostly discussed from epistemological aspects. Our main question in this survey is of the origin of legal and ethical propositions. Do they directly relate to an objective external reality that determines their truth; or are they only based on the intentions and the purposes of the people who stipulate them? Legal and moral naturalists have chosen the first explanation with various interpretations, and conventionalists have tried to prove the second one. In this study, configuration and construction are regarded as mental construct entities in practical philosophy and the theory of conventionalism is shown to be more reasonable and defensible.

Keywords: legal epistemology, ethical epistemology, naturalism, conventionalism, the tools of knowledge, religious knowledge.

The Shade of "Oneness of Being" on Tafsire Bayan al-Sa'ada

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The idea of "Oneness of Bing" is considered the most important and the most focal ontological claim of mystics and theosophists. Some mystic exegetes have been serious advocates of this claim, and hence have introduced it in their esoteric interpretations of the Qur'an. The early mystical Quranic exegeses, however, simply dealt mainly with the internal meaning of the Quranic verses. The main idea of mystics was to extinguish the low desires of the soul and selfhood, leading their soul to divine love and finally to annihilation in God. So there is no hint at the idea of Oneness of Being in their exegeses. Then, instead of the immediate internal and didactic meanings based on intuition and spiritual feelings, they ventured to develop some philosophical and mystical concepts. And finally the ideas of divine love and annihilation in God were led to the idea of Oneness of Being, and in the 7th century the idea was brought into Quranic exegesis by Ibn Arabi. After Ibn Arabi, instead of simple and ascetic mystical exegeses, a period of hermeneutic reflections based on the idea of Oneness of Being began, and this idea was propagated by Ibn Arabi's followers. Sultan 'Ali Shah Gonabadi, the author of Bayan al-Sa'adah fi Maqamat al-'Ibadah, is among the strong supports of this idea, speaking about it in various places. He described this idea by relying on the words of Ibn Arabi and Mulla Sadra, and went to the extreme of excess in interpreting the Quranic verses according to this idea. In addition to surveying the historical background of this idea, its semantic dimensions, and the way it entered into the mystical exegeses, the author has shown the sway of this idea over Tafsire Bayan al-Sa'adah and its comparative interpretation of the Qur'an in terms of this idea, and has presented a close examination of it.

Keywords: Oneness of Being, Unity of Vision, Gonabadi, Bayan al-Sa'adah, mystical exegeses, esoteric interpretations, interpretation and comparison.

The Role of Philosophy of Science in the Research Program of Evolution

Hadi Samadi

Referring briefly to the effects of philosophy in the formation of Darwin's theory of evolution, this paper will survey the relationship between philosophers of biology and evolutionary biologists in the current age. The role of the philosopher of science in the streams of science, and therefore the role of the philosopher of biology in the evolutionary research program is more than just clarifying concepts and definitions, and revealing the hidden presuppositions; it rather includes introducing the methodological

equivalents of some metaphysical theories to scientists, and, in other words, offering some methodological programs based on metaphysical presuppositions. By pointing at the problems, philosophers of biology can also help scientists in the process of criticizing the methodology (not the content).

Keywords: biology, philosophy, metaphysics, evolution, Demarcation, Popper.

Fear of Death

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Whether fear of death is rational or not is a topic discussed nowadays in philosophical circles. While explaining the nature of fear of death, this paper tries to examine the idea of its being irrational. We will show that fear of death is a natural reaction to the individual's noetic structures so it should not be considered absurd or irrational. Then, we will examine the arguments put forth in favor of the irrationality of fear of death, and will show that fear of death is rational and even recommended in religious traditions. This paper is written in a descriptive-analytic format.

Keywords: fear, death, rationality, meaningfulness of fear, overcoming fear of death.

The Philosopher-Prophet as the Ideal Ruler in the Political Thought of the Medieval Iran

Dal Seung Yu

The theory of ideal ruling is the central idea of the medieval Persian political thought; as the ideal ruler, in turn, is at the center of this theory. This paper intends to identify and introduce, with an analytic view, the most important features of the ideal ruler in the medieval political thought of Iran. The focal thesis of this article is to introduce the philosopher-prophet as the central idea of the political thoughts in medieval Iran. We will investigate the ideas of the principal representatives of this thought in medieval Iran such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Suhrewardi, and Mulla Sadra, and recreate their intended ruler. In the author's view, the philosopher-prophet introduced as the real ruler in the works of these representatives of Iranian thought has the characteristics of the ideal Iranian king, the platonic philosopher, the prophet of Islam, and the Shi'te Imams. Besides recreating the features of the ideal ruler in the main streams of Iranian thought, the author has tried to find and introduce the common foundation of these thoughts.

Keywords: political philosophy, divine wisdom, illuminative philosophy, prophethood, eschatology, transcendent philosophy, active intellect, substantial motion.

Relativism in Transcendent Philosophy

Sayyid 'Ali 'Alam al-Huda

By examining the different meanings of "essence" and "quiddity" in the thought of the Muslim philosophers, and by examining the important origins of Mula Sadra'a (transcendent) philosophy, this article will prove that the concepts of essence and quiddity are rejected in his philosophy and are considered as something conventional and as subjective constructs. So this line of thinking is nominalistic in this regard, and therefore is epistemologically a relativistic thought considering the knowledge of reality as something relative. In his philosophy, necessary and absolute knowledge of reality is impossible, and from the methodological viewpoint, this line of thought cannot be classified under rationalistic philosophy. Therefore, this kind of philosophy must rely on methods like intuition or experience.

Keywords: natural universal, essence, quiddity, essentialism, nominalism.

Substance in the Eyes of Lock

Hakkak

The problem and the concept of substance are considered to be one of the basic and perennial subjects in philosophy. It takes an important place within philosophy both epistemologically and ontologically, and most philosophers have discussed it in their works. In his book, *A Survey Concerning Human Understanding*, John Lock, the father of empirical philosophy in England, has discussed the concept of substance and how it is conceptualized in the mind, and through that, he has come to believe in their independent existence. According to him, the concept of substance is originated from a supposition and a rational inference: that the qualities cannot be self-existent. He believes that we have no notion of substance in mind, save a substratum upon which the accidents stand. So the concept of substance is not known through experience at all whether the experience is a sensation or a reflection. Therefore in believing in the concept of substance, Lock has ignored his empirical principles, as he has ignored his empirical method in believing in its objectivity, because he does not believe in any kind of a priori concepts or judgments. In this paper, however, we will offer an empirical understanding of the concept of substance; a point that was not intuited by Lock. In this view, the concept of substance is considered empirical, but believing in its independent existence based on an a priori rational principle is regarded as violating the empirical principle that no a priori principle exists. Thus, on the basis of Lock's empiricism we can believe in the concept of substance but not in its external existence.

Keywords: substance, Lock, experiment, sensation, reflection.

Theoretical Explanation of Kindness and Friendship in the Ethical Thoughts of Ibn Miskwayh

Foruzan Mustafa Muntaghimi

"Kindness" and "friendship" are among the most important ethical and philosophical topics. Kindness, in Miskwayh's ethical thoughts, is a general title referring to the natural capacity of man for making relations and correlations. Kindness, being a subcategory of justice, has a social color and is regarded to be superior to justice. The best standard for evaluation is to get the highest form of actions. Kindness may appear in different forms and levels due to different motives such as pleasure, interest, and goodness, of which the real motive to kindness is goodness. The higher level of kindness is called love, which is specific to God and is a result of divine blessing and inspiration. To gain this level of kindness we have to practice and try to acquire ethical virtues, because love is impossible to be gained without knowledge, and true knowledge is gained through purification and avoidance of passion. Divine love, religious law, and role models to follow are very important elements in developing ethical virtues and improving the social relations.

Keywords: virtue, kindness, friendship, love, knowledge, Ibn Miskwayh.

An Examination and Criticism of Mental Being from Fakhre Razi's Point of View

Muhammad Zabihi
Muhammad Javad Pashai

The representational and truthful nature of mental beings is among the most important philosophical and epistemological issues. Some philosophers have supported the theory of resemblance and some of them have supported the theory of sameness. There is a third attitude which rejects both theories and proposes the theory of relation; the relation between the knower and the known. Fakhre Razi has supported this theory describing it in a disordered fashion in his various books. Our motive for choosing to discuss his views about this subject has been that he was the initiator of this topic independently, and that he possessed a great place among Muslim philosophers. Historically, he is the first one who entered this problem among philosophical issues, and raised it independently under the title of "mental being". Some thinkers, however, regard him among the deniers of mental being, but this survey is to show that Razi was within the supporters of mental being.

Keywords: Razi, mental being, relation, representative phantasm, non-representative phantasm, the sameness of quiddity.

The Concept of Catholic Faith According to the Ideas of Augustine and Tomas Aquinas

Ahmad Riza Miftah

Some catholic theologians have considered the concept of faith as a form of knowledge, having, in other words, a propositional nature, but some others have regarded it as something beyond knowledge and non-propositional. Augustine as an advocate of non-propositional faith has taken faith to be a kind of knowledge in the early period of his intellectual life, and hence considered faith and understanding as correlative concepts. But he finally gave up conceptual cognition and regarded faith as something intrinsic based on divine grace and endowment. Thomas Aquinas, however, supporting propositional faith, regards faith as knowledge, but his approach to faith is not only philosophical; rather he also relies on some non-epistemic elements like hope, kindness, and the notion that faith has to be bestowed [by God].

Keywords: faith, knowledge, understanding, grace, will.

Examining the Authority of single Traditions in the realm of Theology

Mahdi 'Azizan

Traditions are one of the sources used to demonstrate religious teachings. The unanimous traditions (reported repeatedly), and also single ones (reported only by one source) tied with certain contextual evidences, are authentic in jurisprudence, theology, interpreting the Qur'an, history etc. Some of the traditions that are reported only by one source and are valid are used by jurisprudents, as well, in the process of discovering legal norms. But can we use them in issues not related to jurisprudence, such as theological issues or not? After examining the different ideas and views offered about this subject, we will present a proper answer to this question. Some of the results of this survey are as follows: distinguishing between unanimous, valid single, and invalid single traditions; the issuance of tradition and its content; and the method of inference in rational or traditional discussions.

Keywords: authority, single tradition, unanimous tradition, theological issues, the principles of jurisprudence.