



**Views on Reduction**  
**Workshop, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2010**  
**Room T206, Centre for Philosophy of Natural and Social Science, LSE**

**Physicalism and the Part Whole Relation**

**Andreas Huttemann**

Part-whole physicalism is the claim that the physical properties of compound systems are the way they are *in virtue* of the properties of their parts. I will start by analyzing the in-virtue-relation. I will then look at the alleged evidence for part-whole physicalism: successful micro-explanations (the explanation of the behaviour of compound systems in terms of the behaviour of its parts). I argue that an analysis of micro-explanations shows that the part-whole relation (as it is conceptualized in classical or quantum mechanics) fails to provide evidence for part-whole physicalism.

**What, precisely, is meant by 'the Economy'?**

**Margaret Schabas**

In 1959, Gerard Debreu provided a mathematical description of an Economy, *E*, in terms of ordered sets. The ontological commitments are patently obvious. There are consumers with preferences, producers and resources. What his account lacks are any macro phenomena, particularly what are known as the leading indicators, for example, GDP, inflation, unemployment, and the interest rate. There are obvious reasons for this, the absence of power relations, nation states, or even money in the theory of general equilibrium. But clearly to construct 'the Economy' as a macroeconomist, one needs to stitch these indicators together and provide some account as to how they cohere as a single entity. Even then, the commitments to the nation as the obvious unit, or power relations on a greater or smaller scale, are not explicit.

My talk will address the sense in which knowledge of the leading indicators is connected (reducible) to micro foundations, to agents and their psychological states. This joins well with the appeal by John Searle, in his *Construction of Social Reality*, to see social facts as robust products of collective intentionality. I will take the case of the interest rate, argue that it is a relatively robust kind and that there is good reason to treat it in the framework provided by Searle rather than aspire to a full-fledged physicalism.

**Theological Attitudes to Naturalism**

**Keith Ward**

Christianity, like Judaism, Islam, and most Indian traditions, asserts that space-time is dependent upon a non spatio-temporal reality. This dependence is one of causation through intention – God knows and brings about the cosmos, non-temporally, for a reason. This entails that the natural world (space-time) depends on a super-natural reality which is mind-like, not physical or located in space-time. It follows that God is not as such identifiable by any sensory or physical means.

## IS THE IDEA OF GOD COHERENT?

The ideas of existence and causality are not well-enough understood to have clearly definable limits. The ideas of causal closure and determinism conflict with quantum ideas of non-locality (entanglement) and Heisenberg indeterminism. The cosmos seems 'spooky' (Einstein's term) even without God. Examples of non-physical existents: mathematical and moral truths; laws of nature; the multiverse or the quantum vacuum state from which the universe originates; logical possibilities; mental phenomena like feelings, thoughts and intentions. If the logically distinguishable is logically separable, then a non-embodied mind-like reality is logically possible.

## WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD GOD MAKE?

If there is a God, then the cosmos has a purpose. God creates for a reason, which will consist in a set of valued states or processes. Transcendental deduction of value: it is a condition of the possibility of the term 'value' having a meaningful use that there are beings with consciousness, feeling, the ability to envisage future states and the power to choose them. It follows that all values are conscious states or activities, and if anything is a value, then consciousness, happiness, wisdom, freedom, and power are values – any rational agent has a good reason to choose them.

The idea of supreme value is the idea of a greatest possible consciousness, happiness, wisdom, and power. This is the idea of an Anselmian Perfect Being – 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived'. The best reason for a perfect being to create a cosmos would be to instantiate the existence of values that could not otherwise exist (e.g. social life, self-realisation and development, perspectival values, created and realised from finite and embodied viewpoints). Such values would be (a) known by God (b) remembered everlastingly by God (c) could be shared by finite intellects. Thus humans could have purpose, an objective moral goal which could be fulfilled after bodily death.

## HOW COULD GOD BE KNOWN TO EXIST?

God is a postulate that allows for objective truth and intelligibility, beauty, perfection, and happiness – the Ideal of the Good. This postulate is confirmed by experiences of non-sensory objective value in morality, art, the intelligibility of nature, and in contemplative prayer.

It is also confirmed by the 'religious sense' of personal acceptance and transformation (awareness of human life as trapped in hatred, greed, and ignorance, and experience of partial liberation into a life of wisdom, compassion, and bliss). It is disconfirmed by evil and suffering, the experience of ugliness and chaos, and by evaluation of the religious sense as pathological.

With regard to naturalism, God's causal influence is not quantifiable, repeatable, publicly observable, subject to experiment, or subject to general covering laws. Like any form of personal causality, it can be denied ontological existence and causal power. But it would make a real difference, and that difference is confirmable and disconfirmable in personal and historical experience, though not conclusively so, and evaluation is a central part of such experience.