Samantha Berthelette
Self-Deception Without the Desire to Believe

Alfred Mele suggests that garden-variety self-deception occurs when an agent acquires a false belief by treating evidence in a motivationally biased way. But Dana Nelkin criticizes Mele's account for being overly broad. There are some cases, she argues, that we would intuitively judge to not be instances of self-deception even though they satisfy all of Mele's conditions. To remedy this problem, she offers her own account of self-deception: the Desire to Believe account. She argues that in every case of self-deception, the agent must have a desire to believe that *p*. In my paper, I identify a major problem for Nelkin's view. I argue that her account sorts some clear cases of self-deception as not self-deception. Although Nelkin's objection to Mele is that his account is too broad, Nelkin's own account turns out to be too narrow. I then defend Mele's account against Nelkin's objection. Although Nelkin herself might have clear intuitions about her counterexamples, I offer empirical evidence that suggests most people do not. Because her counterexamples fail to incite the sort of intuitions she expects, I argue that she has not given us sufficient reason to reject Mele's account.

Brett Castellanos
Responsibility and Authenticity

Several philosophers have offered *deep-self views* of responsibility. Typically, such a view will prioritize some aspect of an agent's psychology such as his or her desires as particularly important for responsibility. So, when the agent's desires are properly involved in an action, the agent is responsible for that action (unless there is some other excusing or exempting factor). However, these views face two objections that I'll address here: cases involving manipulation and cases involving the shallow self. Although these objections problematic in quite different ways—manipulation cases make changes to the content of the deep self while the latter objection focuses on psychological elements outside the agent's deep self—I'll argue that both problems point toward single solution: authenticity. Instead of focusing on a particular type of psychological state, as constituting the deep self, a successful theory of responsibility will focus on finding those states that are authentic.

Thursday, 11 October at 11:00am
Leacock 927
A light lunch will be served

Department of Philosophy | McGill University | Leacock Building
855 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec
Tel.: (514) 398-6060