The Leuven Philosophy Newsletter is an annual publication dedicated to the men and women, alumni and alumnae, of the Institute of Philosophy.

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Again I would like to extend to all our alumni around the world a word of welcome. This Newsletter, now the 14th of its kind, continues to offer a substantial link between the lives of our alumni and of the community of scholars here at the Institute of Philosophy.

Your alma mater continues to be a place of lively philosophical activity. Besides the usual pursuit of researching and teaching, professors and students have again, during the academic year of 2004-2005, been privileged to welcome many philosophers from around the world. Our Thursday Night Lecture series has, as in the past, provided a forum for us to partake of the scholarship of many eminent thinkers. The Institute has also hosted and contributed to several congresses and conferences throughout the year. You can find details of these in the reports prepared for us by some of our doctoral students, and in the “Institute News” sections toward the end of the Newsletter.

Also in this volume, we trust you will enjoy the various interviews that visitors to the Institute
have taken the time to give for us. Among these is a discussion with our Cardinal Mercier Chair holder of 2004-2005, Richard Kearney. This year too, at the close of an international conference on “Kant and Cosmopolitanism”, Professor Frans De Wachter became emeritus. You can find my laudatio for him within the Newsletter, followed by an interview that he gave especially for the Newsletter some days later.

You may also note that a number of our students have earned their doctorates this year. Details of their research, which continues to add so much vibrancy to the Institute, can be found here, alongside lists of theses defended in the MA and in our new MPhil programme.

It goes without saying that if it had not been for the cooperation of those visiting researchers and scholars who have so greatly contributed so much to our year at the Institute, and who have generously agreed to give interviews and reports, you would not have such a substantial volume now in your hands. The Newsletter is the product of many hours of work for them, and also for our editor, Renée Ryan. She has, as in previous years, been able to count on the help of Ingrid Lombaerts, and this year especially on Niall Keane and John Noras, both of whom have made substantial contributions in terms of interviews. We are all grateful to those students who took the time to carry out interviews, write reports, and take photographs for the Newsletter. We hope that you will enjoy the results of their labour.

As always, we extend this Newsletter to you not only for its academic interest, but also as a gesture of continued appreciation for your own time here. As the life of the Institute of Philosophy goes on, we remember our alumni fondly, and wish for each of you, in your personal as well as in your professional lives, much success. We hope that you enjoy this, our annual letter to you, and we hope too to hear from you – and perhaps even to see you again – before too long.

André Van de Putte,
Dean, Institute of Philosophy
On the 20th of November, 2004, Professor Frans De Wachter became emeritus. He marked this occasion by giving his emeritus lecture at the close of the conference on “Cosmopolitanism: the Kantian Legacy”. (More details of the conference can be found in the “Institute News, 2004-2005” and in the “Interviews” sections in this Newsletter.) Professor André Van de Putte, Dean of the Institute of Philosophy, gave a speech on this occasion, the text of which follows. Dr. Miles Smit, a graduate of the Institute of Philosophy, interviewed Professor De Wachter some days afterwards, and this interview can also be found below.

Dear Vice-Rector, dear Dean, dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends and Family Members of Professor Frans De Wachter, Anne-Marie and Frans,

Frans De Wachter, whom we see today become emeritus in this solemn rite of transition, is one of the solid pillars upon which this Institute and, moreover, this university, is built. He dates back to from before the war. The term emeritus – Frans is a classicist and so undoubtedly knows this – comes from the verb emerere – which like so many words, connotes a complexity of meanings. So it is that the verb refers to the end of military service: an emeritus is a soldier who has completed his term of service. He is, then, a veteran – possibly of many wars, but also a soldier released from the yoke of all his obligations of service. In Cicero one finds the term emeritis stipendiis, which means that when the emeritus has ended his service he no longer receives a salary (You have been warned Frans!). There lies, though, in this word yet another hidden meaning: meritum, which also refers to service, and most often to good service. To become an emeritus might mean then: the conclusion of a period of service, a kind of conduct, an activity that is praiseworthy and that, in being so, justifies a life. Is it perhaps due to these references to the noble fulfillment of a soldier’s term of service that we celebrate this moment when the warrior is released from his yoke with an address in which his daring deeds are remembered?

Let us not shy away from this tradition but rather for a moment recall the small and the great battles that have ennobled Frans’s life. In 1956 he began to study Classical Philology at this university. The Prospopographia Ptolemaica only moderately beguiled him. And then when the
question of writing a doctorate came up, he chose to work with Professor Gerard Verbeke, on the ethics of Aristotle – or rather, on the several ethical theories of Aristotle. For as was then usual, one first had to develop a theory about the evolution of Aristotle’s ethical doctrines, then settle the question of whether the Magna Moralia were authentic and only then finally commenting on their content. Frans defended this doctorate in 1968, having prepared it from 1961 onwards while also working for the monitoraat. Frans still likes to recall this heroic term of service with remarkably good-natured irony. Above all he recalls that the monitoraat was then split along gender-lines: male monitors for the men, female for the women; only clergy-men could give study exercises to the female students. I ask myself, dear Vice-Rector, if we shouldn’t also follow a similar scheme, thus dramatically balancing the genders in our corps of professors.

After the conclusion of his doctorate in 1970, Frans De Wachter succeeded Professor Verbeke in teaching metaphysics at the Faculty of Psychology. 1970 is of course two years after 1968. Marx and his allies were then much discussed in introductory courses, and these discussions did not take place in a milieu of antipathy. Frans was exceptional in the sharpness of his critique here. After all, in 1967 he had spent several months in Poland, which was at that time groaning under the weight of the blessings of the Gomulka régime. His experiences then did nothing to stop his great interest in Poland; nor did they prevent him from continuing to watch over Poland and Eastern Europe in general. In particular he continued to follow developments in Poland and one can certainly still detect in his work the influence of Eastern European intellectuals such as Michnik, Gieremek and Havel. He also took it upon himself to learn Russian. And so by the end of the Gorbachev period, he had begun to have a shot at knowing the lingua franca of all the Eastern block countries. Here he ran out of luck, for the wall fell too soon. And after the fall of the wall Russian was a language that the Czechians, Poles and Hungarians no longer wanted to speak.

His stay in Poland was for him not exceptional. Frans continued to travel, above all to less fashionable tourist destinations, where lesser known languages are spoken. At the end of his philosophical studies he traveled to Italy, together with the only other two lay students in the department, Wilfried Ver Eecke (now in Washington) and Jef De Raedemaeker (who worked for the De Wulf Mansion Centre). On the road, they sought out cheap lodgings, knocking always first on the doors of the pastors of small villages, with whom they then spoke Latin when the same pastors knew neither French nor German.

Another of his great loves is South Africa and in particular South African literature. This interest doesn’t originate in any Flemish nationalist feelings of kinship. He saw in this literature, rather, a medium to gain insight into the African continent. So he owns splendid tales, written in Afrikaans, by Eugène Marais about the cultures of African tribes and he maintains that Marais’s Die siel van die mier [The soul of the ant] was plagiarized by Maeterlinck in his La vie des abeilles [The life of the bees]. One of his great discoveries in South African literature is the movingly naïve collection of psalms in Griekwa, a language that has developed out of Afrikaans, and which is still spoken by a small black minority. His interest in the foreign and exotic has led him also to those Dutch authors
who write about Suriname (Albert Helman), or Dutch India (Multatuli above all, but also others, from Couperus to Jeroen Brouwers). One can hardly say then that his lecture of today comes completely out of the blue.

Let us now return for a moment to the period before 1968. As you all know, this was the period characterized by the tribulations of the split of this university. At a certain moment the assistant organization Lovan drew up a “Wallonians Out!” petition, which assistants of the university were asked to sign. Some of the more convinced members of this organization spent their weekends seeking out those who had not yet signed. And so, Frans De Wachter was given an address in Lier, of a certain lady called Schaerlaekens. The chronicles relate that he cannot have won her over, or at least not concerning that for which he had come. Quite the reverse, for instead it was she who convinced him of her own point of view. That was after all, though, not the end to his trip to Lier, which, as you know, proved to be far more productive – and this in more ways than one. Many years later this discussion would result in a number of important articles by Frans about nationalism, multiculturalism, post-national identity and, as you may today have gathered, cosmopolitanism. The irony of history, moreover, is that the Institute asked Frans to help execute the split. Together with Professor Carl Laga and Professor Mansion, he helped to divide up the books of the De Wulf Mansion Centre. And De Wachter swears that this division did not happen, as is sometimes told in mythical tales, on the basis of odd and even numbers.

When Professor De Smaele became an early emeritus, Frans De Wachter stood in for the masters and bridge-course entitled *Foundational Questions of Moral Philosophy*. There he dealt with extremely diverse themes and very controversial texts, but he always took care to include a classical author. For example: human rights (Kant, Hegel, Lefort); property rights (Kant, Hegel); moral education (Kant, Kohlberg, Gilligan); sexual ethics (Augustine, Kant, Levinas), evil (Kant), cosmopolitanism (Kant). Furthermore, he would regularly include introductions to a number of contemporary authors, such as Walzer, Sandel, Rosanwallon, Nussbaum, as students were required to prepare for lectures by these scholars, or for study days devoted to them.

In 1974, the year in which he became a university teacher, Frans was appointed to give philosophical courses in the faculty that was commonly known as the “sportkot” [Faculty of Sport], a faculty that has since then often changed its name and nowadays is known by an abbreviation hinting at great industry, *Faber*. He did not consider this appointment any secondary assignment. On the contrary, he made it the occasion to develop a third field of research next in the Faculty of Letters and later too to the students of philosophy. Over the years that followed, he was to develop this course into a well-balanced and authoritative overview. In this course, contrary to what one might expect, Kant rather than Aristotle occupied the central place. But that did not mean that no attention was given to new developments or shifts in interest. He spoke there about Rawls and Habermas and devoted an entirely new section to human rights, to which too he has devoted a number of publications that for me are still some of the best ever published on the subject. When Professor Urbain Dhondt became emeritus, Frans De Wachter stood in for the masters and bridge-course entitled *Foundational Questions of Moral Philosophy*. There he dealt with extremely diverse themes and very controversial texts, but he always took care to include a classical author. For example: human rights (Kant, Hegel, Lefort); property rights (Kant, Hegel); moral education (Kant, Kohlberg, Gilligan); sexual ethics (Augustine, Kant, Levinas), evil (Kant), cosmopolitanism (Kant). Furthermore, he would regularly include introductions to a number of contemporary authors, such as Walzer, Sandel, Rosanwallon, Nussbaum, as students were required to prepare for lectures by these scholars, or for study days devoted to them.

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to nationalism, cosmopolitanism, etc., and into ethics and human rights. And so Frans was in the 1980s, together with Hans Lenk, a member of the board of the *Philosophical Society for the Study of Sport*. His publications in this domain, above all in the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, dealt with themes such as the anthropological and social meaning of terms such as performance, competence, fairness and, most importantly, the relations between game rules and moral rules. The latter was then a subject much discussed. Figures no less than Rawls and Searle had published about it. Frans’s publication about this, *Spielregeln und ethische Problematic*, was endorsed by K.O. Apel and used in his *Diskurs und Verantwortung [Discourse and Responsibility]*.

Anyone who has been keeping track of all this might well ask just how many students Frans has taught. Major introductory courses at the Faculty of Psychology, Physical Education and Humanities: he always gave these lectures himself. Even when he had obligations that he couldn’t get out of, he himself made up for any classes missed. As I have already said, he dates back to before the war. So, many courses entailed a great number of oral exams. In those heroic times this meant more than 1000 exams per session. From eight o’clock in the morning until at least six in the evening, with a quarter of an hour break for a sandwich, Saturday included – sometimes, he has told me, in rooms without any daylight. In spite of this ordeal, his grades always reflected a well-balanced judgment. He was neither excessively harsh nor unnecessarily lenient. Seldom did he have to account for any deviations. Once, however, he observed with concern the approach of a discussion of the grades of a young woman who had an average of 15 or more but to whom Frans had given a 7.

When the moment arrived, the then chairman Professor Huygelier reported that this student was a special case since she had given birth to a child shortly after the exam with Professor De Wachter. Frans had noticed nothing. (It’s lucky that you became a philosopher Frans. What would have happened had you become a gynecologist!?)

Having heard me expound on Frans’s research and teaching activities in these broad strokes, you might well expect me to begin my *peroratio*. But this I will not do. Frans De Wachter is one of those professors – at the Institute we are happily still rich in these – who without counting or tallying, without nagging or complaining, is always prepared to put himself out for anything important for the Institute, whether or not it would be detrimental to him personally or to his career. During the accreditation of the Institute a few days ago, all the members of the committee spoke with great amazement of the great loyalty and commitment that prevails here and that makes so much possible, and they asked at the same time if it would be possible for this same spirit to maintain itself in a changing academic order. In every instance, this loyalty and commitment could in Frans not be more self-evident.

For many years he was the academic responsible for the library, following Professor Dhondt who had become president. He commissioned the construction of a new library. Moreover, it was necessary to establish a new numbering system, a thematic system and no longer a system that registered books according to a chronological catalogue of entry of the book into the library collection. I’ll spare you the details, but Frans found with this project that he had committed one of the greatest blunders of his career. He had completely overlooked the
turn of the century so that the numbering of the books went haywire! I must tell you though that I have never experienced this blunder as a problem, nor have I found it a nuisance. What I do know is that our library makes an extraordinary contribution to our Institute, and that this would certainly not have been the case without the efforts of Frans De Wachter.

After Professor Dhondt passed to emeritus status, Professor De Wachter also became the chairman of the Centre for Ethics and Political Philosophy. He managed this calmly, with great openness, as always neither pushing himself to the fore nor letting everything revolve around himself, and in this way he would invite speakers of diverse ilk to the Wednesday evening lectures. One could always call on Frans if something tactful and diplomatic needed to be done, or whenever there were delicate matters to be taken care of. One finds thus several chairmanships of teacher evaluation commissions in his curriculum and from 1990 until 2001 he was a member of the ZAP commission of our university, a commission that everyone always hopes will meet as little as possible.

Dear Frans, you are now emeritus. You have brought your service to an end and now you can leave the ranks. An emeritus seems a bit like a beast of burden, released from the yoke, one who has been unharnessed and now can walk around freely, in this sense even returning to what he had been, before being put into the harness. Anne-Marie was honoured just a week ago in her faculty. She has decided to follow you into your new state. You are now both unharnessed, although in a family context naturally this remains very relative. As a matter of fact, this brings to mind that she, in her word of thanks during the celebration of her own emeritus status, tried to persuade the women in the hall that it is possible as a woman and a mother to have a successful career in science. But she did add that for this they would do well to find someone like Frans De Wachter. It is not for me, Frans, to speak about that aspect of your life. But such testimony, from no doubt an unprejudiced witness, makes it clear that you here also fulfill your service most eminently: “fulfill” and not “have fulfilled”, because for this there is no emeritus status.

Frans (and, of course, Anne-Marie).

The Institute owes you many thanks for everything that you have done and what I have tried to sketch for you in colors all too poor. We are indebted to you not only for what you have done but also for the way in which you have done it; a way that reveals your deeper characteristics and makes every meeting with you a pleasure. Thank you for your peaceful friendliness, your openness, your tactfulness but also, and perhaps above all, your subtle humor and irony, which give a relativising and light touch to your bearing and which certainly have contributed to the preservation of the spirit of solidarity at this Institute. When soldiers have fulfilled their service often they receive a medal. At the university this is not usually the case. We can only give you a modest gift: to Anne-Marie, as is fitting, flowers, and to you a travel-cheque. We certainly expect a postcard, but above all we expect that we will still see you here regularly and also we expect from you still a little bit of work and writing. Because as today you have shown us again, you still have quite a bit to say.
INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR FRANS DE WACHTER

Professor De Wachter, it is a great pleasure to interview you. Could we perhaps begin talking about the influences on your academic career? Some of those might be early academic interests and some of those might be generational, or else historically determined. You are, for instance, one of the last professors of a generation born before the war. Has this perhaps had philosophical consequences or resonances?

It’s not so much the fact that I was born before the war that has had philosophical resonances, but that I was old enough to still have memories of the war. Surely this has influenced my life. Throughout all my life I have been haunted by the war. Nobody knows this really; I have never spoken about the war in my classes, except in one class on evil. I was born in 1939. My father was in a German camp because he was an instructor for Belgian recruits. In 1939, after the invasion of Poland, there was mobilization. The recruits who had not yet learned to shoot, so to speak, were evacuated to France to be instructed in a safe place. But then the Vichy régime came. France collaborated with Germany, and so all the soldiers, my father included, were in a kind of camp in Toulouse. He came back later, two years before the end of the war. That I don’t remember, but the first memory of my life — can you imagine?! — is of the German soldiers retreating. We lived on the main road from Mechelen to Limburg. My very first memory is of a wounded guy with bandages on his head. He rang at our door asking for some water. My mother gave him some water and I got a piece of chocolate from him. That’s the very first memory of my life.

Was that a German soldier?

That was a German soldier. A few days later there was the big feast, Americans came, and the tanks and the beautiful oranges! I still remember the feast in my village! And this has had the following importance: I have always seen America as the country of freedom, even in my severest Marxist periods, so to speak, in the 1970s, immediately after 1968. Even later when I started teaching classes on human rights, I started by telling my students about the American War of Independence, about the Declaration of Virginia, the Bill of Rights, and so on. I was reading Thomas Payne instead of Burke, and so that has had a lot of influence on me. Americans think that Europeans are
not grateful. And yes, of course we criticize, sometimes politically especially, but this sense of gratitude is very deep: it’s stronger than anything else we might say about America.

And then what influenced me also was that in 1944, after the Americans were there, the Germans started shooting their V1s from somewhere from the Eiffel region in Germany to Antwerp. They passed right over our heads, and in those moments we were always in the cellar, because just in front of our house were the American artillery trying to shoot down the V1s before they reached the towns. I still remember the sound of a V1 being hit and then the motor stopping and then it coming down on our village. Some guys in our village were killed by those V1s. We sacrificed ourselves, so to speak, for the people of Antwerp. So I had this image very early of the Americans fighting the V1s, and then also, I grew up with this intense hatred of Nazism. That’s because it was so close to us – it was really at our door. Aachen is only an hour away by car – sometimes I drive to Aachen to go to a bookstore there, and I think, how could this have happened in such an enlightened culture?

This explains, although in a negative way, why I turned from Aristotle to Kant and to problems of fundamental rights and things like that. I started Philosophy with Aristotle. I did my doctorate on the influence of non-philosophical conceptions on the ethics of Aristotle. It was quite natural that I did a topic in Greek Philosophy, since I had first studied Latin and Greek. But I was never happy in Aristotle. I couldn’t identify with him. Only afterwards did I discover the reason why. When I finally discovered Kant, it was as if I had come home again. There were two reasons for this. First, Aristotle was a pagan, in that he had a kind of aesthetic conception of ethics: that one was to become a fulfilled human being. I never cared about being fulfilled; I’ve never cared about all those excellent qualities of character. And one of the reasons maybe is that one of the heroes of my youth was Father Damian. (He lived in the village where I live now.) I couldn’t explain Damian by Aristotelian categories, because Damian didn’t care for himself. He didn’t care for his fulfilment. He cut down, so to speak, his own possibilities – even his moral possibilities because where he ended up was in a kind of moral jungle. There was a moral degradedness among the lepers that he found and lived with, but he didn’t care.

And the second reason is, although I know it’s not too popular to say this, Aristotle has too much of a hermeneutic contextualist narrative. It’s based on an ethos of being an Athenian citizen, and my idea was always that to live morally is to live responsibly. That means that we do things not just because we are Greek, or because we are what we are, or live in the country where we live, but because there are principles that tell us that something is good or that it is not good. This means some kind of universalist, what they call technically “foundationalist” outlook. Ethical theories after the war in Europe were either Thomistic or non-Thomistic natural right theories, or Kantian theories, or utilitarian theories, or existentialist theories. And those were all very much universalistic. Even Sartre has an extremely universalist ethics – for him because we are just freedom, not dictated by any particularity. After the war, our ethics was foundationalist because we needed some supra-historical principles for ethics, so as not to fall again into that extreme particularism that Nazism was. I think the trauma of the war had to be over before philosophers could again...
turn to some kinds of contextualist narrative or a hermeneutical ethics. That happened in the 1980s with people like Williams or MacIntyre. Their voice was heard only at that period in the 1980s in Europe because at that time there came a new generation that had not lived through the war, and whose primary goal was not to escape from particularistic biases. These later thinkers realized that maybe universalism had its own problems.

You talked about the enormous impact that World War II had but in the remarks you made you talked of avoiding the particularism of Nazism. But in historical terms there was also another extreme form of political or social reality in the form of communism. It had a universalist pretense. I'm wondering whether there was a reaction against that, or certainly, was there a reaction to its demise?

That's another story. Professor Van de Putte mentioned in his speech the influence of 1968. I started to teach in 1970 and this was the period when Marxism was very much present amongst the students. I taught Metaphysics to BA psychology students. This was rather tough because during the class people would stand up and say “professor, you say this and that, but Lenin says…!” And they were quoting. And so it was quite tough at the time.

But I was married in 1967 and my wife happened to have very good friends in Poland. They were Polish people who had been studying Theology and for our honeymoon we went for nearly three months to Poland, to visit all these people. There we met the intellectual circles and the opposition circles also, of Zmak, in Warsaw. We came there with a rather positive prejudice, and in comparison with Czechoslovakia, Poland had a much nicer atmosphere. The bureaucracy was much less, but we discovered that there was real censorship for universities and that there was real intimidation, even though life went quite smoothly in that period because then there was a lot of Western investment – the economical crisis came later.

So I was ambiguous about the whole thing and as I said I had to give a class in 1970, which had been given before me by Professor Verbeke, the great Professor Verbeke, who was a specialist in antiquity. To my amazement, in his textbook there was no criticism of Marx! When I then rewrote Verbeke's textbook I made some additions with criticism. I still remember the proto-totalitarian tendencies in Marx. Later I knew so much of real Marxism in Poland, and when we returned to Leuven after our time there I became a very convinced anti-Marxist, although some of the things Marx writes are still very actual, beautiful things. But then those people of Zmak became the free people's union, the solidarity of people, and in the beginning of the 1980s there was the beginning of the martial law and some of those people went to prison. My wife went several times alone, under the cover of the academy, to visit those people, to bring them food and so forth, at the very beginning of the 1980s. They were hard times. It was really even a dangerous atmosphere at times. So that was the complete end of my love for Marxism.

I think that finally my problems with Marxism led me to become what finally every philosopher should be: a liberal. We in Europe have seen sometimes the danger, let’s say, of too much community. That’s also what I said in my last lecture: that we should not belong to one type of belonging. Belonging to groups is very important socially speaking, but we have seen the danger of too much community, with Nazism and Communism. That’s the reason, I think, why in my classes I have always taken up
anti-communitarian positions. But at the same time I told my students: look out because the problem of communitarianism and liberalism is an American problem. I can understand this very well in the United States, because there the problem is not that there is too much community but that there is too much individualism. When I read the texts of Amitai Etzioni for instance, I can very well understand that this kind of communitarianism, this kind of small-scale communitarianism, is important for a society. But when we develop that further into a kind of national community, like Michael Sandel sometimes does, I get scared because we have seen what that means in Europe. I can understand that Americans want more communitarianism in their society, but we have too much of it. I think that’s why from a kind of existential background I have become a kind of Kantian liberal.

The word “liberal” has so many different and even opposite connotations. In North America it has inverted almost completely. Whereas in Canada it once meant libertarian, in favour of free trade and laissez-faire, and whereas in America JFK, who was the consummate liberal, meant tax-cuts and a robust anti-communism, it now means leftist.

It’s very ambiguous of course. But for me liberalism only has the Kantian meaning, of the dignity of the people. Finally it’s about there being an individual. For me it has also a kind of religious context, what they call a kind of theology of the name. God knows only my name. God is the only one who relates to me just by my name, perhaps more or less like a father relates to his children. Whether they succeed in life or not, whatever their social world is, they are there by their name and God relates to them purely as individuals. That’s the final dignity of people. Normally we cannot do that. We are linked to people always in relation to social problems. Sartre’s book before the war, in 1938, La Nausée, is about the complete loser. It’s about a boy without any social importance. He’s nothing, socially speaking; he just succeeds in being an individual. That’s what human rights are about. Every human being is a being is an abstraction from anything else. This is its dignity. This is my philosophy of human rights, but I agree that there is some religious context behind this, because to be honest, in human relations you can never do that: you would have to be God.

A couple of things occurred to me from what you’ve asserted. On the one hand there’s a question of seeking a foundationalism in ethics for dignity. On the other hand it seems that crucial to a dignity that you describe is a category of God’s unconditional love for us. Is there any danger if an ethicist tries to categorize or appropriate as a foundation an unconditional love which comes from or which we owe to God? — because it seems like the communitarians’ concerns are wrapped up in that all over again.

That’s a good question. I think there has been an evolution in my life. I have been a foundationalist in the way that you describe it. I am not completely any more and the reason is that I’ve been a rationalist too. I thought that God was, so to speak, the key or the basis or the foundation that was really supporting our answers, and then I realized that this is onto-theology, that I need God to make something my own plans. When I need God for my own plans then he is not God any more. Then he is not transcendence any more. I have learned from some of my colleagues here at the Institute, from De Dijn and Visker and Isseling, that the problem of transcendence is essential. I’ve learned this also from Levinas, namely, if God means something for
Ethics then it’s not as a rational foundation, but it’s more that he’s disturbing my plans — even my moral plans. The ethics of the New Testament, that the enemy should be forgiven and the poor should be elevated, and so on, is so much against human rationality, even moral rationality, that God comes in more in those breaches of existence. Love can never be fulfilled, guilt can never be compensated. There is so much suffering and commitment that has never been known. So that can never make human sense. It’s more in those experiences of non-fulfillment that God comes in for me. And so in that sense I feel that I am not foundational.

Interviewed by Dr. Miles Smit

Restored (Spring 2005) Meunier Relief
Professor Richard Kearney held the Cardinal Mercier Chair for the academic year of 2004-2005, visiting the Institute of Philosophy from the 1st until the 3rd of March. (Details of his lectures can be found in the section of “Institute News, 2004-2005” at the end of this Newsletter.) Professor André Van de Putte, Dean of the Institute of Philosophy, introduced Professor Kearney’s lecture with the following address. The Dean would like to express his thanks to Professor William Desmond for helping in the preparation of this introduction. An interview with Professor Kearney, held while he visited the Institute, follows this address.

Colleagues, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen:
It is my pleasure to introduce Richard Kearney as the holder of the Mercier Chair for 2005. Professor Kearney comes to us from Boston College, but his attachments are as much to this side of the Atlantic as to the other. He is as much a citizen of Dublin and Paris as he is of Boston. His education was in Ireland, and in Paris where he worked on his doctorate with Paul Ricoeur and Emmanuel Levinas, and his intimacy with contemporary French thought has not diminished since his student days. Much of his academic life to date was in Ireland, where he was involved in many aspects of its cultural life – literary, artistic, and also cinematic. In recent years he has made a move to Boston College, where he is now the Charles B. Seelig Chair of philosophy.

He is a person of many accomplishments, and this is reflected in the many-sidedness of his work which, in a broad sense, could be described as operating at the point of inter-section of culture and philosophy. He is a writer of many parts, and not all of them are confined to the philosophical, understood in a more narrow professorial definition. Of course, he has written many works of philosophical commentary bearing on themes and thinkers in contemporary continental philosophy. These include, for instance, Modern Movements in European Philosophy (1987). In more recent years he has tried to speak philosophically more in his own voice, the fruits of which we see in his most recent trilogy entitled Philosophy at the Limit. The books comprising this trilogy are: On Stories (2001), Strangers, Gods and Monsters (2002), and The God Who May Be (2002).

Over the years also he has tried to engage living philosophers in real dialogue, and some of his work on this score was instrumental in introducing many readers in the English-speaking world to some of the major figures in contemporary continental thought. I refer to Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers (1984), where among his interlocutors were figures like Derrida, Marcuse, Ricoeur, and Levinas, someone who was then much less well-known in the English speaking philosophical world. This dialogical engagement continues, and a volume will shortly appear, gathering up many of these early dialogues, in addition to many that have been conducted since then. In these dialogues, Kearney is direct and energetic in his questioning. He also draws out answers that often exceed and freshly illuminate the written work of his partners in conversation.
One might say that a strong desire to communicate distinguishes his work. Thus, in addition to these scholarly and philosophical works, he has had a long engagement as a cultural commentator and critic, often in relation to Irish issues, but often too with concerns with a more cosmopolitan accent. For many years he edited an influential cultural journal in Ireland, called The Crane Bag and in it one can find contributions from some of the most significant names in contemporary Irish culture. But he is more than a commentator or critic or editor, for he has published a volume of poetry, and to date two novels, and I believe a third novel is in the works.

And last but not least, relative to his cultural engagements, he has had an abiding fascination with film. He has been very much involved with film in Ireland, both in fostering the study of film, and playing an active role in supporting its creation. More recently, he has dedicated work to the pedagogic use of video as a means of bringing thinkers into dialogue across continents. He has produced video dialogues with important contemporary thinkers from many places around the world. His work in this direction was recently rewarded with a significant grant awarded by the European Union.

As a writer working on the intersection of philosophy and culture, the central importance of imagination has always been evident in his work, and especially in its narrative form. This is indeed reflected in the overall guiding concerns of his lectures and seminars with us here, where narrative constitutes the overall organizing frame of his presentations. His concern with imagination is bound up with his reflections on possibility — and indeed his doctoral work was published as Poétique du Possible — a concern with possibility that continues to this day.

It would take too long to enumerate the many books he has written or edited, but an important book for defining his concerns was The Wake of Imagination (1988), in which he explores different understandings of imagination from archaic times to postmodern times, and in different traditions, both religious and philosophical. Other significant contributions developing these themes further are to be found in subsequent books, such as Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Postmodern, (1991, and 1998), and Poetics of Modernity: Toward a Hermeneutic Imagination (1995).

One might speak of his concerns in these works as engaged with hermeneutic imagination and narrative in many different forms: in the aesthetic, in the political, in the ethical, and finally in the religious. In his earlier writings, the aesthetic and the political were perhaps more often to the fore, though it is not that the ethical and the religious were not present. But in time the latter have also tended to become more explicit. We see, for instance, something of a shift from poetics to ethics in these books just mentioned, the Poetics of Imagining and the Poetics of Modernity. The ethical is not easy to make seamlessly coherent with the poetic, yet Kearney wants an understanding of the hermeneutic
imagination which embraces both the poetic and the ethical. While poetic imagination might seem non-controversial, the ethical power of the image is often more complex and controversial. And yet there is no escaping the ethical power of the poetic image. The uses of the imagination are themselves, overtly or covertly, modes of being ethical. The narrative imagination has to be understood as embracing both the poetic and the ethical.

Thus, for instance, in his epilogue to his *Poetics of Imagining* Kearney returns to a theme that also was developed in a chapter in *Poetics of Modernity* (1995), entitled “The Narrative Imagination: Between Poetics and Ethics.” As he puts it: “When the story is over we re-enter our life worlds transformed, however imperceptibly. The crucial ethical import of this return journey from narrative to action is the central theme of . . . ‘Narrative Imagination’”. This statement, one might say, could be taken as a central clue for much of Richard Kearney’s work. Sometimes the voice of Kearney is marked by an unmistakably Ricoeurian ring, but more and more he is speaking in his own voice.

What then, in sum, is the ethical potential of the narrative imagination? Kearney here offers three main suggestions: first, the testimonial capacity to bear witness to a forgotten past; second, the empathic capacity to identify with those different to us (victims and exemplars alike); third, the critical-utopian capacity to challenge official stories with unofficial or dissenting stories that open up alternative ways of being. But as he also wisely reminds us, narrative imagination is not always on the side of the angels. His most recently trilogy once more reflects and amplifies these central considerations. His engaging essay *On Stories* (translated into Dutch, by the way) takes up the argument for the indispensability of the narrative and the story, even in an age of the postmodern where the book seems to have ceded pre-eminence to the video image. Many of the chapters of *Strangers, Gods and Monsters* are written on the interface of philosophy and culture, and the book includes reflections on film (for example, the trilogy of films on “The Alien”), terrorism, the sublime and evil, terror and the significance of 9/11.

While aesthetic and ethical-political considerations continue to figure in his work, the role of the religious has become more accentuated. This is not new, in that, going as far back as the time of his doctoral dissertation, there is a discussion in *Poétique du Possible* which tries to address what Kearney calls the “God of the possible.” His book *The God Who May Be* is a thought-provoking and engaging effort to articulate more fully what might be meant by such a “God of the possible.” This book has received considerable attention since its appearance, both for its inherent excellences, and for its illuminating engagement with themes that have become newly of importance in the turn to religion of some recent continental philosophy.

We look forward to the opening Mercier lecture tonight, and the lecture and seminars to follow in the coming days, for these presentations concentrate Kearney’s overall preoccupations very intensively. The guiding thread throughout will be the theme of narrative. Tomorrow at 6 p.m. his second lecture will be entitled “Narrating Terror: Philosophy after 9/11.” On Thursday and Friday he will offer two seminars entitled respectively, “Narrating Pain: Trauma and Catharsis,” and “Narrating the Sacred: A Poetics of Epiphany?” But tonight his inaugural lecture is entitled “Narrative Desire: From Plato’s *Symposium* to *The Song of Songs.*”

Please join me in warmly welcoming to Leuven Professor Richard Kearney.
PHILOSOPHY AT THE LIMITS OF REASON ALONE:
A Group Interview With Professor Richard Kearney

While visiting the Institute of Philosophy, Professor Kearney kindly took the time to give an interview for the Newsletter. The interview took the form of a conversation between Professor Kearney and several of our doctoral students, Niall Keane, Francisco Lombo de Leon, Michael Funk Deckard and Sonja Zuba. One of our alumni, Dr. James McGuirk, also participated.

JAMES McGuirk: First of all, Professor Kearney, I’d like to start by welcoming you to Leuven. By way of getting the ball rolling, perhaps you could tell us a little bit about your own current philosophical project.

Well, my current project is an attempt to articulate a “philosophy at the limit”, which is the overall title of my recent trilogy. The three books are attempts to say the unsayable, think the unthinkable, and imagine the unimaginable. In the case of The God Who May Be (2001) it is the question of God, in the case of On Stories (2002), it is the question of the unnarrated trauma, which is something so painful and intolerable that it is blocked from memory, and hence we deploy stories in order to try to unlock and unblock those repressed memories and to find some healing. Basically I deal with how repressed narratives need to be retrieved and retold, be it in relation to stories of empire, i.e., conquerer stories, and then on to various other case histories of the survivors of trauma. I also talk about literature as a form of narrativity that deals with some secret, gap or enigma in an author’s life which needs to be worked out through fiction. In The God Who May Be I am trying to zoom in on one limit experience of the unsayable, namely, what is called the divine. In Strangers, Gods and Monsters (2002), there is a more pluralist approach to the unsayable in terms of the question of the limit experience of good and evil. I deal specifically with the question of good and evil in relation to strangers and monsters. This book attempts to amplify the phenomenology of the sacred so as to cover non-monotheistic religions, something I believe is vitally important for the hermeneutics of dialogue and which I call “diacritical hermeneutics”. With this diacritical hermeneutics I am trying to chart a middle course between
apophatic and kataphatic extremes: between, on the one hand, the cult of silence – sublime speechlessness, for example – which can lead to paralysis, and, on the other, the standard metaphysical definitions of God which often say too much. This latter temptation is what William Desmond calls “excessive speech”, in which everything must be immediately converted into talk, categories, substances and so on. So, if the latter kataphatic tradition leads to excessive speech – Marion’s “conceptual idolatry” – the other apophatic tendency leads to aphasia and, all too often, to inaction. Basically I’m trying to find a middle way through the two poles.

Francisco Lombo de Leon: Could you say a little bit more about your own formation and how you may have moved beyond your earlier position?

Curiously enough, when I was working with Ricoeur in Paris in the seventies, he thought that I was much too influenced by Levinas, Derrida, and of course, Heidegger. So we used to have great dialogues on these grounds. Ricoeur was very much an Aristotelian: he was always defending metaphysics against the charges of Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida, who said that metaphysics was totalizing and onto-theological. Hence, my thesis under Ricoeur, entitled Poétique du Possible, was actually a work which Ricoeur felt was not very loyal to his own hermeneutic path. He respected it very much and we had good conversations about it, but it was a conversation between two voices coming from very different perspectives in that I worked as much with Levinas and Derrida as I did with Ricoeur.

Nowadays, in fact, I would say that I am closer to Ricoeur than to any other philosopher that I know. But I’m not a “disciple” of Ricoeur’s, so to speak. One of the reasons for this is that his whole hermeneutic philosophy is about a fecund conflict of interpretations and he has a huge suspicion of a hermeneutics of closure. Hermeneutics, as Ricoeur kept reminding us, is itself the impossibility of closure, an infinite openness to new textual readings. Thus, because of Ricoeur’s own hermeneutics it was impossible for him ever to have a school as such, and because of this there are no “Ricoeurians” around. He taught his students to think for themselves. In addition, I was always more interdisciplinary than Ricoeur; I would introduce literature, politics, and theology into philosophy more readily than he would. For him Derrida was always too literary and Levinas was always too religious. Unlike Ricoeur, I never minded crossing borders and transgressing boundaries.

However, my inspiration for diacritical hermeneutics, as I try to develop it in Strangers, Gods and Monsters and The God Who May Be, did come largely from Ricoeur, and also from Gadamer’s hermeneutic tradition, and by implication from the Socratic practice of dialegein. They were my mentors in that they emphasized the Platonic dialogue as a model for philosophy, as that space where different points of view work their way towards a new point of view. Therefore, there is always a surplus of meaning (un surcroît du sens) which points towards something still to come in the text. But I would also say that my experience of growing up in Ireland between two cultures, two religions and two languages, two poles of North and South, was also very formative for me. I realized that if I am without dialogue, then I am somehow forced to align oneself with one side against another. So for reasons of personal history too, I was trying to open up a third way.

Michael Funk Deckard: You have tried in your work to bring together Irish philosophy, literature, and ethics.
One particular passage that you have used is taken from the work of James Joyce, which you quoted to us in your lecture the other night. It is taken from the very long hallucinogenic Circe chapter in Ulysses when Stephen’s cap speaks to him. The cap says, “Woman’s Reason. Jewgreek is Greekjew. Extremes meet. Death is the highest form of life. Bah!” In taking your impetus from Levinas and Derrida, is Joyce’s passage here just a humourous tool as found in its original context or can it be used as the basis for a deconstructive ethics? If you support the latter, what is the content of such an ethics?

Neither Derrida who cites that line in his essay on Levinas (Violence and Metaphysics), nor Levinas himself, would adhere to the sentiment expressed in that phrase. I don’t think Levinas even knew about Joyce’s phrase until he read it in Derrida, but the substance of it, the content of it, is very operative in Derrida and also in my own work, at a much more modest level of course. Levinas is one of the main contemporary thinkers to put forward the idea that there is an Abrahamic path of exodus, a path traversing the desert and moving towards the infinite, in contrast to the Odyssean path of circumnavigation which leaves from itself and returns to itself, which he identifies as Greek ontology and totality. Thus, Levinas sets up a pretty neat opposition, and yet as Derrida points out, the very process of writing Totality and Infinity, as a working through of Western metaphysics, means that he cannot avoid ontology and phenomenology, which is the Greek language of presence and totality.

I wanted to restore the robustness of the two voices of Jew and Greek instead of separating them out as Levinas tried to do. I was trying to find a way between Derrida’s complete mixing and collapsing of the two by using the language of mutual contamination, and Levinas’s attempt to keep the two separate. The result of this is a diacritical hermeneutics where there is a mutual openness of Jew to Greek and Greek to Jew. I like that about Joyce. Yet I think it’s not just to be found in Stephen’s cap, but also in Molly who takes up where Stephen’s cap leaves off, in that she represents woman’s reason where Greekjew and Jewgreek come together, the Jew being Bloom and the Greek being Stephen. Hence, there is a coming together of both, but not in such a way that there is a co-mingling or collapsing of the two into each other. It is more a question (as the Calcedonian formula goes) of a crossing-over or community without total separation or without total confusion. One consequence of this is, I think, an openness to inter-religious dialogue with non-western discourses and wisdom traditions. In recent years, I have found it personally and academically fruitful to try to expose myself to the narratives of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, and to Buddhism and Taoism. I know all too little about these wisdom traditions, but I am interested in exploring possibilities of “other voices”, apart from the Jew and the Greek, of opening further the space between.

Sonja Zuba: You used the term “between” just now. Do you have any specific philosophers in mind when you use it? Do you perhaps have William Desmond in mind? If so, where do you differ from William Desmond?

Well, I am very indebted to my friend and compatriot, William Desmond, for his intriguing notions of metasxu and metaxology. But I have also borrowed this idea of a middle or medial way from Plato, Aristotle and Ricoeur, and from the Buddha, and from Martin Buber. It has a long and noble lineage. The “diacritical method” I outline in Strangers, Gods and Monsters also plays on the diagnostic connotations of the term, diacrinein, which means to distinguish, discriminate, discern the juste milieu between
extremes. Hence the more technical usage today in grammar of diacritical signs or marks that distinguish different sounds or values of the same letter – for example, diaeresis, cedilla or accents like circumflex or acute etc (ê é è ù à). These tiny and almost imperceptible inflections of sound or sight, of hearing or reading, can make a significant difference in sense. French captures this well when it uses the same verb, entendre, for both acts of reception (to hear and to understand). But the term diacrinein also has a rarer and older sense of medical diagnosis. And this diagnostic and therapeutic sense is one which interests me greatly, as I agree with Wittgenstein that critical philosophy – as a practice of attentive, vigilant, careful discernment – can also be a form of healing.

While William Desmond and I agree fundamentally on the metaxological role of the “between”, there is one point, perhaps, at which I felt William was more Hegelian than I would have been; though in his recent publications he has most definitely moved beyond the Hegelian model, just as Ricoeur at one point moved beyond Hegel as well. And it is here that we realize that “the middle” is not just a synthesis of opposites which leads to closure or totalisation. Here the middle actually opens out onto a new path by reintroducing the metaxu of Socrates and Plato. Now if we understand this to be a diacritical method, a way of accenting differences, of placing a stress or inflection upon this or that, then we can see that discernment is what is called for. Hegel to me is not a genuine call for discernment. The mediating middle of Hegel leads to a final synthesis that ends in absolute consciousness, whereas diacritical hermeneutics would want to keep that constantly open to the further discernment of Spirit such that you never actually reach the end, so that you are always coming back and asking new questions and every concept becomes a sign which calls for a new concept. There is a hermeneutical way of rereading Plato’s metaxu, as Desmond suggests, which rescues him from the charge of onto-theology and totalizing presence. I owe a lot to William on this score. But whereas I tend to draw more from contemporary continental philosophy – phenomenology and hermeneutics in particular – William seems to me to be more indebted to great classic thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel. In other words, he would be more a defender of “metaphysics”, while I have always been more an iconoclast of metaphysics. However, I feel William’s work of late is moving more and more beyond metaphysics, whilst I, on the other hand, am moving more and more back to metaphysics. So perhaps we’ll meet somewhere in the middle!

NIALL KEANE: You have been clearly inspired by Heidegger’s well-known critique of onto-theology in the Western philosophical tradition, and you seem to follow his lead, to some extent at least, by addressing the issue of a possible God in a post-metaphysical sense. However, doesn’t one run the risk, as Heidegger most certainly did, of ignoring the complexity and profundity already to be found in traditional or standard metaphysics, by calling for a diacritical or hermeneutical metaphysics?

Onto-theology is a caricature or summary selection of these reified conceptual moments which have forgotten the fundamental dimension of things – Being, God, Eschaton, etc. What one means by a hermeneutic retrieval that comes after metaphysics – that is, post-Platonism, post-Aristotelianism, post-Cartesianism, post-Hegelianism – does not amount to saying one is post-Plato, post-Aristotle, post-Descartes,

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1 See the chapter, “Should We Renounce Hegel?” in Time and Narrative, vol. 3.
It is a question of trying to retrieve what has very often been occluded in the texts themselves. When Heidegger actually reads Aristotle – the source of his hermeneutics of facticity being the Rhetoric, the Ethics, and the Poetics of Aristotle – he is more interested in opening up new dimensions of Aristotle, the originary questions, which were very often covered over for those of us schooled in Scholasticism. That is how I would qualify what I mean by the “God after metaphysics”, or what I prefer to call an eschatological God. This God is already inscribed in the great metaphysical thinkers and texts, but there has been a tendency to privilege certain concepts at the expense of others, for instance actuality over possibility, speech over writing, perhaps being over becoming or non-being. We could go through a series of examples. The one that I was concerned with retrieving in The God Who May Be, and perhaps to some extent reversing, was the priority of the actual over the possible. The point was not to deny that there are aspects of actuality within the divine but to ask whether there are aspects of dunamis also within the divine. It is simply a question of de-reifying concepts and re-imagining concepts, not of inventing something absolutely new, for everything has always already been said. There is ultimately a necessary iconoclastic, self-transfiguring motivation within philosophical and religious thought, and this is clearly evident in that all the great thinkers are perpetually starting all over again. That is all I am attempting to identify and explore.

Niall Keane: Whilst I agree with the perpetual necessity to start all over again, what is also essential, however, is the carefulness and exactitude with which we start all over again. For example, Heidegger is definitely a more arresting thinker than Gadamer, yet Gadamer is clearly more careful with the philosophical tradition. How important, in your opinion, is it to be philosophically careful?

Well everyone who starts all over again, at the beginning at least, is not very careful because they usually start by saying “let’s imagine that nothing has been thought”! Here, there is a necessary methodological bracketing out of the conversation that has been going on for thousands of years, and this gives people a certain sense of simplicity. Yet Gadamer, like Ricoeur, begins quite humbly in the middle of a conversation by quoting other people. We also need this approach, so as to be interpreters who mediate the tradition, working like Himalayan Sherpas who know the way up and down the mountain and who are constantly serving others. But this is not to take from those more “original” thinkers who set out to discover new continents: the pioneers. The guys who actually made it to the top of Everest. I think Husserl and Heidegger did this when they called for phenomenology to be a rigorous science. That kind of instinct for originality, the striking out for something new, is always required if philosophy is to continue on its course. Whereas the Gadamers and the Ricœurs of this world are hermeneutic mediators who are always modestly helping us to unravel things, they really do not have the same impact as those who come out with revolutionary-sounding statements.

James McGuirk: Regarding this question of the complexity of the tradition, I wanted to ask about your employment of Heidegger’s notion of onto-theology as a way of characterising the tradition in The God Who May Be. You say, “If the tradition of onto-theology granted priority to being over the good, this counter-tradition of eschatology challenges that priority.”

I find it interesting that inasmuch as the notion of onto-theology is accepted uncritically, it

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also seems to mean whatever we want it to mean. For here, the point is distinctly Levinasian/Derridean and so Heidegger is a part of, and as guilty as, the dominant tradition of Western thought. Do we not risk, then, making the term onto-theology dangerously imprecise or inaccurate?

Well yes, I could see that as a danger. But it can be avoided if we recognize that this is a methodological move, if we acknowledge that onto-theology is a caricature, a schema, or a paradigm which is representative of a decline of thought from its original moments. It's a way of telling a good story! Heidegger located what he calls the "originary moment" of thinking in the pre-Socratics, after which followed two thousand years of forgetfulness that was ultimately broken by phenomenology and the phenomenological revolution. Now that is a very exciting story, as if some philosophical Rip Van Winkle had gone to sleep for two thousand years and now he's back! It is more interesting and arresting than saying that the question had never been forgotten. However, when Heidegger starts doing the phenomenological Destruktion, the retrieval of metaphysics, that is exactly what he finds: the question had never been forgotten, and every time someone experiences Angst they are simultaneously experiencing the question of Being and non-Being. I see the notion of onto-theology mainly as a methodological ploy which Heidegger himself eventually moves beyond. This is how I like to read both Heidegger and Derrida.

Niall Keane: The eschatological dimension of your project is quite evident in your work and along with that you appropriate many Heideggerian categories along the way, for example, Gemeinlichkeit and Entwurf to name but two; however, I'm interested to know, following a recent comment by Jean Greisch on your work, where exactly Heidegger's notion of Geworfenheit or “thrownness” fits into your project? Do you run the risk, as Greisch has indicated, of “forgetting or shading out what Heidegger calls Geworfenheit”? I think that's a very relevant point and actually Ricœur makes a very similar observation in his review of my work in Philosophy Today, where he says that the narratives I deploy and promote are basically very enabling, eschatological narratives. Yet he asks, “what about tragedy?”, which is another name for the shade, that which resists translation or transfiguration into the eschatological. Here he is pointing to the intractable nature of Geworfenheit, that which cannot be transformed by narrative imagination or by any form of working through. It is that which is irredeemable, that which we must be silent about in living with the pain. So yes, I take your point and I take the point from my interlocuters, Ricœur and Greisch, on that one too.

Yet my response would be something like this: one of the things that worried me about traditional metaphysics, at least as I imbibed it in a very Scholastic manner at University College Dublin in the seventies, is that philosophy was realism and realism was truth. What disturbed me about that was that everything was already acquired; truth was always a systematic given and it was there to be learned from Creation onwards; it was spoken by Jesus Christ and then published by St. Thomas Aquinas: the system as perfect synthesis. Hence, my philosophy grew out of a hunger for the “possible” and it was definitely a reaction to my own philosophical formation. Yet that wasn’t my only reaction. I was also reacting to what I considered to be the deep pessimism, and even at times “nihilism” of the postmodern turn.

What interests me most in the whole postmodern debate about metaphysics is to see if we can still return from text to action. I am interested in the possibility of an eschatology of action, and that is what fascinates me about the “possible”. My philosophical position is a reaction to both Scholasticism and postmodernism. But like every reaction it tends to go to the other extreme, in that one forgets the shadow or shade and the limits that are always already set. That is why my trilogy is called “Philosophy at the Limit”, where even though I’m attempting to say the unsayable, I’m still trying to deal with those “limit experiences”, as Jaspers called them. By contrast, in early works like Poétique du Possible or Poetics of Imagining, I wasn’t really dealing with limit experiences. It seemed the world was wide open. Imagination was there to blaze new paths of discovery. From that point of view, I think Ricoeur and Greisch were right to suggest I redress the balance. The poetics of the possible always needs to acknowledge the ethics of the real.

SONJA ZUBA: In your work you speak about God as “possible”. Yet God is usually defined as eternal, so can we, in fact, talk adequately about God in terms of time and in terms of possibility?

Absolutely not. I believe we are compelled to speak and simultaneously to acknowledge the limits of our speaking. Now this means that when we talk about the futurity or the possibility of God – as I do in The God who May Be and Strangers, Gods and Monsters—we are always talking in terms of human phenomenological categories, that is, hermeneutic constructs. We are not talking about the ontological substance of God, the “in itself” of God. And, curiously enough, in the wisdom traditions the very unnameability of God, the fact that the eternal cannot be reduced to time, itself allows for, and in fact calls for, a multiplicity of names, figures, tropes, and metaphors. For if you confine the divine to a few terms and sacralize those few, and turn them into doctrines and dogmas, then you are really reducing God to our terms, which you claim are the only true terms. That for me is the true danger of idolatry. The danger does not reside in having a hundred different names for God, but in presuming to have only one! Hinduism and Buddhism have much to teach us here. The more images, figures and faces of the divine you have, the more you are respecting the inability of any one of them to adequately represent the divine. Thus I would concur with Stanislas Breton when he suggests that the truth of monotheism, in any of the wisdom traditions, is polytheism. Now, in The God Who May Be, I do speak of the futurity of God, but I would not want to do so at the expense of the presentness or pastness of God. These three temporal aspects have to be maintained. Eschatological futurity is only one of these, but the one in my view that has been most occluded in the official history of Western metaphysics.

JAMES MCGUIRK: When you speak of moving “from text to action”, do you intend this in a Marxist sense (i.e., the mission to change rather than interpret the world)? And secondly, given your sense of the openness of diacritical hermeneutics, do we not risk descending into a “pure openness” that becomes unable to discern between good actions and bad?

Well, I have never had an explicit reckoning with Marxism, but Marx would have had a greater influence on me as a student than Hegel did – not doctrinally of course, as I was never drawn by any Marxist movement, but I was very taken by philosophers who were influenced by Marx, namely, Marcuse, Bloch, Horkheimer
and Adorno. Or thinkers like Ricoeur, Levinas and Michel Henry who spoke very respectfully about Marx. Basically from the very beginning I was drawn towards various philosophies of radical action. I was never drawn at all by speculative and abstract philosophy. I found Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* unreadable; I found the *Summa theologiae* unreadable; I found Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia* unreadable; even Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* was unreadable to me. I did read them, but without relish. Thus, I loved Kierkegaard after reading Hegel; I loved reading Rousseau after Kant; and I loved re-reading Plato’s dialogues after Aristotle. Therefore, I was always drawn towards the existential tradition, which I see as going back to Socrates and resurfacing again in Augustine and Pascal and then leading to the nineteenth and twentieth century existentialists.

My difficulty with Marx’s work was that it always had the tendency to become *Marxism*. The problem I kept encountering was Marx’s closure to the question of transcendence and poetics, which for me were necessary critical chaperones for politics. Without the questions of God and imagination, political economy risked losing the run of itself and taking itself for the only game in town.

Now to come back to your second interesting question about a pure openness to the possible: firstly, the eschatological model that I propose is an emphatic acknowledgment that the divine is not reducible to the human. In other words, eschatologically and in the order of eternity, God remains unconditionally a call, a solicitation, and a summons. But in the order of history and phenomenology, where human beings reside, God – unless we endorse the God of theodicy, which I do not – has created the seventh day where we give flesh, or do not give flesh, to the divine call. It is actually the incarnational call, the summons of perpetual embodiment (*ensarkosis*). Here I approve the Scotist idea that creation is going on in *every moment* and working its way towards the eschaton. But the eschaton may never happen in history. There is a promise that it will, and there is an invitation and a desire, both human and divine, that it should. But we can also pull the trigger. We have the liberty to destroy the world of history as we know it, in which case there will be no Second Coming for this world since we will no longer be here. If we are not free to say no to God, then the incarnation is a rape, it is a violation, and so is every form of good and evil. According to such a model (theodicy) – which I utterly reject – God wills what is good or evil and ethics has...
really nothing to do with us. This is where I remain a steadfast existentialist! I believe that human freedom is indispensable and I resist any divinity that threatens that.

This brings me to the other part of your question: whether or not we run the risk of becoming so open that we become indiscriminate. In Strangers, Gods and Monsters, my main scruple, recurring throughout, is an ethical and hermeneutical scruple about discrimination. This was my main difference with Derrida at the three Villanova conferences and in various written texts – namely, that deconstruction was so open in that “every other could be every other”. I just want to suggest that we need some guide-rails as we traverse the abyss. Now Derrida does say that we have to act against evil, we have to act for justice. But where do we find the criteria for good and evil, for justice and injustice? That is the problem for Derrida. Of course, Derrida’s always been on the side of the good and the just, I’ve never known Derrida to support a malign cause. He has always defended the oppressed of the world. But for Derrida there are no hermeneutical criteria for reading the signs. I would like to keep those criteria pretty variable. I like the idea, in diacritical hermeneutics, of a plurality of narratives. Diacritical hermeneutics strives to preserve a balance between unity and difference, between dogmatism and relativism.

Niall Keane: But isn’t Gadamer’s application or appropriation of Aristotelian phronesis essentially the deliberative and discriminating tool which you are calling for?

Well it is, and you’re right in a way. But my quarrel with Gadamer, the other face of hermeneutics, is that for him phronesis is fundamentally grounded in ontology; it is a practical understanding grounded in the voice of Being, an interior ontological voice that is primarily found in the Greeks. Gadamer certainly took a step beyond Heidegger in opening a debate with plurality, but I don’t think he went far enough. For even when he admits to a certain alienation or slippage of the text, to the necessity of estrangement and the play of to and fro, he does so always with a view (shared by Heidegger) to finally arriving at some kind of Aneignung or reappropriation, some sort of “fusion of horizons”. By contrast, diacritical hermeneutics does not aim to return from the other to the same. It works towards an overlapping of concentric circles, where the overlap will always be very small vis-à-vis the space of difference. Here it is a question of emphasis, if you will. Gadamer’s hermeneutics – and I am deeply indebted to it – inclines more towards convergence, consensus, unity, oneness and, to some degree, sameness. That is not what I’m doing. With diacritical hermeneutics I’m trying to find a middle way between ontological fusion and ethical difference. Diacritical hermeneutics aims at this “way between” the one and the many. A very age-old project indeed!
Professor Hans-Helmuth Gander gives the Husserl Memorial Lecture: An Interview


John Noras: Professor Gander, perhaps you could tell us a bit about your background?

It would be my pleasure, and I would also thank you very much for your invitation to do this interview. As far as my academic background is concerned, like many people, I started studying philosophy due to my fascination with the texts by authors like Nietzsche, Camus and Sartre, whom one would normally initially become acquainted with in high school or university. This fascination was due to the fact that these figures posed an opposition to the existing currents of the time. In that context, admittedly very early on, I got close to Heidegger, because I always argued with Sartre, and at the time my Latin teacher told me “everything comes from Heidegger” and gave me Being and Time as a gift. I then started reading it, and I was somehow already fascinated by it.

In spite of all this, I wanted to study medicine. In Germany one has to do one’s civil duty, and I did mine in an operating theatre of a hospital for two years. During that time I noticed that I was indeed fascinated by what felt like a spirit of charitability. I also noticed that I
wanted to have a lot of time for myself, and that these two preferences would be in competition within my future job description. So I gave up plans for medical school and started to search for where I could study philosophy. Because of my earlier interests, I looked for a place where I could deepen my understanding of Heidegger. I then came upon an introduction by Karl-Heinz Volkmann-Schluck, an introduction to philosophy, and I knew that that’s where I would be going: to Cologne. Thus I started to study philosophy in Cologne. If one studied philosophy there at the end of the ’70s, she or he came into contact with Husserl right away, because at the time Elizabeth Ströker was the director of the Husserl Archives, and there were still six professors with a phenomenological approach in the department.

JOHN NORAS: Husserl through osmosis…

Yes! After I started studying philosophy in Cologne, I also had contact with other departments, that is, I started to study psychology along with philosophy. My love for theater was also opened up through dramatics. I did a lot of work in the theater as an assistant director. Theater has always fascinated me!

Then suddenly, as is the case for many Husserl experts, I started to be interested in German Idealism. It is really amazing how people, who originally come from Husserl, suddenly get into German Idealism, like the former directors of the Freiburg Husserl Archives, Werner Marx and also Bernhard Rang. So then I went to Karl-Heinz Ilting, who was still alive in Saarbrücken, to study Hegel, and noticed the connection between Husserl and Heidegger via idealism. At the time that was what interested me. Then I went to Freiburg, where Werner Marx still was, to work towards my doctoral degree. There I came into real close contact with Heidegger and the editors of Heidegger’s collected works, especially Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. Also, Wolfgang Wieland was in Freiburg, and I was very much interested in the interconnection between science and philosophy, that is, how the process of the independence of the sciences is philosophically grounded, as it is in Aristotle and in particular Comte and Dilthey. This was my dissertation topic.

After the conferral of my doctorate, I was fortunate enough to receive an offer to work as an editor on Heidegger’s collected works. So between 1987 and 1992 I was editing one of his lectures. Again, this was important for me. I took over this project because this was the next one available, and, as is always the case for editors, I did not have a say over which edition to pick. It was an early lecture from the winter semester 1919/20, on the fundamental problem of phenomenology; and all of a sudden this was something different compared, so to speak, to the traditional Heidegger who had yet to make himself independent. It was also laid out completely differently, using the terminology of life-world phenomenology which had not yet drifted towards ontology at all, but was rather
more phenomenological. There was nothing concerning the question of Being; rather, it was the execution of the life-world phenomenology of the time. This fascinated me very much.

Furthermore, I then had the opportunity to talk to Gadamer, whom I visited several times. Gadamer told me that he understood this fascination very well, since the earlier Heidegger was a very important area for him as well. While I was editing, it became clearer to me that, unlike what one finds in most receptions of Heidegger, this earlier lecture paved the way towards Being and Time in a genetic manner. So I noticed traces of what was yet to become his own position. As it was apparent in this early lecture, I was surprised to find out that he knew a lot about pragmatism – that he had read William James. Heidegger cited Max Weber at the time. So he was really involved in the academic discourse of his time, something we implicitly knew about the later Heidegger, who was then no longer young. Then I thought I would very much like to investigate this, and I wanted to do this in the context of the transformation of the concept of phenomenology from Husserl to Heidegger.

After this edition was finished, I did not want to start a new one, so I began to work on my postdoctoral lecture qualification (Habilitation). In that period, I was also in Stuttgart at the Institute for Philosophy. Günter Bien had invited me there for a permanent teaching position. That was very good for me because Stuttgart is a university with a technical orientation. This was absolutely exciting for me. For instance, I did a seminar about the time problematic. There I became more fluent, meaning I had to develop my own manner of presentation and language, since I was facing a totally different academic culture of the natural and technical sciences. As you know with Heidegger, one tends to get into Heideggerian terminology, and can also get carried away by it. This is not the case with Husserl. Husserl, as a philosopher, is too rigorous, and works too much on his own terms, but he is also inconsistent in the formation of his terminology. One must always look at the context, whereas with Heidegger there is the possibility to lay out a repertoire of terms properly and work with them. This was a valuable experience for me at Stuttgart, since if nobody had understood what I was talking about, there would have been no interest; so the way I expressed myself had to be accessible to these students.

John Noras: So you mastered the art of translating Husserl and Heidegger for the non-specialists in Stuttgart?

Yes. That was a good teaching experience, one which I enjoyed very much. After I received my postdoctoral qualification (Habilitation) in the summer of 1998, I was here and there like all private lecturers (Privatdozenten). Then in September 1999 the director of the Husserl Archives, Bernhard Rang, suddenly passed away after a number of serious heart problems. At the time the situation in Freiburg was such that there still remained two Husserl editions underway, one by Thomas Vongehr and Regula Giuliani, and the other by Robin Rollinger. So the Archives needed a moderator and a supervisor for these projects. Then I was asked if I would be willing to fill this position, and naturally I accepted the offer with pleasure. This is how I got into the Husserl Archives, and then the ball started rolling. Before I became a full professor and the 4th director of the Freiburger Husserl-Archive in October 2003 I was teaching for a while as a visiting professor at the University of Tübingen.
Niall Keane: You have written extensively on self-understanding and the hermeneutic situation. Thus the presence of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics is rarely far from your own work. How would you describe Gadamer’s impact on your philosophy?

Well Gadamer had a real impact on me. I am very indebted to him as he was an exceptional man to whom I am very grateful. In conversation he was an exceptionally kind person. In our conversations it was always the same: whenever he spoke, regardless of his conversation partner, one was always guaranteed his full attention and seriousness; the conversation could stop at one point and be taken up at the next encounter. This was one of the ways in which I preferred Gadamer, and a point on which he greatly differed from Heidegger. Heidegger is certainly, although not as bad as Husserl, a monological philosopher, and not somebody with whom one could develop a philosophical problematic in a conversation. Now this was something that really appealed to me about Gadamer.

What was genuinely correct about Gadamer, at least for me, was that philosophy and philosophising is not a search for presuppositionless principles in which to ground the activity itself, but, instead, it is the genuine investigation into the possibilities of presuppositionless grounds themselves. Hermeneutics, conversational hermeneutics that is, developed an approach that had the status of dialoguing with the sciences – not teaching the sciences, because they had misunderstood the fundamental status of questioning; the principle that the sciences cannot think is impossible for Gadamer. The figure of Paul Ricoeur also has a place here. I invited Ricoeur to Freiburg to give a week-long series of lectures and that was also very significant. He was someone who had an altogether different temperament to Gadamer, someone who was always willing to dialogue with the sciences, who actively sought a dialogue with the natural sciences.

Now this revealed to me the great strength of Gadamer, which in Heidegger is not to be found. For Heidegger the question of being and ontology plays a central role and it is the reference point which philosophy must take seriously, for he explicitly asserts that this serious question is not to be found in the sciences. One finds in Heidegger, then, more so than in Gadamer and Ricoeur, a decision to the effect that there must be a concept of metaphysics known as first philosophy. Now, the other determinative aspect is Plato, whereas for Heidegger it is Aristotle. It is from this that we can understand the difference. When one reads the clues to Heidegger’s Aristotle one finds very little reference to ethics and politics, to Aristotle the ethicist or to Aristotle the political philosopher. It is always in reference to Heidegger’s interest in metaphysics and the question of Being. For example, there is no reference to the fact that Aristotle was writing in the state of Athens. Heidegger had a great power and original genius, but he selected one beginning, while for Gadamer it is clear that it is another, Plato. Now Heidegger’s interpretation of and engagement with Plato, which deals with the historical concept of metaphysics, itself is not convincing – whereas for Gadamer and the Gadamer school this is not the same problem. I believe that for Gadamer Plato assumed a significant importance due to his association with Natorp. That is, late neo-Kantianism plays a significant role as well. Gadamer had, after all, been trained as a true classical philologist and had studied with Friedländer, hence coming to Plato and working on Plato when he was twenty-four or twenty-five years old. Basically, he was an expert in ancient
philosophy who specialised in Plato. And I would speculate that it was under Heidegger and Heidegger’s early lectures on Aristotle in the early 1920s, that Gadamer truly found his own autonomous position in relation to Plato, possibly because working on Aristotle with Heidegger at that time would have been philosophical suicide, specifically because Heidegger himself had invested so much time in Aristotle. In addition, Gadamer also had a great grasp and flair for understanding what exactly it was that was driving and engaging the conversation. This was something that left an impression on me.

Niall Keane: When it comes to a critique of phenomenological reflection, that is, both Heidegger and Gadamer’s so-called problematisation of the above-mentioned reflection — namely, the young Heidegger’s introduction of “hermeneutic intuition” and Gadamer’s unique notion of “effective historical consciousness” — in your opinion, do Heidegger and Gadamer do justice to the Husserlian project? How valid are their criticisms in your eyes?

I do believe that there is a correlation between the two thinkers on the issue of reflection, but I also think that the common point of reference for Heidegger and Gadamer is not really Husserl, but instead, Dilthey. Of course, I believe Gadamer knew Husserl well. However, I also believe he didn’t really find what he was looking for in Husserl; but then, perhaps Gadamer just wasn’t interested in Husserl. One can see this clearly when one looks at the two main figures of philosophical hermeneutics in the second half of the twentieth century, Gadamer and Ricoeur. One can actually see in Ricoeur an intensive working through or confrontation with Husserlian phenomenology. Now Gadamer didn’t have a very deep understanding of Husserl and believed, from the very beginning, that the problem of history needed to be considered. This is why Dilthey became vital, and philosophically formed both Heidegger and Gadamer: neither philosopher believed they could see or find a sufficiently deep account of history in Husserl. Hence, the point where Heidegger and Gadamer come together is in relation to Dilthey and Schleiermacher and, once again, this has Plato as the reference point and, it must be remembered, at that time Lebensphilosophie was very important (Simmel, etc). And hence I believe the notion of history and “effective historical consciousness” (wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein) is Gadamer’s genuine and original contribution to hermeneutics. There is, of course, Heidegger’s presentation of surrounding the structure of history, within which existential historicality and understanding are thought, and this was what Heidegger had applied to historicality itself. But in the history of being (Seinsgeschichte) it was an entirely other way. It was here that Gadamer had found it necessary to operate with another concept. And one can see when one reads Gadamer on the hermeneutic position that the phenomenological structure is still present within it. For example, like Husserl, Gadamer also wrote a lot about what the phenomena are and their relation to a horizontal structure. For example, in reference to my lecture “On Attention”, one can find many references to “attention” (Aufmerksamkeit) in Gadamer’s work. This was one of the primary issues in his philosophical hermeneutics, namely, that which claims us or appeals to us and our response to such an appeal. It is also clear that Husserl wrote significantly on this topic, but the two thinkers were most certainly coming at the problem from different directions.

Niall Keane: If we are to take Husserl’s statement in the Crisis seriously, a proper access to the historical can only
come about through our responsible self-liberation from prejudices and even from the sedimentation of tradition itself. Keeping this in mind, is there any solid continuity between phenomenological hermeneutics and Husserlian phenomenology? Where would you situate yourself regarding these two positions?

That is a very good and also a very difficult question for me to answer. In relation to this thematic of history and historicality I would situate myself closer to Heidegger and Gadamer, and I would ultimately give a preference to phenomenological hermeneutics. For Husserl, history is ultimately tied to a teleological project and this makes the relationship to history difficult. Now this is unconvincing. We know of many instances in the history of philosophy in which history has been understood as teleological – Hegel for example – but this does not hold for sure. This is simply not convincing for me.

JOHN NORAS: In your presentation on attention and the media culture yesterday, you dealt with the issue of the media’s competition for our attention within the context of the manipulation of the transition from our primary passivity to our active directedness. How about the transition in the other direction, namely the diminution of an active directedness into secondary passivity? Do you think that our future attentiveness to what is different or novel is further determined by these sedimentations, since the appreciation of the novel has to presuppose givenness of the familiar? And don’t you think that this kind of conditioning is really what is at stake for the advertisement sector?

Thank you very much for the question! Originally I did have this problem in mind. When one is limited to one hour in a presentation, she or he cannot cover very much. I dealt with this issue in the first version of my paper, but I had to shorten it due to time limitations, such that I could not talk about the question of cultural conditioning yesterday. Clearly it is there of
course! The point is that we also come across this in media culture. The media calls upon the cultural manipulation, to which our perceptions, or attention, have been habitualised. This is quite clear! In the last part, where I addressed the topic of the social phenomenon of attention or attentiveness in the sense of politeness, this played quite a decisive role. If one were to define attention, it would have a very specific sense within the cultural framework. One can do this very well. This phenomenon is a huge one, since as socially encoded it is completely different or completely determined by the habitualisation of the attention which is governed by culture. When we greet each other, it is polite to look at one another as we shake hands, but in Japan this is quite rude, so it is impossible to do something like that there. Thus attention in the social sense is always dependent on the setting, and this setting is quite decisive. That was something which came up very briefly in the discussion yesterday in reference to the issue of curiosity. Naturally this is something presupposed. I cannot develop an anthropologically significant notion of attention, if I do not keep in mind that there is a basic impulse which is governed. And this basic impulse is always culturally encoded. This is something that we can never be given; that is, the manner of our attentiveness is always already socially conditioned in advance. This is what Heidegger calls “thrownness” (Geworfenheit) or “facticity”. And naturally this is very decisive. But perhaps I am speaking too narrowly here, since the perspective I have been using as my point of departure is from within the Western liberal democratic society. More emphasis should be put on the fact that this particular perspective is the one I use to support my thesis concerning information media, and everything I attempted to talk about yesterday naturally appears within this tradition. The situation seems to be quite different in India or China. (Also ritualisation!) So this is quite an important point.

JOHN NORAS: Having described our situation as such, do you have a prescriptive stance concerning our status within this consumer culture?

Naturally I have very deliberately said that I would not want to take up an attitude of cultural criticism. I’d rather only describe the situation. I also explain this with psychology, and yesterday I did not get the chance to unpack that either. As such, one could approach the matter today through the big problem of the so-called attention deficit phenomenon, which means it is no longer possible for children or young people to concentrate on only one thing. One can also notice this deficit in one’s own attention. Certainly this sensory overload (Reizüberflutung), as it’s called, is something really extreme, calling for a reaction. Yesterday, in his first statement, Professor Bernet underlined the importance of the activity. And he had the impression that it was under-emphasized in my presentation. But naturally activity and therefore spontaneity – not in the Kantian sense, but in the Bergsonian or Sartrean sense of freedom – plays a very important role. One must develop techniques and practices for oneself that at the same time train this reaction. But one has to be careful here, since this reaction is not a basic drive, and left as it is, even a moderately intelligent person would not be able to regulate it. So I would say one needs training in any case to govern this reaction.

As I talked about this very briefly yesterday, in reference to this point one could learn a lot from the late Foucault, through his reformulation of these care-concepts (Sorgekonzepte) in
the context of the stoic reinterpretations. I think this is exactly the point that is a bit of a current issue in Germany at the moment, in the background the art of living (*Lebens kunst*). Foucault demonstrates very clearly that these are practices. He always talks about practices, or exercises. Yet these exercises would be a possible way to regulate what is happening to oneself, but one should learn these ancient exercises and practice them without leaning towards escapism or elitism. That’s why Stoicism is an area of research for me. These late ancients are very important. And if one looks into the history of attention today, one finds St. Augustine. As I talked about this with Professor IJsseling yesterday, this theme was very much developed in this direction by Augustine, and also by Lucretius. The very late ancients developed this as a technique – not only as a mere phenomenon, but as a phenomenon which had its own corresponding technicians. I personally find it delightful to work very closely together with the German diary archives. This is an institution which was founded in 1998 on the initiative of the residents of Emmendingen, a small town close to Freiburg. It collects the diaries of common people, instead of the more prominent ones. And as I was there to develop a project, it was exquisitely interesting for me to read these diaries as a cultural technique, in which someone operates against the prevailing experience of time that disintegrates everything. If you read these diaries which were written over a period of twenty or thirty years, you can infer from what you have seen that someone had developed their own cultural technique to seize the day – *carpe diem*, if you will. This is extremely interesting! Thus far I totally agree with you. This does require technical acquaintance. That is, attention has also a lot to do with this phenomenon of spontaneity.

*John Noras:* Professor Gander, thank you for having taken the time to conduct this interview with us. We look forward to your forthcoming publications on the subjects that you discussed with us today.

It was my pleasure. Thank you for having given me the opportunity to do it!

*Interview conducted and translated from the German by Niall Keane and John Noras.*
PROFESSOR MARTIN STONE GIVES THE SAINT THOMAS FEAST LECTURE

On the 8th of March, 2005, Professor Martin Stone gave the Saint Thomas Feast lecture, entitled “Truth, Deception, and Lies: Lessons from the Casuistical Tradition”. Professor Van de Putte took this opportunity to introduce Professor Stone, and his address is below.

Mr. Vice-Rector, Dean, Colleagues, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, a special welcome to the Members of the Thomas Institute of Cologne,

It is my great pleasure and honour to introduce to you Professor Martin Stone, who will be holding today’s Saint Thomas Lecture. In some sense this is superfluous, since Martin Stone has been part of the Institute of Philosophy since the year 2002. Many among you present here this evening already know him. At our university it is not a tradition to invite new lecturers to give an inaugural lecture, and therefore the Saint Thomas Lecture is an ideal occasion to introduce him to a wider audience. You may compare this in a way with what happens in soccer. A foreign star player is bought and put in the club’s showcase whenever the opportunity arises, and is thus presented to the public. Professor Martin Stone is indeed a star player for whom we cherish great expectations for the future, and who – and this has already become very obvious – is a permanent reinforcement for the team of the Institute of Philosophy.

He gained a BA in Classics and Philosophy from King’s College, University of London, where he studied with Richard Sorabji. In 1986-7 he earned a maîtrise at the Sorbonne-Panthéon. Having spent a period of post-graduate study in Cambridge, he returned to London to complete the research degrees MPhil and PhD at Birkbeck College. He became a British Academy post-doctoral researcher in early modern philosophy at the Warburg Institute, School of Advanced Study (London), where he did research on “The Decline of Scholastic Ethics and the Development of Modern Moral Philosophy” and held temporary tutorial appointments at the London School of Economics and the University of Oxford, before becoming lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion at King’s College. And, as I have said, in 2002 he was appointed to the K.U. Leuven, where he already had stayed in 1999-2000 as Visiting Research Fellow.

In passing I have already given some indications of his fields of research. Summarizing them under the headings “Late Medieval Philosophy, especially 13th and 14th Century Ethics and Psychology”, “Renaissance Philosophy, especially the 15th and 16th Century Debates about the Rational Soul”, and “Early Modern Scholasticism, especially the Moral Thought of Baus, Banez, Molina and Suarez and 16th and 17th Century Commentaries on the Nichomachean Ethics”, would be cor-
rect, but would at the same time leave out other domains of interest. In Grayling’s book *Philosophy: A further Guide through the Subject*, Martin Stone has written a long essay on Philosophy of Religion. And besides all this he has done some work on Ancient Philosophy, Early Christian Moral Thought (Ambrose and Gregory the Great), Early Modern Philosophy (Arnauld and Malebranche) and on Kant. This is a wide scope of research, certainly for somebody who has still to become forty, and it has resulted in the publication of many articles, encyclopaedia entries and book reviews. Martin Stone has co-edited, if I am correct, five collections on such subjects as *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy, The Proper Ambition of Science, Theories of the Will and Human Action, The History of Problems of Perception and Reason, Faith and History*. He also serves as joint editor of the monograph series *London Studies in the History of Philosophy* and *Studies in the History of Philosophical Theology*.

Concerning books, he is working together with Guy Guldentops on a book on *Siger of Brabant on the Unity of the Intellect, Translations and Commentary*. His most important and ambitious project, however, I have saved for the end. It has to do with his interest in ethics, moral psychology and practical reasoning. This interest has incited him to study thoroughly the tradition of casuistry. It is a study the results of which we can read in his two volume book: *The Subtle Arts of Casuistry: An Essay in the History of Moral Philosophy*, the subtitle of the first rather historical volume being *The Casuistical Tradition from Aristotle to Kant*, while the second has as its subject a more systematic study under the title *Ordinary Morality and Practical Reason*. His lecture today will discuss some of the themes of this important book on a subject which has long been neglected.

Everyone will agree that with Martin Stone’s arrival the team of the Institute of Philosophy has been strengthened. At the beginning of my introduction I stated that this Saint Thomas lecture is a perfect occasion to present him to a wider public and to put him in our showcase. However, this metaphor threatens to have unwanted effects. Star players in soccer sometimes are put in showcases in order to sell them at the highest possible transfer fee and with the greatest profit. This of course, Martin, was not our intention when we invited you to lecture tonight! Martin, the floor – I almost said the field! – is yours.
Could you tell us a little about your early intellectual influences?

I had a Jesuit education. From the age of eight until seventeen, I was with the Jesuits and then, unusually for a philosopher, I went on to art school. I did five years of fine arts education, and taught for three years as an arts master in a private school. I suppose with the Jesuits (although probably not consciously) I had developed an appetite for philosophy. I started reading philosophy while I was probably not at the latest stage at school but certainly while I was in arts school. When I finished arts school I spent a year training to be a teacher. By that point I'd already had a higher education, and it was possible to study part-time, so I began to study philosophy at the same time as I was teaching art. And in fact three years into that, things were going quite well and so I went for the PhD pretty quickly, and then much to my surprise I was given an academic post and I’ve been at the same place since then.

How long have you been at St. Andrews University, where you are now?

Well, I was appointed to Saint Andrews in 1983 when I hadn’t actually finished my PhD. I began my PhD in 1980, and I was appointed to St. Andrews in the spring of 1983, so after I got the offer I popped into the British Museum and I wrote my PhD in about two and a half months, because I knew that if I went to St. Andrews without the PhD it would be a long wait. I had been appointed to teach moral philosophy in the Moral Philosophy department, though given my interests I could have just as easily been appointed to the Logic and Metaphysics department. This was in 1983, so I’ve been there for twenty five years now.

Your name is associated with Analytical Thomism, which has received some attention – the Monist had a special issue on it in 1997. Could you perhaps provide an outline, an explanation, or maybe even just a definition of analytical Thomism?
This expression “analytical Thomism” was a phrase I introduced in some lectures at the University of Notre Dame in 1992. At the time Alasdair McIntyre had asked me to give some lectures and to talk about a programme that I was interested in and I had to give that an overall title, if you like, and so I called it “Analytical Thomism”. This was really more for a matter of convenience but it has turned out to be really a very good description in a way – though it has led to some disagreements among people as to whether the idea it represents is viable.

What I meant by “Analytical Thomism” was in one sense very ambitious and in another really quite modest. I should explain first of all its modesty. This wasn’t the idea of launching some new kind of Thomism that was meant to take the place of some other sort of Thomism. So it wasn’t like Transcendental Thomism for example, or certain kinds of existential Thomism and such like. This wasn’t meant to be another claim to the ownership of Thomism.

I think that some of the resistance in some quarters and particularly in the neo-scholastic quarters has been because some people have felt that, you know, this is somebody coming along and telling them what Thomism really means. And it wasn’t about that at all.

It was really addressed to two kinds of constituencies. The first were the analytical philosophers, people who had had the sort of philosophical training that I had had and who had the interests that that sort of training fosters – particularly philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. I was really saying that the issues that we’re interested in – reference, intentionality, the nature of mind, the mind-body relation, and so on, are all actually addressed in this tradition by Aquinas and by philosophers following in his intellectual wake. It’s really worth going to Aquinas as other philosophers had gone to Aristotle or Spinoza or whoever it might be. This really is a resource that philosophers in the analytical tradition for a whole variety of cultural and historical reasons don’t know about.

And the other thing was to say to philosophers working in the Thomistic tradition that since their interest lies in things like intentionality, concepts and so on, they should maybe look at the analytic tradition, where there’s been massive work done on these issues. This is really worth having a look at, particularly as it could raise the standard of the dialectic of the argumentation. Analytical Thomism then was really a way of trying to say particularly to younger Thomistic philosophers interested in things like intentionality, the nature of the mind-body relation and so on, that they should look at analytical philosophy and learn from it: learn from some of the ideas and you might find that it’s not hostile in the way you might have feared it.
was; and to say to analytical philosophers: look, here’s a new voice in the conversation (I mean new to them), the Thomistic tradition. It was about marrying together some of the insights and philosophical theses, if you like, associated with Thomism particularly in metaphysics and philosophy of mind, with some of the rigour and ideas and genuine advances in philosophy represented by analytical philosophy.

And what would you say are the main things that each of these schools can offer each other?

I think that analytical philosophers have a kind of premium on the kind of rigorous argumentation that dissects what is before you, seeing whether one thing follows from another or if one thing excludes another and so on. They have a concern with argumentation and with formal technique. There’s a sort of happy marriage I suppose I would say, between the empirical and the rational in analytic philosophy that I see very much as being in the tradition of Aquinas. You know, Aquinas is both an empirical and a rationalist philosopher. There is sort of mid-way point possible between reductive empiricism and disengaged rationalism. This is certainly present in Aquinas but I also see the great major figures of analytic philosophy, people like Saul Kripke, Donald Davidson, working in this way. And I think it’s no accident that, for example, Kripke’s interests in metaphysics can be seen to be continuous with the marriage between the empirical and the rational.

I suppose a lot of Thomists might think that there are certain prejudices in the analytic tradition — a certain a-historicism, or perhaps a lack of engagement with especially pre-modern forms of philosophy. Another perception might be that there’s a scientific kind of bias and related to that perhaps an unwillingness to engage in metaphysics in as full a way as Thomists can.

To some extent this is always an exaggeration of analytical philosophy as a whole. The charge of a-historicism, the sort of hostility to metaphysics perhaps, applies to some analytical philosophers, and obviously to the Logical Postivists. This is truer in the United States than it has been in Britain. Most professional philosophers in Britain were until quite recently trained in Oxford and a high percentage of them would have been trained in Plato and Aristotle and so on — and so they would not be a-historical. I think that analytic philosophers have generally become much more alert to history and metaphysics. As more people have come into the profession, they’ve had to find good research areas, and so they have explored all aspects of philosophy, going back into researching historical figures that hadn’t before received much attention. My own experience has been a good one. I’ve never felt that I’ve been shunned or discouraged in any way from the analytical side. Where I think there’s been the strongest resistance — to put it that way — has actually been on the Thomistic side interestingly, from a number of philosophers in the Catholic tradition who are not themselves Thomists. My experience has been that analytical philosophers, to the extent that they take any interest in this at all, have shown a sort of curiosity through to encouragement.

You’ve edited a book entitled Mind, Metaphysics, and Value in the Thomistic and Analytical Traditions (University of Notre Dame Press, 2002). It has a couple of contributions from Leuven, from Stefaan Cuypers, for example, and from Martin Stone who is here now. It seems that Philosophy of Mind is one area where there is potentially fruitful dialogue between the analytical and Thomistic traditions. You mention in your contribution
a reductive physicalist account, where mental events are seen to be dependent first on physical events in the world, and then on physical responses in the human person. In the Thomistic account the mind plays a much more active role. It’s not simply a passive receptor: there’s a process of abstraction of the universals. In fact, the intellect’s cognition of universals is one of the arguments which Aquinas makes for the immateriality of the mind. You seem to suggest that there have been some movements, by Davidson and McDowell for instance, towards a less reductive approach to philosophy of mind. Could you perhaps elaborate a little bit on that?

I think that the history of the philosophy of mind in the post war period within analytical philosophy is extremely interesting. It serves as an instance where analytical philosophy has made real progress. I don’t think that it has seen all the range of possibilities, and this is where Thomism comes in – but I do think that analytical philosophy has really very rigorously and effectively exposed some of the difficulties of some ideas, including ideas that earlier analytic philosophers had favoured. In particular, a strict and reductive identification of the mind with the brain has been shown not to be impossible or incoherent, but at the same time the price of being an identity theorist of the old style has become very clear. If you go that way you have to be a reductionist. Someone like Davidson tries to ease that, because he finds the reductionist implications unacceptable. So, he tries to arrive at a non-reductive materialism. Now my own view about that is that it can’t be done. I would say that in contemporary analytical philosophy of mind really we’re back to the situation where you either have to be a materialist, in which case you’re going to be a reductionist, or you’ve got to be some kind of dualist – and not just a conceptual dualist but some sort of ontological dualist. Analytic philosophy has perhaps been negligent in that it doesn’t really have an ontology of being. Even Kripke, brilliant and insightful as he is, has just never got around to thinking about Being itself. And I think that’s been a neglected topic in analytical philosophy.

Do you think that there could be an eventual return to taking another look at hylomorphism as a possibility?

I think to some extent people have looked at hylomorphism but more as an account of the way in which being structures itself in certain domains. But I think that more generally what has not itself been touched is Being as such, as it were. I’m not trying to root for any particular doctrine here, I just think that analytical philosophers have not thought about the nature of Being and the possibility of different kinds of being, modes of being.

Would you say then that in spite of the fact that Thomism speaks about an immaterial intellect and also the physical dimension, with the soul as the form of the body, that its effective answer to the argument is just another version of dualism?

I think the better figures know there’s a problem in the Thomistic account. Some Thomists like to talk about how they alone avoid the errors of reductionism and of dualism and St. Thomas has a wonderful solution. But when you look at Thomas, he looks as if he slides between two different positions, one interpretation of which you wouldn’t take as very different from a non-reductivist material account – maybe a Davidsonian account. But the other interpretation makes him look like a dualist, a Cartesian dualist. And if you really press the issue, the challenge is to ask how at the end of the day Aquinas is really different from Descartes. You can talk about the details, but doesn’t he after all believe in a separate intellectual soul,
and isn't that what Descartes believed? I think there are genuine difficulties here, and occasionally Thomistic scholars do take this issue on. Tackling it, though, usually just means identifying it, and I do think that this is an area that needs a lot of work and development. I don't have an answer really, although I've entertained some possibilities. If somebody said to me that the world was going to end in two minutes and I had to give my take on the mind-body problem, I think I'd go to dualism.

*Of course, but it would be a very qualified dualism?*

Sure, I agree. But then if I had a bit more time than only two minutes, I'd say that what you get from Aquinas might well be the story, but it needs working out. I don't think what you have here is an intellectual substance resident in a material one. But rather you've got an animate being which is already beyond the level of just matter; an animate being whose activities come to be actualized. This intellectual activity comes to be actualized — and having been actualized now you've got something that comes to, as it were, have a life of its own. Now I think there are genuine difficulties there. Obviously, I don't think that they're insuperable, but they are under-discussed. A lot of work needs to be done and what might be the conclusion of that work is that really the only way of saving the Thomistic picture is by being more dualist than some people would like to admit.

*Could you tell us about your recent book Faithful Reason?*

Yes, it's about three or four years behind schedule, but I hope that there'll be a further collection complementing this one. It's subtitled *Essays Catholic and Philosophical*, and I wanted to be unapologetic about that because I think some philosophers who are believers can tend to compartmentalize their religion and their philosophy. Temperamentally I'm not inclined to be like that, partly maybe because of my art interests. Artists don't divide themselves between their studio life and the rest of their lives. Artists are just artists, and I think that philosophers to some extent should be like that. Philosophers should particularly not compartmentalize with regard to things that fundamentally and existentially matter. So I've always found it a little peculiar that some people think of themselves
as Christian philosophers in the same way that they might think of others as sort of Christian mechanics. I just don’t see how you can contain Christianity, particularly Catholic Christianity. So that’s one thing, it’s about not wanting to separate things.

But also I felt that it was important to be encouraging to others, to say to them that you can and should draw on your Catholic resources in addressing philosophical questions. The collection is divided into four or five sections. One has to do with Catholicism and Philosophy, where I talk about MacIntyre and others and about Catholic philosophy. Then I talk about some theological ideas like infallibility and the dogma of the assumption. And then I move through natural law and ethics, talking about the ethical tradition; and then I move into some particular issues to do with education and spirituality, and there’s a section on Catholic education and the philosophy of education. So really this is a collection of essays, as it were, on Catholic philosophy in general, moving through some particulars of Catholic thought, using philosophy in defence of some Catholic dogmas, then going into the broad Catholic philosophy of value, and then into particular issues.

You mention that you deal with certain theological issues. Do you think that one of the problems today might be that theology and philosophy have been compartmentalized?

I completely agree with you. I could mention radical orthodoxy in this connection. Radical orthodoxy is a British, Anglican, theological movement. I think that it’s precisely that severing of philosophy and theology which has in the broadly reformed tradition resulted in a kind of aridity. Theology in the reform tradition has gone into a crisis for a want of philosophical guidance. Radical orthodoxy recognises that theology has got us into a real mess and it’s an effort to go back and ask how this was possible and how it happened. I think radical orthodoxy misidentifies the sources of the problem because it actually sees Aquinas as part of the problem rather than part of the solution. It thinks you have to go further than that. They read Aquinas as closer to Descartes than to Augustine. So they think that in order to recover theology you really have to really go pre-modern, and going pre-modern really means going back to the Patristics and Augustine and so on. And one of the reasons for that is that they’ve got a conception of intellectual life that is more liturgical as it were, and poetic, and rhetorical rather than dialectical. So that’s why Augustine is the great hero here, and it’s not the Augustine of some of the more academic and philosophical work. It’s more the Augustine of the rhetoric.

So in a way this loss of the harmony, of nature and grace, of faith and reason that was so much a part of the thirteenth century is at the root of this?

Absolutely. I said earlier on that the Catholic philosophical tradition is at risk of jettisoning philosophy, or at least the tradition. And I think that radical orthodoxy is an illustration of what happens to a tradition when it has ditched philosophy and then suddenly recognizes the need for it. It’s a bit lost and it sort of overshoots in its effort to grapple. There are connections between radical orthodoxy and the kind of post-modernist I was talking about. But I think that the trajectory of radical orthodoxy is more back into the tradition, whereas I think that the prophetic post-modernism trajectory is really the way out.

Interviewed by Dr. Alexander Rosenthal
The conference “Kant and Cosmopolitanism” brought together a number of international scholars last academic year. Two of the keynote speakers at the conference, Nicholas Capaldi and Georg Geismann kindly agreed to take part in an interview with Professor Martin Moors, several doctoral students of the faculty, David Pactwa, Alexander Rosenthal, and Renée Ryan, and alumnus Dr. Miles Smit.

**Prof. Moors:** Professor Geismann and Professor Capaldi, what do you think the roles of the philosopher and of philosophical discussion are with regard to globalization? What do you have to say, from a philosophical point of view, to the learned world, with regard to what is happening in this world at the moment in terms of the movement of politics towards perpetual peace? How can philosophers situate themselves within this discussion?

**Prof. Geismann:** I think that, with regard to the empirical facts, philosophy has little to say. Speaking of empirical facts is the role of the sociologists, of political scientists and of economists. The only answer that the philosopher has to give that the others can’t is to the normative question. The philosopher gives a normative judgment about what happens: whether it should or should not happen, and how it should change, not with regard to the details of a world constitution – that’s a question for a lawyer – but concerning, for instance, the principles of how a world constitution should be organized.

**Prof. Capaldi:** I really think that philosophy should have a much greater role than this. It does seem to me that the great philosophers prior to the twentieth century have always tried to make sense of things and developments in the world. I think for instance of Aristotle; and I think of Descartes trying to make sense of the modern self, or of modern science; or I think of Hume and Smith. Philosophers have traditionally played that role and I am loathe to give that role up to the social sciences, because as I understand it the social sciences have no model on which to base these developments. They don’t think in terms of structures or in terms of meaning. I also think that the ideal role of philosophers in this respect is to explicate – to make explicit – the implicit norms that they see. This takes a very special kind of philosophical acumen.

Furthermore, philosophers should ask the question of supremacy. That is, is this a good thing and how does it go together with previous norms? Ideally, this is what philosophers should do. Unfortunately they don’t, and they don’t for two reasons. One is that philosophy has become so specialized that philosophers have no connection to the world. They sit and spend their time reading other philosophers as if reality consisted of texts rather than of events in the world. The problem is that philosophers do...
not ask themselves the fundamental question of whether this is the right question to ask. What they do is they give a hypothesis and develop a hypothesis, rather than asking if they have the right starting-point. As a result they end up becoming partisans in the debate, rather than people attempting to understand the process. Ideally they should be Socratic but instead they become magisterial.

RENÉE RYAN: Do you think that there is a difference between globalization and cosmopolitanism, or are they one and the same? Alternatively, is one a subset of the other? Does either of you think that Kant would recognize in globalization something of his sense of cosmopolitanism?

PROF. GEISMANN: Cosmopolitanism in the Kantian sense is a normative idea of how the world should be ordered in accordance with the laws of freedom. Kant could well say that globalization is an empirical fact, but in principle the Kantian norm hasn’t changed. The Kantian question now would be this: how we can constitutionally establish a free world under the condition of globalization? Globalization may be helpful for this, but globalization may also hinder it. We will have to see that and have to study it. But this is not a question that a philosopher should have to study. A philosopher has to take into account that it is not his proper problem.

PROF. CAPALDI: I see a much closer connection between globalization and cosmopolitanism. I think that, given Kant’s familiarity with Hume and Smith, one can say that just as it was very clear in the minds of thinkers of his time. For Kant too it was the case that if you understand the laws of property then the inevitable result is an international economy. I think that we’re living in a world that is exactly what these eighteenth-century thinkers were talking about. I think that in this sense Kant is more relevant today than he was in the eighteenth century, in the same way that Adam Smith is taken far more seriously now in the twentieth century.

DAVID PACIWA: Many philosophers seem to understand Kant as a proponent of socialism rather than of capitalism. I’ve come across this idea a number of times. I would like to ask your opinion on that.

PROF. CAPALDI: I think that anyone who believes that has just not read Kant – but that’s been going on for some time now! One of the ways to state one’s position is to cite only those authorities with whom you agree. It would be very difficult to be a philosopher and ignore people like Hume or Kant or Hegel. So what you do is you tend to read them as supporters of your view. And for a very long time – I’d say even up to the first half of the twentieth-century – philosophical scholarship was very bad. It makes no sense to read Kant as a defender of Hegel. Kant has also been read as a defender of an authoritarian society, and this also makes no sense. I think that what I have tried to do is to try to capture Hegel and Kant and others as
very good classical liberals.

Alexander Rosenthal: Professor Capaldi, you made a quite stark distinction between a classical liberal philosophical background and a communitarian background. Do you think that these are two completely incommensurable ways in which to argue against some of the contingent points that each of these polarities seems to entail? For example, you mentioned in your lecture many of the issues that come up in the books that we’ve been reading here in Leuven in some of our courses recently — issues such as technology and advancements in standard of living. Is social policy conducive to what Kant would say? Would this way of arguing from some of the premises and focusing on some of the contingencies perhaps show us how ideals of communitarianism would work?

Prof. Capaldi: Whatever good points seem to have been made in this respect, Kant simply didn’t answer them. The standard objection to the classical liberal view is that it creates the notion of an individual who then cannot be connected with a common good. This is one of the basic objections. You can discuss this in relation to Hume for example, or you can look at Hegel. The ultimate drive is for alterity. These people need recognition from other autonomous beings. So if you take autonomy seriously you are subject to this objection. So it seems to me that if you want to defend foreign policy, humanitarian interventions, and things of this sort, the ultimate drive behind this is to create a world where other people are in fact influenced. I want to be uncomplicated on this point. I want to stand up and say — and I think I’m right on this — that the others are simply nay-sayers and people who don’t understand the process that the classical liberals ask for, and they offer no coherent alternative. And if you are somehow caught between these two positions, then I would argue that you haven’t thought about what the positions entail.

Prof. Geismann: I would say that some of these alternatives are not exclusive alternatives. You have personal autonomy and you have tyranny. Autonomy degenerating into alienation is not allowable in the crafting of the state, but tyranny would be exploitation. You have liberty and equality, but equality comes first, which means at the same time equality of rights. The social good is an interesting point. Kant’s idea of the state is at first the Night Watchman state. So, the state primarily has to interfere in economics. But since its main function is to safeguard the rights of the individual, and since the rights of individuals can also be affected by the social situation of individuals in the state — the economically poor, and so on — according to Kant the state has to ensure the social state, and this is not socialism. The function of the state would be then to enforce rules such that class distinctions couldn’t exist. For the rest, the economy is free. So he would never have thought of a classless society. He would never have thought of a society in which classes have the opportunity to suppress other people, because that would be against their rights. So if you keep in mind that rights are the primary concept, then you can add the rest. And not vice versa.

Miles Smit: Professor Moors made a distinction at the beginning of the conference regarding the tension between the cosmical and the scholastical perspectives. Kant suggests the possibility that the scholastic can afford to be audacious or utopian in his prognostications or demands because he’s likely to be ineffective. But what I noticed in the discussion of, for example, either an overlay or a confusion between a kingdom of ends and a cosmopolitan republic, is something that reminded me of Vogelin’s concerns about “immanentizing the eschaton”, the concern that it might not be the worst thing possible that scholastic ideas or utopian ideas are
ineffectual in the pursuit of peace, because these ideas might be detrimental. On the one hand you think of something that might be lampooned like the Kellogg-Brand pact of 1928, which outlawed war – albeit to no great effect. But it seems to me that some ideals that have promised a peace have said that the cost of peace might be a passing slaughter, after which an enduring peace will be brought about. I'm thinking of the Khmer Rouge, for example. Would either of you have anything to say about the suggestion that while the Kantian kingdom of ends lies on the far side, perhaps the limits of what is realizable might perhaps come in the form of a cosmopolitan republic? This was an idea raised by many people at the conference.

PROF. GEISMANN: The idea of ends doesn’t appear at all in Kant’s idea of the state. The state has only one end: to safeguard that people can have their ends, their purposes, and as long as the realization of these purposes does not interfere with the purposes of others, you may follow whatever purposes you want. They may be moral or immoral, as long as you don’t interfere with the rights of others. And that is the only end the state has. Kant’s idea of the despotic state is that the state tells people which ends they should follow. That is absolutely un-Kantian.

PROF. CAPALDI: I understand the question quite differently. I think you can divide philosophy into two groups – an Aristotelian and a Platonist. If you are an Aristotelian you are inevitably going to be led to the idea of an end; if the form does matter, which it does for the Aristotelian, then you are inevitably going to come to the idea of the eschaton. If you are a good Platonist – and I count Augustine and Kant among these – you need to do your best to ameliorate the human condition and make it function like a body. It did seem to me there was some confusion during our discussions in the conference about when this eternal peace was to become effective. Remember how Kant says that this would be when history would be following a rule? Well, if the world were all commercial republics then we would not have to set up commercial republics as a norm.

PROF. GEISMANN: What is a commercial republic?

PROF. CAPALDI: It comes from Montesquieu’s laws. Ancient republics were small. The question then arose especially in the founding of the American state: could there be such a thing as a large successful republic based on a small Greek-style republic? Montesquieu referred to the Federalist Papers, where the possibility was discussed that a large republic could be successful if it was based on commerce.

PROF. GEISMANN: But where do you find that idea in Kant?

PROF. CAPALDI: I’m presuming that if you take Kant’s autonomy then two things follow: rep-
representative governments and private property – as well as the idea that you have a freedom of economy. Certainly his reading of Adam Smith and Hume would have led him to share those views.

PROF. GEISMANN: But he was definitely not living in a world of republics, in a world with what you call commercial republics or a free economy.

PROF. CALALDE: But he was living in a world in which he had read people like Montesquieu and Hume and Smith and he could see the direction in which all of this was moving. I think this is something that can be developed.

PROF. MOORS: I will refer back to my first question as to what kind of a role philosophy and philosophers can have in the goal of perpetual peace, and with regard to globalization. Professor Geismann, a philosopher’s position is normative. This normativity comes from a premise. Do you presuppose that behind and backing this view of morality as law-giving, there is a philosopher’s task? Can you elucidate the foundations of that task?

PROF. GEISMANN: If you write a metaphysics of morals in contrast to a physics of morals you have to base it on principles, and that means that you have to reflect these principles, and that is what Kant has done.

PROF. MOORS: But what is normativity?

PROF. GEISMANN: But this gives me the possibility to say, well, this is an “is question”! But then, if you say “This is my duty”, this also gives you the possibility to say that this is an “is question”, but it is a normative question.

PROF. MOORS: I think the philosopher’s task would also be, from an ontological point of view, to elucidate the very being of what is precisely at the centre of our problem.

PROF. GEISMANN: But Kant’s question is definitely not ontological. Kant’s anthropology as an empirical science was always a moral science. His answer is normative: being under the laws of freedom.

PROF. CALALDE: I think Prof. Moors has asked the most important question. This is philosophy’s most important function. Philosophy has to present the big picture. That is philosophy’s ultimate responsibility. The sad fact is that very few of us bear up to that challenge. There are lots of things against us. For example, philosophers are often expected to be specialists, which is totally the wrong notion. The last philosopher I know of who was able to perform this function was Hegel, the last of the big systematic philosophers. We are still waiting for the next systematic philosopher to come forward. There are no candidates for that now. That does not discredit philosophy, although it may discredit the people who get paid to teach philosophy.

RENÉE RYAN: Is there then still hope?

PROF. CALALDE: If we can still have a conference on Kant’s cosmopolitanism, this gives me a great deal of hope.

GEISMANN: I hope I’ll still be here when this next great systematic philosopher arrives!
INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR TENGEYLI

Professor László Tengelyi paid a short visit to the Institute of Philosophy as one of our visiting Thursday speakers and delivered a paper entitled “The Phenomenological Experience of the World”. Professor Tengelyi is currently professor of philosophy at Bergischen Universität Wuppertal and has also been president of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für phänomenologische Forschung since 2003. His research mainly centers on the relationship between phenomenology and contemporary French philosophy. Professor Tengelyi has written extensively on phenomenology, hermeneutics and his publications include Der Zwitterbegriff Lebensgeschichte (1998), an expanded and reworked version of which has just been published in English as The Wild Region in Life-History (2004).

Professor Tengelyi, could you start off by telling us a little bit about your philosophical background and how would you describe your current research interests?

Well, to begin with, I spent ten months in Leuven in 1988-89, where I was one of the first Soros scholars to study here. There was a cooperation between the Catholic University of Leuven and the Hungarian Soros Foundation at that time. The Soros Foundation was a very important foundation in Hungary and all over Eastern Europe. This was the first possibility for me to study in a Western country. I was even allowed to give a seminar on a topic which I was dealing with at that time, namely, Kant and the problem of radical evil. I organized this seminar looking at Kant and some texts of the young Hegel, that is, The Spirit of Christianity and its Destiny, and Schelling’s On the Essence of Human Freedom, and even some texts of Kierkegaard.

Back then I saw in Leuven, for the first time, how phenomenology could be practiced; especially the lectures given by Rudolf Bernet were important for me. I had, of course, known some phenomenology, Husserl as well as Heidegger, but it wasn’t my main topic of interest.

After that I spent two years in Germany as a Humboldt scholar and this also made a huge impression on me. It was in Wuppertal and Bochum that I studied with Professors Klaus Held and Bernhard Waldenfels respectively. At the famous phenomenological seminar in Wuppertal, Klaus Held amazed us all with his unique ability to develop a train of thought out of simple questions and answers. He developed a phenomenology entirely inspired by Husserl that also took in some influences of Heidegger. Husserl and Heidegger were combined in a very interesting manner; the uniqueness of this approach lies in the fact that Heidegger was treated in a very Husserlian and not Heideggerian language. The Waldenfels School developed another type of phenomenology, influenced by French thought. At that time, Waldenfels was working on a book entitled Antwortregister, which, in my opinion, was one of the most important books published in Germany in the 1990s. It is an original approach to phenomenology, mainly inspired on the one hand by Merleau-Ponty and on the other hand by Levinas. It was this very fresh approach to Levinas which inspired me at that time to write my own book in German Der Zwitterbegriff Lebensgeschichte, which has now appeared in English in a partly abridged, partly enlarged edition (it
now contains a first part which was not in the German original). This book was, on the one hand, about a theory of narrative identity, inspired mainly by Alasdair MacIntyre in the fifteenth chapter of *After Virtue*, and also by the work of Paul Ricoeur, David Carr and Charles Taylor’s *Sources of the Self*. However, the influence of the Waldenfels School led me to be more and more critical of the theory of narrative identity. Thus, I tried to conduct a critical examination of this theory, which led me to an ethics of alterity inspired by Levinas.

My present research concerns what you could describe as the new phenomenology in France, a phenomenology that has been developed over the last two decades. The main problem here, formulated by Jean-Luc Marion, is the search for a third form of phenomenology, which is different both from Husserl’s and Heidegger’s approaches. The main thesis developed by Marion is that there is a third form of phenomenology scattered over the landscape of French thought since the 60s. I think we may distinguish between two epochs in the last four and a half decades. The first is the epoch of the breakthrough by Merleau-Ponty, on the one hand, with his notion of “wild sense” and “creative expression”, and on the other hand, with Levinas’s *Totality and Infinity* and the epiphany of the face, and also Michel Henry’s *L’Essence de la manifestation*, written in 1963, which dealt with affectivity and life force as it reveals itself immediately without an intentionality or an ecstatic attitude towards the world. Even Ricœur’s hermeneutical turn belongs to this kind of breakthrough, since Ricœur’s problem at that time was the problem of the double-meaning of symbols, namely a sense which is not given by intentional consciousness, but which is rather produced by language itself and, more broadly, by what you may call “symbolic expressions”.

The common feature of these various approaches to phenomenology is a common aspiration to describe phenomena that show a certain counter-intentionality – that, in other words, are not entirely dominated by an intentionality of consciousness, not dominated by the sense given by intentional consciousness. Sense arises by itself in Merleau-Ponty as a wild sense; sense is produced by symbolic expressions in Ricœur; and sense is manifested by the other against the interpretation which I develop of the other in Levinas. Although Michel Henry doesn’t speak of sense, he does try to adumbrate the manifestation, which is different from ecstatic intentionality, and thereby to trace the boundaries of ecstatic manifestation. Therefore, you could conceive these different attitudes to phenomenology as an attempt to describe a counter-intentionality, a term used by Marion in *Etant donné*. It is very important that counter-intentionality assigns a certain independence and initiative to the phenomena themselves as against intentional consciousness. However, Marion remarks, correctly I believe, that counter-intentionality is just a turn within intentionality itself. That is, it is not something completely outside of intentionality but, more importantly, belongs to intentionality. One could use a Greek term to describe it, namely, the *peripeteia* of intentionality. This was the first epoch; it is marked by different attempts to describe some specific phenomena, which awaken a certain interest in this reversal of intentionality, but which, however, are neither systematized nor reflected upon from a methodological point of view. The awareness of having produced a new kind of phenomenology is not yet present in this epoch.

The second epoch, the last two decades of
phenomenology, is marked by a certain consciousness of having developed a third form of phenomenology. In this epoch the very notion of phenomenon is reflected upon and conceived of in a new way. On the one hand, we have the attitude of Marion, which I would describe as an integrative approach, because he tries to develop a phenomenology of givenness, thereby synthesizing the phenomenology developed in the early 1960s, especially of Levinas and Henry, and even of Ricœur (but much less of Merleau-Ponty). On the other hand, I also consider Marc Richir to be a very important phenomenologist. He has developed a very different attitude towards French phenomenology, an attitude which I would characterize as differential; that is, he tries to distinguish himself from Levinas and Henry as well as from Marion. Richir, at first, attempted to develop and continue a line of thought put forward by the later Merleau-Ponty, while in his recent writings he even criticizes Merleau-Ponty for having developed a new metaphysics within phenomenology. In his criticism of Merleau-Ponty, Richir tries to develop a phenomenology relying entirely upon Husserl. However, this is a Husserl to be rediscovered. What Richir says is not something to be found immediately in Husserl’s own writings; it is an interpretation which goes beyond the original texts.

Your paper tonight deals with the topic of infinity in both Kant and Husserl. Could you briefly explain why the issue of infinity is an important theme for you?

Well, I have two interests stemming from the problem of infinity. The first is an attempt to unite or connect my two main interests, namely, Kant and phenomenology. I should add that in Wuppertal we had for a while a professor of philosophy, Kai Hauser, who was also a mathematician, and we worked together on Cantor; an interest in Cantor is also present in this paper. On the other hand, this threefold interest in Kant, Husserl, and Cantor is also integrated within my project on a new phenomenology in France. More particularly, it is connected with an attempt to develop phenomenology as a new kind of first philosophy. This is the main project of Marion which, I believe, must be taken seriously but should be interpreted very modestly – that is, it must be understood that first philosophy is not a claim to dominance or to a prevalent position within philosophy. One could even speak of last philosophy instead of first philosophy, as Marion actually does, hinting
at what was described in the tradition of Western philosophy as a *metaphysica ultima*. However, it is my opinion that many of the great problems of metaphysics should be reconsidered in the light of phenomenology. I’ll also be dealing with this in tonight’s paper. What is interesting here is the new approach to things and world. It is only the phenomenological reduction that allows the perception of a thing as an omnilaterally infinite continuum of different appearances and partial aspects (*Abschattungskontinuum*). This means that the “thing” can be considered as an actual infinity of partial aspects only because we have already accomplished the phenomenological reduction. Husserl maintains that in the natural attitude things, of course, cannot be described as exhibiting an infinity of different properties; it is only through the phenomenological approach that an infinity of partial aspects can be taken into account.

As you have indicated in your paper, the notion of actual infinity was rejected after Aristotle, and subsequently somewhat rehabilitated in scholasticism. What new avenues of research does this specific Husserlian account of infinity open up for phenomenology?

Well, as you say, actual infinity was rejected by Aristotle in the *Physics* and in his summary of the *Physics* in Book Kappa of the *Metaphysics*. Aristotle formulated the thought that there is no actual infinity; there is only a potential infinity. In Scholasticism you find, for example in Thomas Aquinas, a reinterpretation of infinity applied to God. It is an actual infinity, but it has nothing to do with quantity; it is the infinity of the power of God. Therefore, it is not actually a rehabilitation of actual infinity from the point of view of mathematics. There are several attempts to reintroduce actual infinity later into philosophy, first with Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno, and then, with Spinoza and Leibniz. Cantor himself, who was a most erudite expert of the history of philosophy as well as a creative mathematician, considered these philosophers to be his forerunners, and he was well aware of their various attempts. They all made an attempt to interpret the world itself as an actual infinity. However, they distinguished actual infinity from quantity, which contained parts and was measurable; so actual infinity was not measurable in this tradition. If you take, for example, the scholion to the fifteenth proposition from the first book of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, there is a very important distinction between two kinds of infinity, the first being an infinity of imagination, the second being the infinity of intellection. The first of these two kinds of infinity is not a real or actual infinity but only a potential one; it consists of parts and has measure, yet it is still only potential. On the contrary, actual infinity, the infinity of intellection, has no parts, admits of no measure, and is unique and indivisible. There is no articulated internal structure to this infinity. This is why Cantor distinguishes his own position from that of Spinoza and Leibniz, by describing what he calls the *transfinite* as an intrinsically articulated infinity. There are several transfinite multiplicities that are different from each other in composition, order, and size. However, Cantor elaborated transfinity in his set theory only in a mathematical way. Yet Cantor’s work is important also for philosophy, because he was not only a mathematician, but he also suggested that there could be a metaphysics of the transfinite. However, in the end, he could not say exactly what that was. He simply assumed that there are certain ways in which the transfinite acquires a reality in the world itself. Now, here is where phenomenology is interesting, because it shows
how a transfinite multiplicity of partial aspects can be assumed without assuming that, within the natural attitude itself, we find an infinity of properties. So, it is not ontology that rehabilitates actual infinity, but rather phenomenology that has already broken with natural ontology. Hence, it is not traditional metaphysics which can rehabilitate actual infinity, but instead phenomenology understood as first philosophy.

With your introduction of the concept of infinity into phenomenological thought, are you at once also suggesting that something like hopefulness should be the underlying attitude of phenomenological research?

Well, we may approach this question by considering the problem of horizons. There are not only external horizons but internal ones as well. This means that even a partial aspect of a thing has a certain inexhaustibility. One cannot foresee how new aspects of a thing can be discovered, because every little alteration in your position, every alteration in the direction of your attention, can produce new aspects of a thing. Hence, it is an inexhaustibility that is related to the subject and not just to the thing itself, or, to put it more properly, to the thing in relation to the subject. This inexhaustibility is a product of a transcendental attitude towards things. On the one hand, there is an infinity of aspects, which can be evidently experienced and foreseen; that is, there is evidence of an actual infinity of aspects that form a thing. On the other hand, however, it is very important that this actual infinity takes the form of an idea in a Kantian sense. This means, we have to account for the endless process through which all these aspects are really discovered. What we may anticipate is only an actual infinity of aspects, of which there are some already experienced, and others which are merely anticipated. The course of experience will always have some surprises in store. We have certain anticipations and expectations that can always be thwarted even if we know a thing very well. There may be some aspect of a thing which reverses the whole process and forces us to start again. There is always a contingency to this process. Although it is necessary that there be an infinity of aspects, it remains to be seen which aspects these are. One can find in Husserl a certain optimism towards the world and towards the progress of knowledge. Here you may speak indeed of “hopefulness”, if you like, at least in the sense of what the Germans call Weltvertrauen, meaning by that term something like a confidence in the world or in the course of things. Yet, Husserl knows that there always lurks the possibility of deception, and he himself says, in Volume 11 of the Husserliana on Analysen zur passiven Synthesis, that it belongs to the very essence of perception and experience to carry with it something new, and that, therefore, experience can always “slap expectation in the face”. One might be led by this insight to break with what has been termed as “hopefulness”. This doubt, however, is not a predominant feature in Husserl’s work.

Heidegger also has a role in my talk tonight; however, it is not so much Heidegger’s book on Kant that is important for me but, rather, Heidegger’s lecture on Leibniz of 1928, GA 26. Here Heidegger describes how a traditional epistemological idea determines the philosophy and even the logic of Leibniz. This epistemological idea is that of absolute knowledge, the knowledge of an infinite being which sees all things at once, what Saint Thomas calls: Deus omnia videt in uno. For Leibniz says that all propositions are identical propositions, by which he means that for absolute knowledge, all propositions, even contingent propositions, prove to
be identical and therefore in Kantian terms analytic. I organized a seminar on Heidegger’s 1928 lecture course entitled *Die metaphysischen Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, and it was very important for me, while writing this paper, to recall Heidegger’s point that this tradition determined Leibniz’s philosophy, Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* and even Hegel’s *Logic*. To be sure, Kant and Hegel, were not simply influenced by this tradition, but their philosophies can be considered as possible replies to this tradition. Now, what I am asserting is that phenomenology breaks with this tradition when Husserl says, at the end of *Ideas I*, that even God has to take profiles and aspects into account.

You have a new book out in English entitled, *The Wild Region in Life-History*. One theme which this work critically confronts is the issue of self identity and narrative identity in contemporary philosophy. You claim that a philosophy of narrative identity can be charged with a certain confusion of self identity and singularity; what you have termed “our irreplaceable unicity”. What, exactly, do you mean by “our irreplaceable unicity”?

At the bottom of this distinction one finds Levinasian considerations. In Levinas we find indeed a notion of a singularity without identity. According to Levinas, singularity is nothing other than a certain position towards the claims of others (that is, of the other and the third). Singularity is constituted by the task assigned to the subject by his elementary relation to the other; it is the election of the subject that follows from this task. This is what I call the “singularity” or “irreplaceable unicity” of the subject. Levinas asserts that there is a layer of the subject, its singularity, which is not dependent upon reflection. I think this is an old observation, as old as Hume, even if Levinas does not directly draw upon Hume. Hume states that personal identity should be put into question, that is, there is no such impression which corresponds to the idea of the ego; what I call my *self* is only a bundle of perceptions. However, the question of personal identity is, as yet, not solved by these considerations because, according to Hume, there are also certain *passions* related to our personality. Hence, there is no personal identity present in this reflective identity, but there is a certain passion related to our ego. So, here there is an important distinction to be found in Hume. I don’t agree with his solution, but I do believe it is very important that he made a distinction between these two layers of identity, namely reflection upon oneself and passions related to oneself. One could also make a similar criticism of narrative identity, which is entirely elaborated from the perspective of a reflection upon oneself. That is, we are recounting stories about ourselves and about others, others are telling us stories about ourselves and we are integrating these stories into a picture we have of ourselves. All these stories are means for our reflection upon ourselves. Being however — in this case, being oneself —, is not exhausted by this reflection; it also presupposes an atemporal experience of oneself. Yet, temporal experience is much deeper; it is also the entirely passive experience, described by Husserl. Thus, it is a process of passive synthesis and not a process consisting of the various reflections of the ego that go on to play a role in the self-constitution of the subject.

One could say that the differences of the temporal relation of the subject to itself had already been discovered by Husserl himself. He describes the ego in different contexts differently — that is, the subject or ego is on the one hand the centre of actions and affections, but on the other hand the subject is also the ego
of re-presentations or presentifications (das Ich der Vergegenwärtigungen), and this always has the structure of intentional implication. Here, there is an accomplishing ego, on the one hand, and an implied or implicated ego on the other, for instance in remembrance. However, these two egos are identified with each other, but this identification is possible only because there is a difference between them. The present and the past egos are identified; this identification itself is a passive synthesis, and hence no activity of the ego is implied in this identification.

I would like to turn to the Heideggerian term Jemeinigkeit. This is, in a certain sense, the expression of a fundamental evidence. It is evident that certain existential problems like the call of conscience, being confronted with one’s own death, and so on, have a certain singularity to them and are related to ourselves in such a manner that they are characterised by Jemeinigkeit, that is, each of us is concerned with them in his or her own way, without being in this respect replaceable by others. There is another evidence mentioned by Marc Richir, an evidence that one can connect to a Heideggerian Jemeinigkeit, namely that each of us can only live his or her own life – the other cannot live my life in place of myself. There is even a third evidence of a related kind, namely that I may change to the extent that I am not the same as I once was, but I cannot change to the extent that I am no longer myself. Hence, there is a substantial layer within personal identity that has nothing to do with reflection; this is the great truth of Levinas. So, how can one find out what this substantial layer of self-identity consists in? It is perhaps not entirely satisfying to say, with Levinas, that it is a position assigned to oneself within a framework of different subjects, that it is just a task which is assigned to oneself which specifies and characterizes your self identity at its most profound core (that is, your singularity). This is perhaps not entirely satisfying because it is not a phenomenological description of how this core is constituted in oneself. How can one describe it? I think here Michel Henry has developed a certain perspective, and I have attempted to deal with this problem. Henry has developed a phenomenology of life which considers life as strictly the life of a person, so he distinguishes his phenomenology of life from all philosophies of life, for example Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and even Freud. He considers Bergson’s philosophy of life, for example, as a metaphysics that is based on the assumption that there is such a thing as life – in bold capital letters. This life is not personal but anonymous, and is permanently at work if you are a living being. Henry develops, on the contrary, a position according to which life is always personal, and that’s what he’s trying to describe when he says that affectivity, as the materiality of life, always has a personal character. It is what is called in French l’ipséité, ipseity in English, and this selfhood is based upon a constant affectivity, a constant Befindlichkeit, a constant attunement which manifests itself by way of a revealing that is different from ecstatic manifestation. However, perhaps it is also a shortcoming in Michel Henry’s position that he does not draw a strong enough relation between affectivity and the situation in which I am. Heidegger's notion of Befindlichkeit had the great merit of relating attunement and affectivity not just to objects, but to the surrounding situation in which I find myself.

The terms “wild region” and “wild sense” were first used by Merleau-Ponty and your own project seems to hinge upon the possibility of bringing this wild and creative wellspring to bear on Levinas’ notion of unlimited respon-
sibility. Simply put, is this what you mean by the notion, expressed in the final chapter of your book, of a “wild region of responsibility to the other”?

This question is entirely legitimate. It is, indeed, a very good question. I come from a tradition, the Waldenfelsian tradition, in which these two authors have been connected to each other. Yet, how they are related is still a huge problem. There are two different models followed up by the two philosophers; one is the model of intertwining in Merleau-Ponty, the other the model of separation in Levinas. So, “wild sense” is a term used by Merleau-Ponty which presupposes a certain kind of interconnection and even intercorporality, a bodily chiasm. Separation in Levinas has another aspect of thought; the relation between oneself and the other is based on the insight that the two figures are distinguished from each other. Being itself, for Levinas, is considered as exhibiting the very structure of the same and the other, and they are separated from each other in this structure. They are, consequently, by no means intertwined with each other. Hence, one cannot say that in the other there is a self, and in the self there is another. The whole point of this metaphysical assumption would be undermined if one understood it as an intertwining. So these two authors, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty, cannot be simply synthesized. That is why your question is legitimate.

Yet, I do believe that the notion of “unlimited responsibility” can still be described in a relevant way as a “wild responsibility”; this is the main step that is necessary for me. By “wild responsibility” I mean simply that “unlimited responsibility” is a responsibility that has yet to be limited. All responsibility must be something we can take up; consequently, it must be limited. A responsibility for everyone in the world is only a “wild” responsibility, which has still to be limited; otherwise it could not be taken up. However, what Levinas tries to show is that responsibility has a tendency to enlarge itself, to go beyond all given limits. This is to be understood in the following way: we always already find ourselves in a situation where our duties and responsibilities are limited; they are limited by laws, by rules of institutions, by moral customs, and even by the habits of the family into which we are born. So, there are only limited responsibilities in these situations, but these situations, which relate oneself and the other, are prone to call such limits into question. Moral order, which is essentially an order of limited responsibility, is, then, only justifiable to some extent and not once and for all. What Levinas means is that “unlimited responsibility” is not something that exists. It is not an entity alongside limited responsibility. Instead, it is only the tendency of a situation to call into question all limited responsibilities that have always already been given to us. If one understands responsibility in this way, then one may be able to apply the concept of “wild responsibility”, in the same way that Merleau-Ponty uses this term, to characterize a region within society, which has not yet been fully domesticated and which, of course, can never be entirely domesticated. “Wild responsibility” is a principle that calls into question all particular moral orders; therefore, it may even be characterized as a principle of “anarchy”. However, it is, as Levinas puts it, the principle of an “anarchy of the Good”.

Interviewed by Niall Keane and Vincent Wargo
In May 2005, the Institute of Philosophy had the honour of hosting Prof. Dr. Theo Verbeek, who came to Leuven to give a lecture entitled “Two theories of action in Spinoza?”, as part of the Thursday Lecture Series. Professor Verbeek is now working in the University of Utrecht. He studied French Philology and Philosophy at the University of Amsterdam, and then lectured on the history of psychology at the Rijksuniversiteit at Leiden. After this, he was a researcher and lecturer in the history of early modern philosophy at the Rijksuniversiteit of Utrecht. In 1988, he earned his doctorate in Utrecht, with a dissertation on La Mettrie’s Traité de l’âme.

An internationally renowned expert in seventeenth-century philosophy, he has published numerous books and studies in Dutch, English and French, first and foremost on Descartes and Spinoza. He is a member of several academic societies, both nationally and internationally, such as the Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen; he is the editor of important scientific reviews and series of books on the history of philosophy (Medieval and Early Modern Science); and has received various awards for his research, including the Prix Descartes Huygens. He has been a guest professor at many universities, including the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, and the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science in Tokyo.

Professor Verbeek, would you please begin with a few words about your academic career?

Well, I started my academic career somewhat late in life, with a dissertation in 1988, which was the critical edition of La Mettrie’s Histoire naturelle de l’âme (1745) with a historical study and an analysis of the sources he had used. Meanwhile, I had been asked to publish the documents and texts concerning Descartes’s conflict with Utrecht theologians, which I did in the same year. After that time, I concentrated almost entirely on Dutch Cartesianism, and published a book on that, Descartes and the Dutch.

This was half of the plan I had wanted to carry out, since I had wanted to pursue the history of Cartesianism in The Netherlands until 1656. In 1656, there was an important condemnation of the teaching of Descartes’s ideas by the States of Holland, which would have been a nice point to finish the story. However, the project was becoming much too voluminous, so I stopped with the death of Descartes.

Hence, my first focus was really on Descartes and Cartesianism in The Netherlands, but there are a number of problems with this topic. As you might guess, there is the problem of the relationship between new philosophy and ancient philosophy, new methods of teaching philosophy and traditional methods of teaching philosophy. Then, later in the century, another...
factor has to be considered, which is Spinoza and Spinozism.

At that time, I did not really like the philosophy of Spinoza. But whereas all anti-Cartesians claimed that Cartesianism was the basis of Spinozism, they dissociated themselves from Spinoza. So there is a difficult philosophical and historical problem here about the relation between Cartesianism and Spinozism. This brought me inevitably to Spinoza, so in 1993-1994 I started to work on a book about Spinoza’s *Theological-political treatise,* because my impression was that, if I started there, something sensible could be said about the relation between Cartesianism and Spinozism. I think that did indeed prove possible, although I should say that the last chapter of that book, which explicitly addresses the problem of the relationship between Descartes and Spinoza, is not entirely to my satisfaction. Therefore, one of my present projects concerns this theme.

Would you tell us a little about your current projects?

Well, I have three projects going on now: one of them is a book on Spinoza’s theory of mind and action, which will more explicitly address the question of the relationship between Descartes and Spinoza. Naturally, this project builds on the last chapter of my book on the *Theological-political treatise,* but I hope it will be more comprehensive and more systematic.

Second, I have started writing a book on language and communication in the Cartesians, a subject on which I published a long time ago. Here, the point is that Cartesians developed a strategy of dissociating themselves from Spinoza by concentrating on the issue of language. Language is a very complex problem, because part of the discussion on Spinoza and Spinozism had to do with the interpretation of the Bible.

Now in the Bible, you have for instance this famous passage in Joshua. Joshua prays to the Lord, that the sun might stop from moving; then the day becomes longer, which allows the Hebrews to win the battle. This was of course one of the classic passages used to counter Copernicanism and related ideas. Then there are other places in the Bible: there is a passage in Ecclesiastes, where the sun goes up and the sun goes down, or in the Psalms, where in the morning the sun leaves its tent as a bridegroom, and hastens through the day, and so on. In short, there are a number of passages in the Bible in which it is suggested that it is the sun that moves.

The Cartesians, then, sought a way of reconciling physics (needless to say, their physics was Copernican and heliocentric) with theology, and they did it by separating two spheres of reality, each of which was associated with a specific type of language and a specific type of ideas. First, there is the language of everyday, which is a language based on ideas we acquire by perceiving and experiencing things through the body. Second, there is the language of science and physics, which is essentially the language of mathematics. The latter uses ideas that are innate, belonging to the soul alone, and that the soul has by itself. Now the idea is that the language of everyday, and the language of science are completely separate semantic systems, because they refer to different types of ideas; so if Spinoza uses philosophy to interpret Scripture, that is a category mistake. In my book, I would like to discuss this whole argument and to pursue it in its different details.

Third, I am working on a new, critical and
historical edition of the correspondence of Descartes. I believe this is my most important project in terms of the amount of time necessary, and perhaps the most intrinsically important one as well. Since 1996, I have been working with a student who became interested in philological and historical problems in early modern philosophical texts. He made a very fine dissertation on the correspondence between Descartes and Regius (the Utrecht professor of medicine), which he completely, and I think brilliantly, reconstructed.

This gave me the courage to start, together with him, to make a new edition of the entire correspondence. We have been working on it together for several years. Last year, we published a pilot volume on one year of the correspondence, 1643. I think that the reactions to this volume were favourable. We published it in the collection of our department, so it is not a commercial edition. We wanted to try out the editorial methods. Oxford University Press has now taken up this project and is very interested and eager to publish the correspondence. It will take me at least another five or six years to carry it through – so long as the funding holds out for my student, because I couldn’t do it without his collaboration.

One of your most interesting books, which we have here in the library of the Institute, is Descartes and the Dutch: Early Reactions to Cartesian Philosophy. This book contains a fascinating historical chapter dealing with the so-called “Utrecht crisis”. Would you mind outlining the philosophical content of this event, which was critical in the reception of Cartesian philosophy in the Netherlands?

Well, it is not easy to single out one particular (in this case, the philosophical) aspect of the Utrecht crisis, because it had to do with so many different things! But perhaps the best way to approach it is by starting out from the respective positions of theology and philosophy in the academic curriculum of the age.

In Utrecht, as in The Netherlands generally, the official standpoint was (though there is always a gap between the official standpoint and the practice) that philosophy together with history, classics, languages and rhetoric belonged to the Arts Faculty. For this reason, these disciplines were seen as preparatory to the higher faculties: theology, medicine and law. This means that the place philosophy occupied in the academic curriculum was subordinate to the higher faculties, and that, in principle at any rate, philosophy had to respect the method and, so to speak, the goals of the higher faculties. Now this subordination was perhaps not even specific to Utrecht, and perhaps it was never sharply felt, because in practice, it may not have been real any more! In Leiden for example, there was an Arts Faculty, which was richer in traditions and livelier than the Faculty of Law or Medicine. In any case, the problem with Cartesianism was that it made philosophy much more important than that, and this is perhaps the first point you should realize before you study the conflict.

There is, however, a second point: that this was also a critical moment for Calvinist theology. In The Netherlands, we had – between 1606 and 1620, say – a theological, ecclesiastical and even political crisis, which had to do with the question of predestination and grace. As you may know, this led to the schism in the Dutch church in 1620, which had huge political implications.
Voetius, who was the Utrecht theologian most concerned in the Utrecht crisis, had been a student in Leiden during these critical developments in the church, and despite his orthodoxy, he believed that it was impossible for theology to formulate dogmas in a completely satisfactory manner without philosophy. This was far from being obvious: his adversaries thought exactly the opposite! The Arminians, for instance, thought “Why should we make dogma more precise than it is in the Bible?” But Voetius himself was very concerned about formulating dogma in the most exact and precise way possible. While in Scripture you find various utterances about predestination, for example, philosophy entitles you to be more specific, and affirm that something is a certain way. Hence, Voetius was interested in a sort of philosophical infrastructure to theology.

However, he needed to defend his position, because it seemed to be almost Roman Catholic. Now defence was possible only if Voetius could present philosophy as an articulated version of common sense, because Calvinist theology in this respect was “sola Scriptura, sola gratia, sola fides”. Therefore, his position was that philosophy should be a hand-maid to theology, provided it was sound philosophy, built on common sense, logic, and so on. Needless to say, the only philosophy which satisfied this requirement was Aristotelian philosophy, and certainly not Cartesian philosophy, because Descartes breaks with common sense in a very explicit way, which is perhaps the third point.

To make this point, let us first take Voetius’s conception of reason, which was thoroughly pessimistic. Since we are concerned with fallen man, said Voetius, and since man’s reason has fallen with him, there is a great risk that if you reject the testimony of the senses and the traditional methods of philosophy, like disputations and dialectical exercises, then the imagination will lose all contact with reality. Madness in his view was simply like that, for really, what is madness? Take a lunatic, who does not believe the evidence of his senses: he lies in rags on his straw mattress, and he thinks he is the emperor of China. People tell him “No, you are not the emperor of China”, but he says “Yes I am” – in short, he does not believe the testimony of his senses, and he isolates himself from his fellow men.

But this is exactly what happens with the Cartesian method: you start by forgetting the science and the traditions of the past, you make a tabula rasa, you doubt whatever you know, whatever you are certain of, and instead of discussing and dialectically testing your opinions, you go meditate! Now, according to Voetius, this entails a lot of psychological trouble, also with respect to personal faith, because in the Calvinist religion, there is, in a latent way, an enormous amount of uncertainty. One thing is certain, of course: God has predestined you either to condemnation or to beatitude, but you do not know to which. At a certain point, you can have some sort of experience that teaches you that you are elected, but you still may be mistaken. So the basis of subjective certainty is very small indeed. Therefore, if someone like Descartes wilfully doubts the few certainties he has, that is a frivolity which Voetius would not accept.

Hence, if you see the Utrecht crisis of the reception of Cartesianism along these three axes: the position of philosophy in the academic curriculum, the situation of Calvinist orthodox theology, and the specific method in which Descartes elaborated his philosophy, I think you have the three points of reference you most
Concerning the historical aspect of the crisis, it happened in December 1641, when Regius, the Professor of Medicine, had his students defend the thesis that “man is a being by accident”, an *ens per accidens*. But in the course of the same disputation, Regius also defended the movement of the earth, and he explicitly rejected the substantial forms (in the disputation, it was always the professor who was responsible for the theses). So there were three very dangerous theses here: the rejection of substantial forms, the movement of the earth, and man as an accidental being. Taken together, these triggered off the crisis.

The theological faculty wanted an official condemnation of Regius, but the authorities were reluctant to allow that. They played a moderating role, although they let Voetius make his point clear in another disputation – and in their view, that was it. Yet, after the winter vacation, Regius published a reaction to Voetius’s counter-disputation, and this text, which he had written together with Descartes, was received very badly indeed in Utrecht. This finally led to an official condemnation in March 1642 (although you may know that the rector of my university plans an official retraction of that condemnation next week!). Hence, it was a very complicated story, but this still was not the end of it, as I show in my book as well, because Descartes started to comment on the event in a very nasty and public way, and then there was a reaction to that, and so on. At a certain point, it becomes so complicated that it is almost impossible to follow.

You have also published on Descartes in Dutch; Chapter 6 of your book *De Wereld van Descartes*, deals with Descartes’s correspondence with Princess Elizabeth.

Your question has more than a philosophical facet. On the one hand, it is interesting (at least in practical terms) that Descartes, after he has attempted to convince, let us say, professional philosophers like Voetius, and has devoted his time to professional philosophy, now turns towards the circles of nobility, the amateurs.

But on the other hand, it is philosophically interesting, I think, that Princess Elizabeth set him thinking on the passions. That is probably the most interesting contribution she made to his work, and she did it with great intelligence, for she was a very intelligent lady – but also a psychologically very complicated, unfortunate and unhappy person. Now, Descartes was probably right in believing that the cause of her physical troubles was psychological, and that is the reason why he discussed with her the problem of the passions, and made some very interesting observations on them.

Now I wrote an article about this a long time ago, “Les passions et la fièvre: l’idée de la maladie chez Descartes et quelques cartésiens néerlandais”.7 There I am trying to show that in the Cartesian system, the only way to account for illness (or at any rate, for most illnesses) is by the passions. You can demonstrate this in various ways, but first of all you have to realize that man is a machine, a machine that regulates itself. That is what it does in animals: animals have no minds, but they are very effective in surviving, because their bodies can adapt to various environments. Hence, the basic principle of Cartesian medicine in my view is that you should leave the organism alone, because

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if it manages to survive, it will go on surviving, unless something interferes with the working of the machine.

But there are, of course, various ways in which external things can interfere with the machine, such as temperature, food and exercise. However, if you leave the organism alone, it will seek for itself appropriate food, it will go to sleep whenever it needs to, and so on. Therefore, the only factor that really can interfere with the mechanism of the machine is the passions, for in Descartes’s view, the passions are a very unnatural state of the body; he describes them as emergency reactions of the body, or as an exceptional condition of it.

Further, imagine there is no food available for the organism: in this case, the spleen will open itself, and a flood of coarser blood particles will be incorporated into the bloodstream, so that the heart receives a bit of extra nourishment in the absence of real food. At the same time, though, these coarser blood particles are in principle toxic. Now what happens in the passion of sadness is precisely that the spleen opens itself, the coarser blood particles come into the bloodstream, but this time the situation is artificially prolonged, and so they generate illness. Hence, in one of his letters to Princess Elizabeth, Descartes says that the most frequent cause of fever is sadness, because the latter can produce a “slow” fever of a not dangerously high temperature, say of 38 degrees. This means that the passions are pathogenic factors – perhaps the only pathogenic factors, because in all other cases you may say that the organism can deal with the problem itself — and this is an interesting theory.

May we now turn to one of your other domains of research, namely Spinozism. What is your appraisal of the claim of Spinoza’s adversaries that he was a pantheist — or, for others, an atheist?

In my book *The Theological-Political Treatise*, I never used the words “pantheism” or “atheism”, because I find them too tricky, but there is a problem here indeed. My book is built on the hypothesis that you should take the title of the *TTP* very literally, for Spinoza’s idea here is that the freedom to philosophize is compatible with peace and piety, and even that without the freedom to philosophize, peace and piety are impossible. But in the seventeenth century, the freedom to philosophize could mean one thing only: the cultivation of philosophy (and not the freedom to think or to speak), so we may say that the cultivation of Spinoza’s philosophy is compatible with peace and piety, and even that without his philosophy, peace and piety are impossible. Thus, I believe, he made an allusion to the accusation of atheism.

Now, he really was accused of atheism, and there is a very obvious reason for this: his denial that God is a lawgiver. For Spinoza, God cannot be a lawgiver. So, in principle you have an atheistic position, but what Spinoza wants to show is that, despite his alleged atheism, he respects peace and piety, and indeed, he proposes a version of peace and piety that is perhaps even better. That was my idea in the book, but I tried to avoid making an explicit claim about the so-called atheism of Spinoza, since I do not find such things very meaningful.

Further, the link between Spinozism and atheism also remained explicit throughout the eighteenth century, for instance in *La Mettrie*, although parallel with that, the changing view of religion ushered in a period of positive evaluation of Spinoza. What you see at the end of the eighteenth century is that people like Schleiermacher have a completely new concept
of religion. Now if you define religion as a feeling, as Schleiermacher did, then the question becomes totally different. In the seventeenth century, religion usually was not defined as a feeling. It was seen as a set of beliefs, a certain behavior (piety) and a set of rituals such as prayer – but feeling, though it did play a role, was not the essential thing in the seventeenth century. However, for Schleiermacher, it is the essential thing, and as soon as you define religion according to feeling, the verbal expression of religion becomes less important, so people can say “well, whether you use this formula or another formula, it is always the same religion, for it is the same feeling”! This might explain Schleiermacher’s positive opinion of Spinoza.

Our next question concerns a famous statement in article 36 of Part V of Spinoza’s Ethics, where he says “mens amor intellectualis erga Deum est ipse Dei amor, quo Deus se ipsum amat” (“the intellectual love of the mind toward God is none but the love of God with which He loves Himself”). Would you comment on this cornerstone of Spinoza’s philosophy? Or better, would you term this statement a cornerstone of his philosophy at all? Then again, can we not see an instance of dialectical interplay between the finite and the infinite in this statement?

No, I am reluctant to see it as a cornerstone. I find this last part of the Ethics very problematic, because my impression is that the system is fairly complete without it. Spinoza says somewhere (in the scholium of Proposition 38, I believe) in Part V something like, “in this way, I have shown what liberty consists in, etc.. Naturally, I have done this in the first part also, but then it was by the second kind of knowledge, and that does not make such an impression on the mind”. This suggests more or less that what he is doing in the fifth part of the Ethics is not meant to complete the system, but to provide an alternative to the system. This would suggest that without Part Five, the system is fairly complete. Yet, I find this problem very difficult, though I am perhaps a bit more relaxed about it now than I used to be. (You may have noticed this yesterday evening, because there I explicitly addressed this question as it can be found in the Short Treatise, where I find it more clearly expressed.) The problem is that in the Ethics, he uses this geometrical method, which makes it necessary for him to deduce whatever he claims from earlier theses, and I think that does not work out that well with respect to this particular point.

Now, with respect to the dialectical interplay or game between the finite and the infinite, in the statement in Article 36, the question is whether this is anything more than a game. Let me begin by pointing out that the definition of love on which Spinoza relies in this context is completely different from the definition of love you find in Part IV and in Part III, which is strange. The “official” definition of love is roughly that it is a pleasure based on the idea of something external, whereas the implicit definition of love, on which he relies in Part Five and in the Short Treatise, is of course one of union and unity. There is no separation between the loving and the beloved, so to say. I find this theme in the Short Treatise much easier to understand than it is in the Ethics, because in the former, you can say that first there is love or union through the instrumentality of the body. (Naturally, there is this kind of love; you see it in the passions, in the sensations, in the perceptions, in the imagination and even in reason.) But at a certain point, says Spinoza in the Short Treatise, the soul is emancipated from the body and turns toward God. However, then you have a dualistic system
which is incompatible with what you find in the 
*Ethics*. So I have only problems with this state-
ment.

Professor Verbeek, it has been an honour and a pleasure to 
welcome you here to Leuven University, this distant sister 
of Utrecht University, which is also a very ancient one, 
and which is situated in just as beautiful a city as Leuven.
Thank you very much for this conversation.

Interviewed by Miklos Vassanyi
Keith Robinson attended the Institute of Philosophy as part of the Thursday lecture series, with a paper entitled “The New Whitehead? An Ontology of the ‘Virtual’ in Process and Reality”. In 2004-5 Professor Robinson was a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute, conducting research and teaching a doctoral seminar on the work of Deleuze and Whitehead. He has published work on Foucault and Deleuze and, with professor André Cloots, has recently published a volume of essays with the Royal Flemish Academy entitled Deleuze, Whitehead and the Transformation of Metaphysics. He currently teaches philosophy at the University of South Dakota. Two of our MPhil students from the academic year of 2004-2005, Michela Summa and Peter Wylie, were able to speak with Professor Robinson while he was in Belgium.

Could you tell us a bit about your background?

I did my first degree in the mid 1980s at the University of Essex in philosophy and literature. At the time, the department of philosophy at Essex was quite unique in the context of British philosophy departments because it was very much a department that specialized in so-called “continental philosophy”. It is not strictly true that it was unique, but if you were interested in continental philosophy then, you had to go to either Essex or Warwick in Britain. Like a lot of people, I had been led into philosophy by reading Sartre and Camus. I think many of us read these books when we were fifteen or sixteen or so and they are responsible for a lot of people going into philosophy. So that was where my first efforts in philosophy began, although I initially wasn’t aware that they were part of a distinct way of doing philosophy as such. The department at the time – it has changed a lot now – was a very good philosophy department. There were a lot of people there who have subsequently gone on to become established in philosophy.

After completing my first two degrees at Essex, and developing an interest in contemporary French philosophy, I went to Warwick
to do my PhD, because you could study both Deleuze and Foucault there in a way that you couldn’t elsewhere. Even then there was a kind of divide, and I think there still is, within continental philosophy between German continental philosophy, essentially phenomenology, and a kind of French post-phenomenology if you like; and that division was more or less represented in Britain at the time by Essex and Warwick. You tended to get phenomenology, Husserl but especially Heidegger, and critical theory at Essex. Although I was interested in that, I was also interested in Deleuze and Derrida who were more focal at Warwick. I think it is Éric Alliez who talks about Warwick as this “savage anomaly” – a “department of English Deleuzians”. Well, it really wasn’t quite a department of Deleuzians, but I think it’s fair to say that there was quite a lot of interest amongst graduate students. Things are perhaps a little different now. That was where my interest in Foucault and Deleuze really developed and I completed a PhD in philosophy there, ostensibly on Foucault and space, in the 1990s.

In your book Michel Foucault and the Freedom of Thought you used Deleuze to interpret the work of Foucault. Did you find that in doing so you were able to bring out any otherwise unexpected aspects of Foucault’s work?

Yes. Perhaps the most “unexpected” aspect of Foucault’s work that Deleuze helps one see is in reading him as a philosopher. This was an unusual reading at that time because even in the 90s Foucault’s work was being disseminated throughout sociology, cultural theory, history, political theory and a great many other disciplines. However, none of the then current interpretations seemed to address the philosophical heart of Foucault’s work, precisely because Foucault was not really seen as a philosopher. What I found interesting and useful in Deleuze’s book was that it engaged Foucault as a philosopher. And Deleuze argues, I think very compellingly, that Foucault is a very profound philosopher, one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century. Of course, it turns out to be all remarkably “Deleuzian”, but that didn’t really matter. The fact is that for me Deleuze was able to release Foucault from these readings which portrayed him as just a kind of social theorist.

Now there are a few more books around addressing Foucault as a philosopher. One of the more recent is Foucault’s Critical Project by Béatrice Han-Pile, who is now in fact a professor of philosophy at the University of Essex - my old school. It is an interesting book because it also reads Foucault as deeply in touch with and responding to philosophical issues and problems. I think its central arguments are problematic and it’s far too dependent on phenomenology for its understanding of Foucault, but it’s a terrific book and it is a very good contrast to Deleuze. Both Han and Deleuze deal very well with the movement of Foucault’s thought through the different periods and methodological frameworks that he developed. But, more importantly, both offer a kind of philosophical underpinning that these other treatments of Foucault, it seemed to me, lacked.

What is significant here is that it is a very Kantian philosophical underpinning. Foucault is explicitly responding to Kant. That is what connects these books by Deleuze and Han together. The philosophical underpinning of Foucault’s work is a certain relation to, an inversion of, Kant’s philosophy. But Deleuze and Han differ over the merits of Foucault’s achievement in relation to Kant. Deleuze offers an
account of the apriori in Foucault that engages the problems diagnosed by Han yet displaces the aporetic logic of reduction and the issues of internal consistency and methodology that Han identifies as a problem in Foucault’s thought. In any case, I think Foucault and Deleuze, despite their criticisms, conceive of Kant as in some ways one of the most radical philosophers of the tradition, as someone who has changed the nature of philosophy, of the way to do philosophy, of what the problems of philosophy are. I think this is true of the continental European tradition in general, this importance which one places on Kant and how one responds to the Kantian legacy.

I think that what really draws the threads together in my research between Foucault, Deleuze and, most recently now for me, Whitehead, is their various kinds of responses to the Kantian settlement. And, incidentally, many other figures it seems to me are also responding to Kantian philosophy in similar ways — for example, if you take Derrida and his talk of “quasi-transcendents”. Irigaray talks about the “sensible transcendental”. There are many philosophers it seems to me who, at a deep level, responding to a whole set of Kantian problematics and I think that this is a very rich territory to explore, of how each with slightly differing modes and emphases is responding to the Kantian legacy.

So you see Whitehead as having a similar relationship to the philosophical tradition as these continental figures?

Yes. Whitehead can be fruitfully read as a post-Kantian in a similar way to many continental figures. But, I would say that Whitehead shares, certainly with Deleuze, a remarkably similar kind of response to the philosophical tradition more generally. There is a passage in Whitehead’s *Process and Reality* that I like to quote to people, which nobody pays much attention to, which sums up his relation to the tradition: “The depositions of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, Kant and Hegel, merely mean that ideas that these men introduced into the philosophic tradition must be construed” and this is the point which I would want to italicise “with limitations, adaptations, and inversions, either unknown to them, or even explicitly repudiated by them.” This is a very interesting conception of relation to the tradition - it is a Deleuzian or Heideggerian conception. It is looking for the unsaid in what is said, “A new idea introduces a new alternative; and we are not less indebted to a thinker when we adopt the alternative which he discarded.” Now few people quote these passages but it seems to me to perfectly illustrate that Whitehead works in a very particular way in relation to the history of philosophy. The history of philosophy is taken to the point of its own becoming. It is an immensely rich and creative way of reading and it is also how Deleuze works. Incidentally, as a result of this approach Whitehead is subjected to exactly the same kinds of criticism, for example when he reads Locke, as when Deleuze reads, say, Spinoza. That is to say, these readings for the critics have little to do with the philosophers they’re purportedly about. But these questions of reading are of course very sensitive. These kinds of questions are raised in both Deleuzian and Whiteheadian readings. How far can you push this? I mean, adopting an alternative which a philosopher discarded or adapting and inverting a philosopher’s “depositions” in ways unknown to them. This whole idea of the identity of a philosopher, of what a philosopher’s positions are, is really stretched
to the limit here. This is I think recognized by scholars of Deleuze, Heidegger and Derrida. I think Whitehead is doing this too. They read the tradition in very powerful ways, in very creative ways. When Deleuze talks about Leibniz, he says he is counter-actualizing Leibniz, showing that there is another Leibniz that we can create, that philosophers are always open to new becomings. I think that this is also very much a part of Whitehead’s history of philosophy, his response to the tradition. In that sense he is remarkably Deleuzian (or Deleuze is “Whiteheadian”) but nobody in the academy really reads it. What do they say? The famous Whitehead scholars say he has bad readings of other philosophers and they excuse it by saying that he is an “amateur”, not a “proper” professional philosopher.

There is a whole politics at stake here, a whole set of protocols of reading. Deleuze, Derrida and all these people are very clear about that. They are very insistent about the kinds of readings that they do and the politics of the readings that they do. The base line here for Whitehead, and he says this very clearly, is simply that there is no non-interpretive reading. Every reading is already an interpretation and there is no non-perspectival interpretation. Drawing Whitehead’s metaphysics into this philosophical scene of reading and its politics is something I’ve been interested to do.

When and how did you become interested in Whitehead?

Whitehead was someone I read and became familiar with much later than my earlier work on Foucault and Deleuze – at Warwick primarily I suppose, as a result of my reading of Deleuze. My moving to America must have also played a part in this. There is though a sort of side note to that, which is that a friend of mine at Warwick was writing his PhD on Deleuze and Whitehead. So I was always intrigued by the connection between the two, even though I hadn’t read Whitehead at that point.

So has your reading of Whitehead also been orientated by Deleuze?

Absolutely. I would say that I read Whitehead having already become a Deleuzian. So I was reading Whitehead through those kinds of spectacles, through those kinds of frameworks. And, of course, the fact that Deleuze does engage Whitehead, however briefly, was always interesting to me. It seemed that there was something worthwhile developing. I was always a bit surprised by Deleuze’s reading of Whitehead. It is a purely affirmative reading and in a sense assimilates Whitehead to his own concepts, his own conceptual frameworks and ways of doing philosophy. So I wanted to see if there was something like a kind of a distance, a gap, between Whitehead’s work and Deleuze’s work. I think there are gaps, though I wouldn’t want to overstate them. I think in the end, for me at least, it comes down to a question of emphasis. I think that they share an approach to the history of philosophy. They share a set of problems and their conception and way of doing philosophy is remarkably similar. Their relation to the tradition, to the metaphysical tradition, is also remarkably similar. But of course not many Whiteheadians – or indeed Deleuzians – would see it this way.

So how would you assess your reading of Whitehead in the climate of contemporary philosophy?

I think that there is certainly something happening, something emerging, in Europe in relation to Whitehead and Deleuze and the triangulation of Whitehead, Deleuze and Bergson. It is
gathering apace and I hope that the conference which I am involved in organizing at Leuven and Brussels will push this along a bit further.

But in the Anglo-American philosophical world I think that it is fair to say that there is little interest in the relationship between Whitehead and Deleuze. In fact, in professional philosophy in the Anglo-American world there is generally little interest in either Whitehead or Deleuze, although both of course are read very widely in other disciplines. Deleuze is now an increasingly important figure in a range of theoretical developments in the humanities and social sciences. On the whole, the image of Whitehead’s thought, in America at least, is dominated by the process theology originating from Claremont, carried on by theologians rather than philosophers. They are doing some very good work but I think they have a very traditional reading of Whitehead, a pre-Kantian representationalist reading, as I would call it. And their reading is almost exclusively focused around *Process and Reality* rather than the general trajectory of Whitehead’s writings. *Process and Reality* is the master text, the bible, of process theology in America, and it is used, selectively I think, to support a certain kind of reading of Whitehead which always has a very prominent role for God. The process theologians are interested in Whitehead’s radical reformulation of the concept of God but this is only one element of Whitehead’s thought. There are a lot of Whitehead texts in which this concept is simply absent. In fact in some of the texts after *Process and Reality*, Whitehead moves away from and uses different kinds of formulations like “eros” rather than the word “God”.

Whitehead’s thought can’t be reduced to this one text exclusively or to this particular type of reading, which is pre-eminently theological.

In the other texts you get different Whiteheads, which do not support this theology-centred reading. And Deleuze is, it seems to me, somebody who can help generate the kind of reading that breaks with this theological centre and with traditional representationalist readings of Whitehead. But, of course, the great irony is that when Deleuze does read Whitehead, he has a role for God. And so that is where, if you like, my reading departs from Deleuze’s reading.

*Could you tell us a bit more about how you see the notion and role of God as evolving within Whitehead’s works and the relation of this to Deleuze’s views?*

The texts in which Whitehead talks about God can be read in various ways and I would say that the process theologians have the tendency to read them as offering a pre-Kantian representational metaphysics. On the other hand, Deleuze is using the very same texts in order to shed light on Whitehead’s own problematic, as if the concept of God was a necessary construction. Now, my problem with Deleuze’s reading of the concept of God is that the role and function that this concept has in the framework of Whitehead’s philosophy is quite different from the one that Deleuze ascribes to it. According to him, God would “affirm the incompossibles,” as he writes in his chapter on Whitehead in *The Fold*. He would then merely operate as an affirmative instance of a pure disjunctive synthesis. In fact, it is very hard to say what this means, other than that it keeps the incompossibles open. But this is a very Nietzschean and Deleuzian idea, related to the virtual as the open realm of pure potentiality, which is only limited by its actualization in the world.

Now, it seems to me that in *Process and Reality* the function which God plays is precisely to limit the realm of incompossibles, of pure
potentiality, to restrict the orders of possibility and so offer occasions an “aim”. It is a chaos which has some kind of basic, yet potentially ideal, order imposed on it by God. And it is through God that those orders of possibility are then given to actual occasions to choose or prehend and make the decisions themselves. So it is not a pure chaos as it is in Deleuze. In *Difference and Repetition*, which is the book closest to *Process and Reality* of Deleuze’s books, Deleuze envisages a pure realm of potentialities, a pure chaos which is given an order through the process of differentiation or actualization.

It is that limiting function in relation to possibilities and its ideality, in fact the very notion of possibility, which I think Deleuze is very keen on critiquing in other philosophers. And it surprises me that he doesn’t critique it in Whitehead but chooses to assimilate it to his own philosophical perspective and framework. And so that for me is rather odd, because I think one way of thinking about what Deleuze ought to say here is that this is an element of transcendence that breaks up the immanent world that Deleuze wants to talk about. But he doesn’t do it and for me that is intriguing and interesting in itself.

I think that this more Leibnizian conception of God, that compares and chooses possible worlds, that one sometimes finds in Whitehead is even more unequivocal in the earlier *Science and the Modern World*. In *Adventures of Ideas*, on the other hand, which comes after *Process and Reality*, it seems to me that there is a much more Spinozistic conception of God, almost a kind of pantheism, an identity between nature and God, which is very different from the Leibnizian conception. So there is a move I think towards a kind of naturalism, of course not a mechanistic naturalism, but something like a process naturalism, especially when he writes about an eternal urge of desire. It seems to me that there is a gradual devolution of this role or power that God has in *Science and the Modern World*, which is, perhaps to a lesser extent, still in place in *Process and Reality*, which is finally dispersed or distributed much more in accord with a Deleuzian view in his late works like *Adventures*.

What about those areas in which Deleuze and Whitehead seem closer to one another? You have noted that one way in which a Deleuzian reading of Whitehead might differ from a classical reading is that the latter tends to downplay the role of “transition” and so the role of natural or efficient causation in Whitehead’s thought.

I think that Nobo’s reading of Whitehead is the one that is the closest to Deleuze in this sense and it is interesting that people have reacted to it in all kinds of allergic ways, simply because he foregrounds the notion of transition in a way that really contests this other more classical reading of Whitehead. Transition is usually interpreted as simply the cessation of the subject’s process of becoming, of its process of concrescence. When concrescence ends, transition is just this bridge, as it were, to the next repetition of the process of becoming. Many of the traditional readings feel that transition is just this kind of endpoint of process, that becoming is terminated or finished. But then you have the problem of how this process starts up again. If becoming has come to a completion, then you require something to initiate this process again and this is where God comes in. God initiates the new aim. And there is a reading of *Process and Reality* that substantiates this to a certain extent, which is why many of the theological readings are centred on this text.

Other less theological readings, on the other
hand, come close to a bifurcation or a kind of mechanism. If the subject is just this kind of cut or unit of process, an epochal unit which finishes its process when its becoming comes to an end, then it seems to me that you are close to talking about something like a set of independent existences which form a kind of pure discontinuity. This comes close to many of the views that Whitehead wanted explicitly to get around, the mechanistic view of atoms or atomic units that are simply externally related to one another. Then the problem is, how do they connect? Positing an atomicity of process over an atomicity of substance doesn’t strike me as much of an advance. So it seems to me that unless you offer another kind of reading, you are not really fulfilling the project that Whitehead set out to talk about in *Process and Reality*, which is the processual nature of the real.

It seems to me that there is another reading that one can give of *Process and Reality* where transition is a form of creativity, but of a different kind which maps very nicely onto the Deleuzian structure of the distinction between the virtual and the actual. Transition is very much the onset of genesis, the transitional process that leads into and initiates concrescence. It is a different form of creativity from concrescence, the ongoingness of time and nature. I think this is very analogous to the process that Deleuze talks about when he talks about the virtual differentiating itself. So there are ways in which you can take ideas from Deleuze and develop a kind of reading of Whitehead which might otherwise be somewhat submerged and has been overlooked by the traditional commentaries. And it is going to ruffle the feathers of not just the theologians because this makes Whitehead much more immanent, but also of those who have other more naturalistic readings which tend to assimilate Whitehead’s work to a kind of mechanistic naturalism rather than a process naturalism.

*What about those notions which Deleuze highlights in Whitehead, namely the notions of event, chaos and creativity? Do you think that a fruitful comparison between the two could be established on the basis of these?*

It depends on which problems and texts you are considering. Take for example the notion of event, which is obviously a hugely important concept in Deleuze and equally decisive early on in Whitehead. For the latter, this notion appears in the early texts as tied to a notion of continuity. Events overlap one another. They extend over and are internally related to one another in such a way that the whole is nothing but an interconnected system of events. Yet in *Process and Reality* things change and the event appears as a kind of discontinuity, as atomic or epochal, as Whitehead puts it, foregrounding the notion of the occasion as a kind of epochal unit. Here the event is a form of individual unity that you cannot find in the earlier texts. So the emphasis here has changed.

In Deleuze, on the other hand, I think the notion of the event is fairly stable throughout his texts. It is a double notion. It has a kind of double structure: the ideal event which subsists or insists in the virtual and the event as a state of affairs, as actualized. Now you could compare Whitehead’s notion of the event with Deleuze’s notion of the event, but it would depend upon the problem one is addressing, which Whiteheadian notion of the event, and which texts you took, as to how productive the encounter between these concepts would be. The same is true with concepts like chaos and creativity, since all these concepts are tied together.
So more important here is understanding what problems within Whitehead’s and Deleuze’s thought these concepts were constructed in relation to, what they were to “do”, how they were put to work. Early on Whitehead needed the idea of the event as extension, because he thought everything could be got out of it. When the problems changed the concept underwent transformation. In Deleuze, this work is more “subterranean”; although the event may remain relatively stable on the surface, it is transposed into other problem-contexts and conceptual registers at a deeper level. Deleuze’s career-long encounter with Leibniz is an example of this. So again I think that there are some very interesting points of similarity but also points of contrast and divergence. But I think that the general basis of their philosophies is remarkably similar.

Interviewed by Michela Summa and Peter Wylie
INTERVIEW WITH JON STEWART

Professor Jon Stewart of the Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret in Copenhagen visited Leuven in May to give a Thursday Lecture entitled “Kierkegaard’s Critique of Hegel: A Reexamination”. Professor Stewart is responsible for the new comprehensive edition of Søren Kierkegaard’s writings (Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter) and has published widely in the area of German idealism and post-German idealist thought. He is editor of Hegel Myths and Legends (1996), The Phenomenology of Spirit Reader: Critical and Interpretive Essays (1997), and The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty (1998). Dr. Stewart has recently published an in-depth study of Kierkegaard and Hegel entitled Kierkegaard’s Relations to Hegel Reconsidered (2004).

To begin with, Professor Stewart, could you tell us a little bit about your own general academic background and your current areas of research?

Well, my main areas of interest are basically nineteenth- and twentieth-century European philosophy. I wrote my dissertation on Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit at the University of California, San Diego, and, after that, I went to Europe and continued to work on Hegel and also on French Existentialism and Phenomenology; that is what I was doing here [in Brussels] in 1993/94. Since 1995 I’ve had a position at the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre, where I’ve been doing work on Kierkegaard studies and also nineteenth-century Danish philosophy.

This was later published in expanded form as J. Stewart, The Unity of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit: A Systematic Interpretation, Northwestern University Press, 2000.

The issue of “myths and legends” has been one interest of yours²; do you think that the traditional reading of the Hegel-Kierkegaard conflict has given rise to its own myths and legends?

Yes, I think it has. I think there are a number of myths surrounding the understanding of Kierkegaard’s relations to Hegel, and I think that there are people who want to tell the broad story of the history of philosophy, who, for one reason or another, like to have clear breaks and to put a full-stop where the old period ends and the new period begins. It seems to me that, specifically in the history of philosophy, things do

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¹ This was later published in expanded form as J. Stewart, The Unity of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit: A Systematic Interpretation, Northwestern University Press, 2000.

not really work that way: there is a lot more continuity and overlapping, and there are no radical revolutionary breaks; people tend to make these up for their own ideological purposes. I am quite convinced that the understanding of Kierkegaard as a radical opponent of Hegel is the result of this kind of thinking, that is to say, people tend to make him more anti-Hegelian than he himself ever was, because it fits into a larger story they want to tell about the history of philosophy – that is, about the end of German Idealism and the beginning of Existentialism, and so it represents a convenient break for them; but really this goes far beyond anything that one could actually find in Kierkegaard’s writings.

Traditionally, Kierkegaard scholarship has drawn a sharp “either/or” between Kierkegaard and Hegel. In your work you try to suggest that there is more than just one standard relation between the two authors, and that Kierkegaard, in many respects, was positively influenced by Hegel’s philosophy. Moreover, you come to the conclusion that there was never a direct criticism of Hegel’s position, but that Kierkegaard’s more violent attacks on Hegel’s philosophy had, in fact, a different target. Could you tell us about your reading of Kierkegaard’s reception of Hegel?

I was very self-conscious about putting that word “relations” into the title of my book – that is, the plural use of “relations”, because the title itself plays on the title of an earlier book by Niels Thulstrup, Kierkegaard’s Relation to Hegel; and also the “Reconsidered” part plays upon that title. The polemical point of that plural is that it’s a mistake to comprehend this as a single uniform relation, in the way people very often do when talking about Kierkegaard and Hegel. In such a way it becomes very general – that is, as if Kierkegaard had just one general dispositions towards Hegel, and that was the end of the story; but Kierkegaard is a much more nuanced thinker, a much richer thinker than that; his thought developed over a long period of time. He made use of Hegel in different ways, and so the conclusion I came to when I was working on the book is that one has to go, almost in an episodic fashion, to the individual book and the individual passage, and see exactly what he is using of Hegel, how he is using it and then, at the end of the book, look back and try to make sense of it all, and see if there is a larger pattern beyond that. What I found is that there are many different sorts of uses and criticisms and not just a single relation. The goal of the book is to make things a bit more complicated in that sense, instead of just giving a standard picture where people can say: “Ok, that is the end of the story: Kierkegaard was an opponent of Hegel and there is not much more to be said.”

So what about Kierkegaard’s relationship to the Danish Hegelians? What are his specific critical targets and are there any specific passages or texts which were thought to be an attack on Hegel but in fact were aiming at someone else?

This is something I discovered only after I went to Denmark. Actually, when I originally arrived I had in mind to write a rather different sort of a book than the one I ended up writing. When I sat down and tried to go through all these individual passages, about which people have said, “this is where the big polemic with Hegel is”, I did not understand them. I came from Hegel studies, and yet I simply did not understand these criticisms. It was only when I started familiarizing myself with some of the more or less unknown or long since forgotten Danish texts, which were important for Hegel’s reception in Denmark at the time, that some of

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these pieces started to fit into place; only then one can see, in some cases very clearly, that the argument and the criticisms only make sense if they are understood to be directed against these other people. This is also part of where the mythologies come in, where it seems to me that many scholars of the past, instead of saying in a straightforward way “I do not understand that in Hegel”, try to make up stories to make it fit with Hegel, where there is often a much more banal explanation to it. One of the most straightforward examples of this is Kierkegaard’s polemic with the system which ends with actuality, that is, what he talks about in the beginning of The Concept of Anxiety. Here people just invariably say, “this is a criticism of Hegel’s Science of Logic” and then they make quite a lot of it, claiming “this is a big polemic, he does not think Hegel had understood actuality, this is the existential Kierkegaard, and so on”. But, of course, Hegel’s Science of Logic does not end with actuality, and so this criticism does not work at all as a criticism of Hegel. But, when you identify its true target of it, it turns out to be Adler, whom Kierkegaard later on criticized in the Book on Adler. Adler wrote a couple of books on Hegel’s philosophy and then was ordained a priest; Kierkegaard was quite upset about this contradiction: “how can a Hegelian become a practicing pastor in the Danish Church?” One of Adler’s books is a commentary on Hegel’s Logic, and in this book Adler gets only about half-way through, getting only to the category of actuality and then stopping; so it is very clear that this is the book Kierkegaard had in mind. In fact, if you look more closely, in the introduction of The Concept of Anxiety, Kierkegaard actually quotes from the same book; thus there is no ambiguity.

Given the fact that Kierkegaard never directly challenged the Hegelian position, for example with textual references or direct quotations, in your work you consider their opposition as a meta-level or meta-philosophical conflict. Is such a meta-level conflict to be taken seriously as a fruitful opposition, or is it to be seen as generating ambiguities and equivocal conclusions, being based on a mis-interpretation of Kierkegaard’s position?

The point is to make things more difficult and to make Kierkegaard more interesting, and it is neither difficult nor interesting if it is just one straightforward negative relation; this would mean that he rejects everything. What makes it much more interesting to me, much more nuanced, is if one could see certain parts of Hegel that Kierkegaard wants to appropriate for his own purposes – however, putting them into a rather different philosophical context, one that is quite foreign to Hegel. Then one can step back and say, “what is his program, how does this relate to philosophy in a more traditional sense, in the sense of German Idealism?” I find that profoundly interesting, simply because it was in this period, the nineteenth century, that philosophy was becoming much more heterogeneous than it had ever been before. That is to say, there were different schools branching out, there were people breaking with some of the older paradigms and calling into question what philosophy was; that is why sometimes today we have a hard time classifying people like Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, or Nietzsche. To what degree are they philosophers and to what degree should we hold them accountable to philosophical standards, or to what degree were they theologians, literary writers, cultural critics, or what not? It’s not an obvious question, but I think it makes Kierkegaard much more interesting, and it is also truer to him as an author to evaluate him and to try to understand him in
terms of these other sorts of categories, because he is often criticized by philosophers who look at him, and at other philosophers from the tradition, in order to find clearly reasoned arguments in the way we are used to today. Then they are disappointed when they do not find them, and they simply conclude that he is a bad philosopher. Well, this is not fair to him; this is not what he had intended to do.

You argue that the general idea that nineteenth-century philosophy has split into two mainstreams — that is, the Hegelians and the existential philosophers — is fundamentally incorrect, since Kierkegaard did not just programmatically oppose his thought to Hegel's philosophy. However, can one say, following your idea of the meta-level conflict, that there has been a split regarding the task attributed to philosophy and the object of philosophy itself?

I agree that my characterization of that is a bit over-generalized, and I did that simply for didactical purposes more than anything else, but the point is that it's a mistake to think in hard and fast categories or time-periods in the history of philosophy, and this was the way that the Hegel-Kierkegaard relationship was understood, but it is correct to point out what we were just talking about: this is a period in which the very definition of the history of philosophy was called into question and people were rethinking that; this is simply something that is in opposition to Hegel's conception of philosophy as a rigorous Wissenschaft, as a systematic enterprise. In that regard, then, one can say that Kierkegaard shares something in common with some of these other thinkers, although he is also doing other things that are quite different from them, so one could say that he is part of a certain spirit of an age, but, once again, to precisely pin that down is not an easy matter from the perspective of the history of philosophy.

Kierkegaard is a very complex author, and his authorship is even more puzzling: how, in your opinion, should it be approached? Should the pseudonymous question be taken seriously, as Kierkegaard himself suggested, or should his corpus be read as a whole, using the signed writings to clarify and fill in the gaps of the pseudonymous texts? What are the current tendencies among Kierkegaard scholars?

This is a difficult question that has engaged Kierkegaard research for a long time, as well as one of the big issues in the research today. It seems to be a bit of a mistake to come down hard and fast on the one side or the other, which is what invariably happens in these sorts of discussions: there are some people who say that the pseudonyms are the key to understanding everything, and one has strictly to distinguish what each pseudonymous author is doing in each text and how this text is radically different from the other texts; then you have other people, probably people from the older research, who say that it does not matter at all — that is, the pseudonyms are just window-dressing, and it is just Kierkegaard behind it all. That does not seem to be quite right either; he did write in pseudonyms and he did seem to be making a point with them. It appears to me that one does need to take into account the fact that he wrote in pseudonyms, but without seeing it as a hard and fast thing, without getting ideological about it. And that is simply because it seems to me that there is a tremendous amount of continuity amongst some of the pseudonyms: I have seen in my study that the same criticism of Hegel will come up in different texts, as if it is a one-liner that keeps returning. The criticism of Hegel for lacking an ethics is a good example, which is at work in many of the pseudonymous works actually; hence it would be a mistake to say this is unique to Johannes Climacus, or something like that.
Speaking of ethics, in tonight’s paper you suggest that for Kierkegaard philosophy and ethics are much closer to Ancient philosophy (i.e., Stoicism, Scepticism and Epicureanism), which is characterized by the question of the good life, instead of following the main interests of nineteenth-century philosophy. Why do you interpret Kierkegaard’s position as going back to ancient philosophy, instead of suggesting that Kierkegaard is opening the way to a new understanding of what philosophy and ethics are all about? The introduction of the concept of existence, for instance, and the problems of choice, uncertainty, and the leap, cannot be simply reduced to the concept of the good life as we have it in ancient philosophy.

Yes, I see, I agree with that. I didn’t mean to suggest that he is doing something reactionary in that sense, that he is going back and remaining within an ancient paradigm of ethical thinking, but rather that he is using certain aspects of ancient ethical thinking as a model for his own thought. I was simply trying to do some brain-storming about this question of how to understand him in terms of the history of philosophy, generally speaking. We are all in agreement that he is trying to do something different; his programme is something different than, let’s say, the programme of German Idealism, and also that he has a different conception of what philosophy is; maybe he would even say that what he is doing is not philosophy, that he is doing something else; then he is making use of certain models in what he is doing. So, if we want to characterize this, then it seems to me productive to compare what he is doing with some elements of ancient thought. I agree entirely, it is not just that; he is also adding some Christian elements to the pagan elements, and he is also adding what we might call existential elements that would clearly be forward-looking and not just backward-looking. The problem I wanted to leave people with is the question of how he is to be understood: how exactly should we tease out these different strands of his ethical thinking? He is in fact a nineteenth-century thinker. Hence we cannot take him out of his period; we cannot put him into the ancient world in that sense. Yet what he is doing has some points of commonality with these other philosophical traditions, which he is trying to import into a nineteenth-century context to see how that looks, and this seems to me to be the interpretative challenge.

Finally, Professor Stewart, considering Kierkegaard’s criticism of the practice of philosophy in the nineteenth-century – that is, of its professorial status and of its speculative claim – would you still consider him a philosopher and, if so, what kind of philosopher?

This is a vexing question. I have to say, I go back and forth on this myself. Sometimes I am a bit frustrated with him as a philosopher because I can see what he wants to say, and I can see some general motivation for why he wants to say it; but then, when I go to his text and I try to find the arguments for it like a good philosopher should, I cannot find the arguments. To that degree, he is probably better for the theologians or for literary people, who are not as hung-up on arguments as philosophers are, and so if that is one’s criterion, then he is probably not a philosopher, at least not a good one. But this is not to take a dismissive tone and say philosophers should not read him because he is not interesting for philosophers. On the contrary, he is constantly using philosophical motifs and ideas and trying to think, in some ways, along the lines of other philosophers. I guess, ultimately, the conclusion I came to is: what really hangs on the label? I am not invested in the question of whether one can hang one label or another on him, because the main question is whether
or not one can read him with interest in a productive fashion, such that he can shed light on things, and it seems to me that answering the question, “is he a philosopher? Yes or no?”, does not matter at all, for it is independent of the bigger issue of whether or not he can be fruitful to philosophical thinking. And there can certainly be no doubt about that.

Are there any passages where Kierkegaard calls himself a philosopher? For he is somehow in line with Romanticism, trying to blur the borders between literature and philosophy, even theology, for they were dreaming of a new mythology. I think it has to be considered in that context as well.

On the contrary, most of the time he goes out of his way to say that he is not a philosopher and distances himself from it. That is also the beauty of him, his reception: unlike many other thinkers from that period who are only studied in philosophy, theology or literature, today Kierkegaard is taken in by all different fields. He is genuinely interdisciplinary.

Interviewed by Margherita Tonon
ON SEA BATTLES, TRANSLATING PLEASURES, AND OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL ADVENTURES
An Interview with Professor Dorothea Frede

Professor Frede (University of Hamburg) took part in the workshop entitled “Plato Transformed – An International Workshop on Plato’s Ancient Commentators”, at the Institute of Philosophy from May 18th-19th, 2005. Prof. Frede is one of the most prolific authors in Ancient philosophy and is well-known not only in Germany but also internationally. She has published widely on Plato, Aristotle, and the Hellenistic philosophers. Moreover, she has also conducted research on Heidegger and phenomenology, Rorty and Davidson. She is currently the president of the recently founded German Society for Ancient Philosophy (GANPH) and very soon she will take up the Mills Visiting Professorship at the University of Berkeley, which was held by none other than Professor Gregory Vlastos. In Hamburg, Prof. Frede succeeded Prof. Klaus Oehler. The chair of Ancient philosophy is among the most well-established positions in Germany; it was previously held by Pierre Aubenque, Wolfgang Wieland and Günther Patzig. Unfortunately however, due to financial cuts in the Humanities by the German government, it is most likely that no successor will be appointed when Prof. Frede retires.

Is it possible to summarize in a few words your academic life?

Initially, I did not think that I was born to be a philosopher. I didn’t know anything about philosophy when I began my studies at the university. I started out in Hamburg, studying German literature and Musicology, with the intention of becoming something like a cultural journalist. But very soon I realized I was not good enough in musicology, because I neither have perfect pitch nor play the piano, which is necessary to work on scores. Some of my peers were doing much better, because they had the necessary skills to succeed in musicology. As for German literature, I felt that I could go on for twenty semesters and not really learn anything. At the same time, I had visited some classes in philosophy, just on the side, and then I got very interested in these topics. I wouldn’t say that I understood right away what was going on, but I had the impression that the philosophers knew what they were doing. And not only that, but I was impressed by a kind of continuity in philosophical problems over many centuries. And that continuity really intrigued me. So
after three semesters I switched from German literature and Musicology to Philosophy and Classics, because at that time I had already discovered that the history of philosophy was what interested me most.

How would you explain your focus on Ancient Greek philosophy?

Initially, you might say, it was an accident, but such commitments are never really accidents! I had been told that Descartes was the beginning of modern philosophy and that he didn’t make any presuppositions — so he would be a good start for a beginner. I therefore took a class on Descartes’ Meditations and found that there were many things I just didn’t understand. The professor who taught the class wasn’t very approachable, so, I took another class the next semester with a different professor. And this time I dared to raise the questions about what had puzzled me, for instance, about the concept of substance. And he informed me that to understand that and other key-concepts properly I would have to go further back, to the Middle Ages and even further back into Antiquity. And since I had always liked Ancient culture, I decided to start with Plato, and then I realized that’s in fact where I wanted to be. I then studied in Hamburg with Wolfgang Wieland, Günther Patzig, and also with Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker. But I liked the way Patzig did philosophy best, and when he accepted a chair at the University of Göttingen the semester afterwards, I decided to switch to Göttingen. So, I went to Göttingen in the fall of 1963 and I stayed there until the end of my studies.

And why did you choose to also study Greek and Latin philology?

I asked von Weizsäcker, whom I knew personally, whether he thought that to switch to philosophy was a good idea in my case, because I was young and quite insecure. He advised me to take up a kind of “craft” alongside philosophy. Since he did not expect physics or mathematics to be my kind of thing and he knew that I was more interested in the history of philosophy, anyway, he therefore encouraged me to get a proper training in philology. So, Greek and Latin became my other two subjects.

After this experience in Hamburg, you went with Prof. Patzig to Göttingen. Did you also do your Ph.D. in Göttingen?

Yes, I did. I worked there in philosophy and classics and finished my dissertation in 1968.

And if I am not mistaken, you wrote your Ph.D. on the famous problem of the Sea Battle (Aristotle, De interpretatione 9), and you tried to demonstrate that, basically, the interpretation of the Ancient Commentators is the correct interpretation. But why did you start working on the problem of the Sea Battle?

We had a kind of private seminar on De interpretatione. At that time, Aristotle got a lot of criticism in the secondary literature, especially by the logicians who held that his solution for the status of future contingents was all wrong because the “principle of bivalence” couldn’t be suspended. This criticism didn’t seem to make sense to me because I took it that Aristotle had quite a different agenda. My fellow students and I had protracted arguments about this issue. I tried to defend Aristotle and they supported his critics. This is how I got into this problem, but before that I never anticipated that I would work on a problem of logic. So, in this sense it was an accident. And then, von Weizsäcker in Hamburg heard that I was working on this problem and invited me to give a talk. That
invitation prompted me to pull my thoughts on this issue together. I was, of course, dead scared to give an official talk, but I realised it would not do to decline. You don’t dodge such challenges. So, I went to Hamburg and gave my first presentation and it went well. Von Weizsäcker subsequently wrote to Patzig and suggested that I should work out my thoughts and turn them into a doctoral thesis. It actually was an excellent choice because it forced me to combine two things that have intrigued me ever since: the investigation of an important historical problem and a scrutiny of the perspective of contemporary philosophers on that issue. If there is no match, then the challenge is to find out the reason for the difference between the two standpoints. With the problem of future contingents I inclined to think that given his own presuppositions Aristotle was right to take the position he took. By now this is old hat, for in the meantime logic is no longer dealt with in so rigid a fashion; there is now an interest in “fuzzy logics” and logicians attempt to bring logic closer to natural language rather than the other way round as they did in the sixties. It is therefore no longer, so to speak, “cut in stone” that bivalence is a principle that must be maintained at all costs.

The title of our workshop was “Plato Transformed – An International Workshop on Plato’s Ancient Commentators”, but there are, of course, also ancient commentaries on Aristotle. According to you, what can we learn from these ancient commentators? Second, would you draw a firm distinction between commentaries on Aristotle and commentaries on Plato, and if so, why?

I don’t think I would draw a firm line between the two kinds of commentaries. I think people who comment on Plato have in a way a more difficult task than people commenting on Aristotle, because Aristotle’s texts are more easy to teach by way of commenting. That’s why so many more of them must have survived because a line by line commentary is very useful in teaching Aristotle. The commentaries on Plato may have perished because it is difficult to nail down his intentions in his dialogues so there was not one but many lines of interpretation; since we have that problem with Plato I expect the Ancient commentators were confronted with the same problem and given there was no orthodoxy many works just disappeared once they were no longer copied.

How would you describe the relationship between Plato and Aristotle? Since you published widely on both and you are considered an expert on both, how do you see, for instance, Aristotle’s criticism of Plato and so on?

Of course, I started out, as one did in Germany at the time, much impressed by Jaeger’s idea that while the young Aristotle was very much under Plato’s influence, the older Aristotle, so to speak, took his distance from Plato. Later on, I realized there is no such necessity. Perhaps it was the young Aristotle who rejected crucial points in Plato which he didn’t agree with while the older Aristotle came to realize that they had a lot more in common than he had thought at first. So, I don’t think the closeness to Plato or the distance from Plato can serve as a definite clue concerning Aristotle’s development. Now, I do think they have a different approach in many important ways. Aristotle gave up writing dialogues very early and decided to write treatises, though he may in fact have continued writing so-called “exoteric works” for a broader public; we just don’t know.

As to Aristotle’s relation to Plato, there is not only a difference in style, of course, but also a different way of approaching philosophy.
But for me there seems to be more that is to be understood as complementary rather than as antagonistic in Aristotle’s attitude to Plato and therefore I don’t like to oppose them to each other all the time. I am now working on a commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and I find the attitude both in Dirlmeier’s and Gauthier/Jolif’s commentaries quite disturbing, because they approach many problems under the aspect whether Aristotle is close to Plato or anti-Platonic, and this often seems like a quite unfruitful alternative. One should interpret a philosopher in his own right unless there are definite reasons for thinking that he addresses a problem that he regarded as inadequately treated by his predecessor.

*Having said that, you might not consider my next question very fruitful, but nevertheless I would like to ask you whether you think that the Posterior Analytics of Aristotle is in a way a kind of response to Plato, for instance to Meno’s paradox and the theory of recollection?*

In a way, of course, it is a response, because Aristotle must have started out wondering how to do science at all — what could be its foundation once immutable, eternal Forms are given up. He was a rather demanding scientist, and he knew that science must, so to speak, proceed on the basis of immutable and necessary presuppositions. So he must have begun reflecting on how to solve the problem of finding the appropriate starting-points. But I don’t think when Aristotle wrote the *Posterior Analytics* he was trying consciously to develop a counter-model to the Platonic theory of Forms. I think he had long before found his own way to work out the first principles of a science and what he took to be the appropriate method to handle them. But Plato’s philosophy did, no doubt, put him on the right track with respect to the question of what is the basis of all scientific research.

*Since your teacher Professor Patzig wrote this famous book on Aristotelean syllogistics, I am sure that you have also studied this very carefully. What can one achieve, from a philosophical point of view, with such a syllogistics, especially if you compare it to modern logic?*

I admit that it was a kind of disappointment to me having sweated my way through the syllogistics to see that in the *Posterior Analytics* the only two syllogisms actually in use are “Barbara” and “Celarent”. Scientific demonstrations are syllogisms with a universal conclusion, and most of the valid syllogisms don’t render such conclusions. So I wondered why Aristotle made such a huge effort for such a skimpy result! Then I came to see, of course, that all things need to be treated in a systematic way, and that if the appropriate method takes you way beyond what is applicable, you still have to work it out in the systematic way it demands. Thus I had to work hard to comprehend Aristotle’s modal logic because the problem of the Sea Battle presupposes a proper understanding of the meaning of necessity and possibility, but once I had worked my way through the modal syllogisms I realized that only very little of what goes on in the *Prior Analytics* actually is presupposed by the discussion in *De interpretatione* 9. However, I don’t think Aristotle could have discussed the problem in the way he did if he hadn’t developed the whole field systematically — nor could I have understood what is going on there unless I had penetrated his presuppositions.

*Let’s return to your personal history, your history as a scholar. You completed your Ph.D. in Göttingen and after that you went to Berkeley. For how many years were you in the States.*

I was in the States for exactly twenty years,
many more years than I had anticipated when we moved there. The first five years we spent at Berkeley. And then my then husband accepted a job in Princeton and so we moved to the East Coast. The rest of the twenty years I lived in various places on the East Coast.

How would you describe your experience in the States, not so much from a personal, but from a philosophical point of view? I mean, if you compare, for instance, the approach there with the approach you knew from Hamburg or Göttingen.

I was very impressed by the thorough organisation and structuring that characterizes American universities. Not having been used to the system, I taught my first course with great trepidation, because I could not imagine that I could stick to the syllabus that structured the entire semester from week to week. In Germany it had never happened – even once – that we got through a text from start to finish in a semester. We always got stuck somewhere, and though I often had the virtuous intention to complete the study of the work on my own over the vacations this rarely happened. So my philosophical education contained lots of interesting “fragments” but hardly any “wholes”. As a teacher in the U.S. all of a sudden I was expected to carry out what I had promised to do. Much to my surprise I actually managed to do so; and not only that: I actually came to see that this was a very good thing, not only for the students but also for myself, because it required a rigorous kind of self-discipline. I was, of course, also struck by the fact that American philosophy departments are much bigger than any of those I knew in Germany, so there is not only one specialist but at least two specialists in every important field and therefore there was always the opportunity for scholarly exchange with your colleagues, which we rarely have in Germany.

Do you think that there is a difference between a German way of doing Ancient philosophy and an American way of doing Ancient philosophy?

Well, I had been trained well by Patzig, because after all he is not just an expert in ancient philosophy but in contemporary analytic philosophy as well. So I was used to the question of what to make of a certain problem both from the contemporary perspective and from Plato’s or Aristotle’s point of view. But in the U.S.A. you would sometimes be challenged in a quite open and aggressive fashion, a fashion that would be regarded as a hostile in Germany. Especially in Berkeley people like John Searle would not be shy to take you up: “What is it all about? Why is it important? Why is that point worth thinking about?” And you would have to come up with a persuasive answer. Such challenges were very good for me because I learned not to take the importance of questions in the history of philosophy for granted. I kind of missed such challenges once I was back again in Germany.

Then, let me ask something about Plato’s Philebus. You are considered an expert on that dialogue. Your German translation of it is quite famous, but, of course, before this you had completed an English translation of the dialogue. Why did you start to work on the Philebus?

It was a little bit like how I got involved in the problem of the Sea Battle. At first it seemed like a sheer accident, but then no philosophical question that keeps bothering you does so by accident. There was a group of scholars from all over the East Coast meeting in New York once every month, to study a Greek text. We were reading the Philebus and we came to the passage on true and false pleasures. I had to lead the discussion – and once again there was a general
spirit of criticism: “How could Plato hold such a position?”, and so on. And I felt quite defensive and thought that the notion that certain pleasures can be true or false was not as absurd as my fellow discussants thought. After I had given a brisk defence-speech on the soundness of Plato’s theory, Alexander Nehamas encouraged me to work out my defence and turn it into an article. This was my first contribution on the Philebus and it was later published in Phronesis (“Rumplestiltskin’s pleasures – True and false pleasures in Plato’s Philebus”). Jonathan Barnes, the then editor of Phronesis at first didn’t want to accept it, and so I invested more work in the clarification of Plato’s position and of that of his modern critics. My second version was much more to Barnes’ liking.

Initially, I hadn’t thought of going on working on the Philebus, but then John Cooper asked me to do a translation with introduction and notes for Hackett. At first I was very reluctant to accept the offer because I am not a native speaker of English, and to do a translation is a hard thing even after fifteen years in the country, especially when it comes to turning a difficult Greek text into readable English. But Cooper assured me of his own assistance and explained that Hackett submits translations to two readers, anyway, so there would be ample opportunity for corrections and improvements. And so I went ahead and it turned out to be a very rewarding experience. One such thing leads to another: When Günther Patzig heard that I was working on a translation of the Philebus in English he suggested me as a specialist on the Philebus to Ernst Heitsch, the editor of a new series of translations and commentaries of Plato’s work in Germany. That was before I had returned to Germany – but in due course I did a translation and full commentary in German.

Now that you have made both an English and a German translation of the Philebus, would you say that there is a difference between translating Ancient Greek texts into English and into German?

After I had sent the first five pages to John Cooper, he asked me what I thought I was trying to achieve: “You don’t have to try to stay close to the Greek text, because people who don’t know Greek won’t get anything out of that and people who do know Greek can check the text for themselves. So, why don’t you try to write readable English?” This convinced me of the futility of somehow mirroring the Greek constructions in English. After my return to Germany it struck me that the tradition of rendering readable translations had not caught on in Germany in the way it had in England and in America. When I started out doing my translation in German I therefore decided to stick to the principle of my English translation. Of course, German is a different language, so in a sense I had to start all over again. As far as the philosophical interpretation goes, I pretty much stuck to my basic ideas on Plato’s basic intentions in the Philebus. But most of the time I didn’t use my English translation, except to check once in a while how I had treated a particularly tricky passage. But most of the time I aimed at a direct transposition of the Greek into readable German, and I hope the result is adequate.

Let me turn now to the situation of Ancient philosophy in Germany. How would you describe the situation at the moment?

Unfortunately, the situation is not good at all. This afternoon during our workshop, while I was listening, I realized with quite some envy, that there are so many young people here who have an interest in Ancient Greek philosophy...
and who are obviously sufficiently well trained to participate actively in such an event. Had I hosted such a conference in Hamburg, perhaps ten to fifteen people might have turned up. In all of northern Germany there are just three professorships in ancient philosophy – one in Münster, one in Berlin, and one in Bonn. This shows what the situation in Ancient Philosophy is like, for things are not much better in Southern Germany. As it stands now, they are about to get even worse; for all indications are that when I retire they will abolish my position at the University of Hamburg.

The reason is that the government, in Hamburg even more than in other states, has decided to cut back drastically on the humanities. Given this pressure, my colleagues came to the conclusion that a second position in ethics is more important than one in Ancient philosophy. Though Hamburg is in a way a paradigm of this new spirit, the situation in the rest of Germany is pretty much the same. It is rather unfortunate, but our politicians are driven by the idea that public funds should go to science, engineering, computer science, and economics. I don't deny that there is the danger that Germany is losing momentum in the development of new technology. But to invest only the barest minimum in the humanities is quite short-sighted because their atrophy will affect the general level of a culture and thus affect science as well. But it is very hard to explain such facts to our politicians who think only of short-term results.

Recently, you became president of the German Society of Ancient Philosophy (GANPH). Could you briefly describe the aims of this society? Do you think that this society can really promote the interest in Ancient philosophy in Germany and maybe unify, though not even out, the different approaches to Plato, Aristotle or other Ancient philosophers?

When the movement to found such a society first started, I declined to become its president, because I felt that the position should go to one of the young scholars who had taken the initiative in the first place. They had done so in the hope that the organisation would help to overcome the isolation of the few remaining specialists and to encourage young hopefuls with an interest in the field. As a member of a group you don't get so easily depressed by the thought that you are the representative of an endangered species. And this has, in fact, worked out well, because the society, its conferences and workshops attracts nationwide attention. There is, for instance, a group in Leipzig studying the commentaries on Aristotle with the plan to provide new translations. There is, also a group in Erlangen working on Ancient political philosophy and they are having a conference in June on this topic. Unfortunately I can't attend because I have too many other obligations, but the program looks quite interesting. Moreover, the first international conference last year in Berlin which was organized by Christof Rapp, our first president, was quite a success, not least because various distinguished scholars from America and England came, and young participants from Germany were just thrilled to meet the scholars who had been just names to them so far. The conference attracted quite some attention and I hope that this will continue. Unfortunately politicians don't really take much notice of such events, but one can only hope that gradually they will realize that it is very foolish to let a field die that originated in Germany and produced world-famous experts.

What do you think of the international programs in Germany to attract foreign students to study Ancient philosophy in Germany? Here in Leuven, for instance, the international program in philosophy has been going on for
several decades with great success.

I think this is a very good idea if sufficient funds can be found to support it. But as the situation is now, in many German universities there is at best one person who represents Ancient philosophy and so foreign students may be quite disappointed if they come from a place where they have two or three experts to choose from. And that is, of course, a great disadvantage in Germany. But so far, at least if the students come for just a year or so, they manage to get sufficient attention and support.

One last question. You have also published on Heidegger, and as you certainly know, here in Leuven there is a strong phenomenological tradition, with the Husserl Archives and also important scholars working on Heidegger. So, what interests you in Heidegger and how would you, in a few words, describe the relationship between Heidegger and Ancient philosophy?

It may surprise you, but it was not at all ancient philosophy that got me into Heidegger. When I was a student, I had to pass an exam, the Philosophicum, and since everybody was doing it on either Plato or Descartes I decided to use the opportunity to do something quite different. I had taken one class on Heidegger when I was still in Hamburg as a young student, on Being and Time taught by Wolfgang Wieland, who had himself been a student of Gadamer’s. At that time I more divined than understood what was interesting about Being and Time, especially concerning the question of understanding, but with a lot of work I managed to make sufficient progress to pass the exam well. When I came to America I tried to find a job and that was not easy at all, because American universities provide jobs to their own students. So outsiders find it hard to get in at all, unless they have an offer to begin with, like my husband did. Finally I was invited to an interview at San Francisco State University, but they already had somebody in Ancient philosophy and therefore wanted to know what else I could teach. Since everything I suggested turned out to be someone else’s territory I finally came to Heidegger. That pleased them very much because in the heyday of analytic philosophy no one knew much about him, but the students of the hippie days who had read Hesse’s Steppenwolf were very interested in his philosophy. This is how my career started, and for years afterwards part of the attraction to a department that hired me was that I could also teach Heidegger and existentialism. I still don’t like the way he treats Greek philosophers at all, because he either turns them into proto-Heideggerians or else portrays them as the grave-diggers of the Question of Being, and I don’t find this attitude very stimulating. But studying Heidegger got me involved in the problems of phenomenology and hermeneutics quite generally, and I found the various approaches to questions of interpretation and the appropriate handling of texts very rewarding. It fosters an attitude of self-restraint that is very wholesome when it comes to treating philosophical texts of any period.

Interviewed by Christoph Helmig
CONFERENCE REPORTS

Report of the conference of the Belgian Society for Logic and Philosophy of Science

On Friday 20th and Saturday 21st of May, the conference of the Belgian Society for Logic and Philosophy of Science took place at the Institute of Philosophy. The aim of the conference was to give researchers in these fields an idea of what is going on at other Belgian universities. The heads of the research departments of Logic and Philosophy of Science in different Flemish and Wallonian universities gave presentations on the research being carried out in their departments. Also, junior researchers working in these departments had the chance to present their work to an audience of Belgian logicians and philosophers of logic.

The conference began on Friday afternoon with the election of the new president and vice-president of the society. Under the approving eye of retiring president Leon Horsten, Dr. Thierry Libert of the U.L.B. and Dr. Sonja Smets of the V.U.B. were elected, respectively as president and vice-president of the society.

In the first presentation of the conference, Prof. Diderik Batens talked about The Plot behind Adaptive Logics and its Relations to the Research at the Ghent Centre. He gave an accessible introduction to Adaptive Logics, which is the central topic at the research centre in Ghent. He explained how Adaptive Logic is driven by problems in the philosophy of science and by the aim to apply logic in many ways. The idea behind it is that logic is about reasoning, not about proving theorems. With Adaptive Logic, the goal is to capture many common reasoning forms that cannot be captured by standard logics. Some examples of applications of Adaptive Logic are inductive generalisation and erotetic inferences. After Batens’ discussion of the research in Ghent, it was time for the first junior researcher of the conference to give her presentation. Federica Russo, who is finishing her PhD in Louvain-la-Neuve, gave a presentation entitled From Probabilistic Theories of Causality to Causal Modelling: Bringing Causal Theory to Maturity. She showed how causal modelling can help to develop a good theory of causality and talked about the importance of causal modelling to help overcome the difficulties related to the probabilistic theories of causality. After the presentations of the junior researchers, there was some time scheduled for discussion, which in this case was about realism with regard to probability and causality.

The second junior researcher, Kathleen Coessens from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, talked about Cartographic Paradoxes and their Relevance for Information and Knowledge. Her presentation was historically interesting, while also linking some questions about cartography with general problems in the philosophy of science. Using the map as a metaphor, her research aims to give an original critique of scientific research. The presentation was structured on the basis of some so-called paradoxes of cartography. For example, maps serve to surpass human limitations, but on the other hand they have their own limits. On a map, you can, at the same time, see more and less than in reality. Other issues were the question of how to offer information and
the reality or virtuality of a map. This session, too, concluded with some interesting remarks by the audience, consisting of an estimated 25 people, mostly researchers.

Roland Hinnion from the Université Libre de Bruxelles talked about philosophy of mathematics. The title of his talk was Russell’s Paradox: a Source of Inspiration for more than 100 Years. Hinnion gave an introduction to Russell’s Paradox: consider the set of sets that do not belong to themselves. Does this set belong to itself, or not? More in general, he considered some evolutions in set theory and their philosophical implications. With this interesting senior paper, the first conference day ended.

On Saturday, another senior researcher talked about the philosophy of mathematics. Another senior researcher, Jean-Paul Van Bendegem from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, talked about The Richness and Inspiration of (the philosophy of) Mathematics. Van Bendegem explained how research at his centre started with finitism, aiming to eliminate the infinite from mathematics. He was also interested in how the concept of infinity came about and what was the philosophical importance of the mathematical practices. He considered some ways mathematics could have developed differently from how it actually did and ended with pointing out how the logical, sociological and biological work of the junior researchers of his centre fits in the picture.

Then came what was probably the most technical talk of the conference: Thomas Brihaye (Université de Mons-Hainaut) on Model-Checking, Logic and Decidability. Brihaye talked about bisimulation: how we learn things about real systems by modelling abstract systems with the same kind of behaviour. One of his topics was the reachability problem (e.g., infinite systems) and he very clearly pointed out how computer science can help logic and vice versa.

Leen De Vreese from Universiteit Gent in her talk How a Pluralistic View Can Draw a Realistic Picture of Causation criticized the trend in the field of causality to defend one theory as the complete and only theory about causality. According to her, a pluralistic approach would be worthwhile to make progress in the research on causality.

Michel Ghins (Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve) gave a talk entitled Models and Realism in the Natural and Social Sciences. Models and realism, the claim that there is a correspondence between these models and the real world, are the shared topics among the researchers at his centre. Ghins talked about the relation between a mathematical model and the real world, a relation he believes not to be representational. A physical object is not a mathematical structure, so there is no isomorphism. Ghins, too, gave an overview of the research going on at his centre.

The last talk of the conference was by Koen Vermeir, of K.U. Leuven, who talked about The Resurrection of the Demarcation Problem. How can we make the distinction between science, pseudo-science and non-science? According to Vermeir, the demarcation problem is not a pseudo-problem and some essential steps towards a solution involve a clear distinction between the normative and the descriptive and an integration of rational and social factors into a social epistemology. With his talk, an interesting and pleasant conference ended.

Reported by Kevin Demiddele
Colloquium:

Marcel Gauchet is the academic director of the École des hautes études en sciences sociales and editor-in-chief of the magazine Le Débat. He has published Le désenchantement du monde (Gallimard, 1985), La religion dans la démocratie (Gallimard, 1998), La démocratie contre elle-même (Gallimard, 2002) et La condition historique (Stock, 2003), most of which have been translated into English.

The honour of Marcel’s Gauchet’s presence at the Institute on Thursday, December the 9th 2004 was made possible due to the efforts of Professors Antoon Braeckman and Bart Raymaekers and the Centre for Social, Ethical, and Political Philosophy. The bilingual (French/Dutch) colloquium was divided into three parts.

The morning focused on central topics in Gauchet’s writings, such as the relationship between religion, democracy and human rights.

Professor André Cloots opened the colloquium with a paper entitled Van religie tot democratie (From Religion to Democracy) which brought to light the central topic of Gauchet’s work, the political history of religion and its complications. Following a response from Dr. Barbara Haverhals and a public question and answer session, Professor Antoon Braeckman delved into the topic of human rights with his paper De privatisering van de politiek. Gauchet over de spanning tussen mensenrechten en democratie (The privatization of the political. Gauchet’s thoughts on the tension between human rights and democracy). His paper, followed by a response from Helder De Schutter, led to a great deal of discussion.

The theme of the conference then turned to the epistemological and political questions of the origins and the end of democracy. Professor Donald Loose (University of Tilburg) delivered a paper, Christianisme et politique. Une interaction symbolique (Christianity and politics: a symbolic interaction) that explored the potential dangers of a reduction of religion to its past and negative aspects, which he claims Gauchet does in his writings. Katia Vanhemelryck responded to this paper and questions from the audience followed. The final paper of the day, delivered by Professor Maurice Weyembergh (VUB/ULB), addressed the topic of ideology’s role in Gauchet’s work. His paper, Histoire, religion et ideologie selon Marcel Gauchet (History, religion and ideology according to Marcel Gauchet) was responded to by Wim Weymans.
The conference concluded with a thorough response from Marcel Gauchet to many of the questions that had been raised throughout the day. His reply addressed the extent to which the socio-political sphere determines religion’s essence in modernity, and his understanding of modernity as an escape from religion. He also explored the issue raised throughout the day about the different types of religion, individual or societal, and the different religions present in democratic states. From this he moved on to his concern with ideology and how one can evade ideology by banishing religion to the past as well as the questions of redefining ideology without its presently negative connotations. His final remarks returned to the tensions between human rights and democracy in that the former are in some way a threat to the latter, as well as to the question of democracy’s universalisability, a particularly relevant question in today’s political scene.

Reported by Anya Diedrich Topolski

Truth and public space

The conference “Truth and Public Space” which was organized between the dates of 21st and 23rd of September, 2005, as a joint undertaking of the Faculties of Philosophy of the Universities of Leuven and of Louvain-La-Neuve, brought together many philosophers from different parts of the world. The conference took place at the Flemish Royal Academy. Below is a summary of the main ideas of the keynote speakers at this conference, who addressed the question of how truth and the public space are related from different perspectives.

Given our pluralist, democratic societies, with people holding irreconcilable views, there seems to be no universal and comprehensive “Truth” that can provide a publicly acceptable basis to convince and unite everyone even on the most fundamental political questions. Today, in order to know whether a proposal can be adopted as a public norm, citizens who have conflicting views are expected to come together in discussion with each other to find the common terms of fair cooperation that can be accepted by all others, at least as reasonable, if not true. But can we completely put the concept of truth aside, or can we easily accept “our” own truth as just one truth among conflicting others? The question “how do truth and public space relate to each other?” remains no doubt central to discussions in contemporary political and social philosophy.

In his opening lecture, Joshua Cohen, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, gave us an insight into why even under conditions of pluralism and doctrinal conflict truth still matters in the public space. But what kind of truth is that which matters? For Cohen, within the limits of a public space, what is at stake is a minimal, political conception of truth which is inevitably rooted in our normative political arguments, inferences and judgments that govern our political reasoning and deliberation on the fundamental questions of justice. Cheryl Misak (University of Toronto) and Robert Talisse (Vanderbilt University), who approached the relation between truth and public deliberation from an epistemic point of view, were critical about the conception of a limited
public space that might exclude some citizens and their views from discussion. By pointing to the need for a public space in which the truth of every proposition and belief can be subject to public discussion and enquiry, Misak, from a pragmatist’s standpoint, and Talisse, from the standpoint of an “epistemic folk psychology”, proposed an epistemic, universal justification of deliberative democracy and emphasized what the role of the State could be for the maintenance of proper deliberation and epistemic practice in the public realm.

Several other speakers’ enquiries into “truth and the public sphere” called our attention to a gap between political theory and political practice. Matthew Festenstein, from Sheffield University, showed us how with respect to the complex nature of political issues, today’s public discussion is mediated by a complex division of labour, which raises the question of the credibility and trustworthiness of political representatives, rather than the truth-value of their claims. By pointing to trustworthiness as an essential virtue of deliberative democracy, Festenstein not only revived the concepts of rhetoric (in the Aristotelian sense of exhibiting the virtuous and trustworthy character of the speaker) and appearance as essential elements of the public realm, but also made us think about the role of the constitutional procedures of accountability and the mechanisms of redress in our democracies. Glen Newey, from Strathclyde University, who approached the same problem from a different perspective, pointed out an unavoidable act of self-deception of the “People” resulting from democracy’s own procedures (scrutiny mechanisms, etc.) which present themselves as relying on “truthfulness” while in fact they subvert the truth. Newey showed us how the belief that the People can exist outside actual procedures and can exercise a veto over deceptive outcomes can become itself an illusion fostered by the “truth-discovering” institutions of democratic politics, which use the rhetoric of truth as an instrumental value. Philippe Raynaud, from L’École des Hautes Études et Sciences Sociales (EHESS), took a Hobbesian approach in criticizing the dominant trend of contemporary political philosophy with its mention of an ideal of rationality and transparency in the public realm. He argued about the importance of the dimension of power in the
development of political modernity and suggested that its foundation includes a kind of skepticism which should be taken into account by contemporary democratic theory.

Other speakers focused on the question of truth and the public sphere in light of the effects of globalization which bring to the fore new forms of political community and democratic agency. From different perspectives, Molly Cochran (Sam Nunn School of International Affairs) and Joshua Cohen (MIT) asked how the concepts of the public sphere and public reason can be extended into the arena of global politics so that individuals can have a say over international political and economic processes that affect them both at the domestic and at the global level. While Cochran defended a functional understanding of a public space which allows a constellation of public and private realms in terms of who is directly and indirectly affected by shared problematic situations, Cohen’s ideal model of “deliberative polyarchy” showed us how the context of global politics might give way to a new form of public sphere and democratic agency without a global state.

From a different angle, by pointing to the effects of new communication technologies as well as architectural developments, Bart Verschaffel from the University of Ghent called attention to the “crises of place” and showed us that the “public space”, which traditionally refers to the street or the square, is no longer a “place” for democratic deliberation and decision-making. Against the street which is simply ruled by the logic of consumption and desire, Verschaffel suggested that it is necessary to defend and affirm the political and cultural importance of the so-called institutional or semi-public spaces (places like theatres, universities, museums) which are still constructed as actual speaking places regulated by certain principles, ideals and rules.

The discussion during the conference not only showed that a philosophical understanding of modern democracies is more complex than ever before, but also demonstrated what the place of universities and conferences could be in this public sphere.

Reported by Banu Kilan
“Autonomy And Paternalism: Between Independence And Good Intentions”: A Report

In May 2005 the Centre for Economics and Ethics, in collaboration with the Centre for Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy and the Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law, organized an international conference on “Autonomy and Paternalism”. This conference brought together PhD and graduate students from various faculties and departments, as well as some acclaimed scholars in the field. The seminar was divided into three parts: an opening lecture on the 19th of May, a conference day which focused on the theory of autonomy and paternalism (the 26th), and another four-lecture day which explored some practical problems with regard to the topic (the 27th).

In his opening lecture, Professor Tom Beauchamp (Georgetown University, Washington) presented an outline of his theory of autonomous action. As such, this account should be distinguished from the more common focus on the autonomy of persons. Beauchamp listed three conditions for autonomous action: the agent should act (1) intentionally, (2) with (basic) understanding, and (3) without controlling influences. Further, he contrasted metaphysical and moral theories of autonomous persons. Both theories have problems of delineation: metaphysical theories that ground autonomy in a special capacity possessed by human beings (e.g., reason, intelligence, higher-order volition, emotion…) have to acknowledge that perhaps a number of nonhuman species surpass certain human individuals with regard to these qualities. Also, if we take moral autonomy to be crucial, then we might have to admit that many people fall short of such autonomy (e.g., babies, psychopaths…). This indicates, according to Beauchamp, that we should be wary of theories which postulate autonomy as the sole basis for moral respect. The principle of respect for autonomy – which is a moral precept – should constrain the concept of autonomous action. As he put it: “Any theory that leads us to classify acts as not autonomous that are of the greatest importance to us in the basic governance of our affairs is both morally dangerous and conceptually dubious.”

Gerald Dworkin (University of California, Davis) made some distinctions which indicate the wide variety in definitions of paternalism. While some definitions focus on the outcome of paternalist acts, others take the motive for action to be crucial. According to a number of these latter theories, this should be an actual motive, while others claim that it should only be hypothetical. Still other definitions think
that what is crucial is that there are reasons for paternalism (i.e., there need not be a specific motive). In addition, there are some more specific questions about what is necessary for an act to be paternalistic. Should it be an act or could it also be an omission? Do we need a violation of the victim’s autonomy, or is an infringement of liberty enough? Should a paternalist intervention go against the person’s consent or is it sufficient if it occurs without her consent? Also, if the act of paternalism is performed for the welfare of the individual, should this be interpreted as physical or as moral welfare? After raising these questions, Dworkin briefly discussed a series of definitions of paternalism to exemplify these different dimensions. He especially focussed on the definition by Seanna Sheffrin which does not contain the condition that paternalist actions should be performed for the welfare of the person being interfered with.

In his paper, Thomas Nys (Catholic University Leuven) argued with Frankfurt that autonomy has to do with “the things one cares about”. As such, a person sometimes discovers that there are boundaries to her will. She experiences what Frankfurt calls the necessities of her will, i.e., although she cannot will differently she also does not want to will differently. In these cases the individual has connected her own well-being to that of her objects of care. Frankfurt is clear that such a necessitated will can still be called autonomous because the agent identifies with what she is “forced” to do. This reveals that autonomy is consistent with a concern for the well-being of these things we care about. Now, since many definitions of paternalism take it as essential that the act should be performed out of a concern for the well-being of the person who is interfered with, this concern can be traced back to the autonomy of the paternalist. Hence, paternalist motives might be rooted in the autonomy of the paternalist. The upshot of this analysis is that we are possibly faced with a confrontation between different autonomies (e.g., doctor vs. patient).

David Archard (Lancaster University) commented on the connection between autonomy and informed consent. It is normally claimed that the value of informed consent is rooted in the principle of respect for personal autonomy. This connection, however, is mistaken. Archard said that autonomy should be valued in terms of “the ability to live one’s own life”. Hence autonomy should be assessed over an extended period of time. Therefore, it is hard to see how simple medical practices, like obtaining a mouth swab without the patient’s consent, could be an infringement of autonomy since they do not violate this general ability in any way. The most straightforward interpretation of autonomy that would support the value of informed consent is that in terms of self-ownership. Yet, if the idea
of self-determination grounds that of self-ownership, it is still not clear how gross violations of one’s bodily integrity are also necessarily violations of the “freedom to live one’s own life”.

Yvonne Denier (Catholic University Leuven) considered the link between autonomy, physical well-being and the good life. She argued for a threefold model: i.e., both physical well-being and “the good” are aspects of autonomy. Put differently, the value of autonomy incorporates both these elements (as an objective and a subjective aspect). Therefore, autonomy should not be thought of as a separate value which possibly conflicts with the well-being and the good for the patient. Autonomy is usually seen as antonymous to dependence, that is to say, although we cannot entirely escape our dependence (i.e., we are not self-sufficient beings), we generally try to retain or develop our autonomy (as independence) as long as possible. Denier therefore argued for a practice of careful solidarity: care should incorporate a concern for both the objective and subjective aspect of autonomy.

At the end of the first conference day, Professor Ishtiyaque Haji (University of Calgary) and Professor Stefaan Cuypers (K.U. Leuven) both emphasized the importance of a clear, descriptive account of “autonomy” and “paternalism”, so that the debate would not be biased from the start by certain normative presuppositions.

On Friday, Eva Feder Kittay (SUNY at Stony Brook, New York) was concerned with people who are unable to give their informed consent. She argued that such people retain some measure of agency which should be respected as far as possible. Even the incompetent (viz. those lacking adequate autonomy) should not be treated paternalistically. Kittay emphasized the importance of a transparent caring self: a person who responds to another’s needs in such a way that she does not project her own needs and desires on to the person for whom she cares. Such a transparent caring self is able to assess the degree to which a person is autonomous and she tries to respect the agency of the patient, however minimal this might be.

Eric Matthews (Aberdeen University) clearly stated that respect for autonomy is meaningless in a context where autonomy is lost. If some forms of mental disorder indeed imply a defeat of autonomy, then we need to reconsider this principle of respect. Put differently, while respect for autonomy is usually invoked in order to protect or honour a person’s dignity, Matthews is convinced that the focus on autonomy may lead us to disrespect the patient’s dignity. Respect for patients in the context of mental health care sometimes means that one has to go against their wishes in order to safeguard their long-term interests. However, Matthews is careful in saying that psychiatrists
must avoid substituting their own values for those of the patient, by means of discussion, living wills, and other such devices.

George Agich (Bowling Green State University, Ohio) also drew our attention to the problem of respecting autonomy in cases where this capacity is severely impaired. Normally, bioethics focuses on respect for autonomy in quite dramatic cases; e.g., where high-risk decisions need to be taken. This focus, however, tends to neglect the problem of everyday autonomy, that is, people struggling to maintain their interaction with the world and other persons. This continuous struggle is often the fate of the elderly who are subjected to long-term care. If one intends to do justice to the value of autonomy in the context of such long-term care for the elderly, then one needs a more fine-grained account of what autonomy means in such a context.

Although psychotherapy is included in the health care system, it has its own particularities. Heike Smidt-Felzmann (National University of Ireland, Galway) noted that with regard to the problem of paternalism, psychotherapy seems problematic for a number of reasons. First, patients in psychotherapy are usually not fully competent. While psychotherapists often proclaim that they treat their patients as “equal partners”, they also think they are justified to question their authority. Secondly, the conception of mental health is value-laden, and this conflicts with the claim that psychotherapy is value neutral. Third, the patient is not entirely free to resist therapeutic interventions because the therapist has significant influence on the patient’s behaviour. Finally, the patient’s actions also have an impact on the therapist. Therefore, doctors need to question their professionalism.

The conference was aptly concluded by Prof. Herman De Dijn who put the value of autonomy back into perspective.

Reported by Thomas Nys and Yvonne Denier
RECENT MASTERS THESIS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL AND DUTCH PROGRAMS

ANDRIES, KARLIEN, “De dierlijke aard van de mens. De plaats van mens en dier in het denken van Mary Midgley.” [The animal ground of man. The place of man and animal in the thought of Mary Midgley.]

BAMPS, DAVID, “Via ‘het raadsel van de creativiteit’ op weg naar een perspectief van verrassing en N/adaptatie.” [Via ‘the mystery of creativity’ on the way to a perspective of surprise and N/adaptation.]

BELMANS, LUC, “De rol van waarheid en waarheidsgetrouwheid herdacht in het kader van de Journalistiek.” [The role of truth and faithfulness to truth considered in relation to journalism.]

BERWAERTS, FILIP, “Autonomie en euthanasie bij psychisch lijden.” [Autonomy and Euthanasia for the emotionally disturbed.]


CABUK, AZIZE, “An Investigation into Merleau-Ponty’s The Structure of Behaviour.”


DE BELIE, NELE, “De rede in de moraalfilosofie van David Hume.” [Reason in the Moral Philosophy of David Hume.]

DEBRIER, NICO, “Substantiedualisme herbekeken: Een vergelijking tussen het dualisme van Foster en het functionalisme.” [Re-examining the dualism of substance: A comparison between the dualism of Foster and functionalism.]


DE CUYPER, STEIN, “De objectieve geldigheid van de zedenwet in het licht van Kants vrijheidsproblematiek.” [The objective validity of the moral law in the light of Kant’s prob-
lematic of freedom.]
de groote, sammy, “De deugdenethiek bij David Hume.” [Virtue Ethics in David Hume.]
degryse, annelies, “In de voetsporen van Socrates: oordelen bij Hannah Arendt.” [In the footsteps of Socrates: Judgement in Hannah Arendt.]
de koker, stefanie, “John Rawls en de zorg voor mentaal gehandicapten.” [John Rawls and care for the mentally handicapped.]
delieve, glenn, “Over de invloed van natuur-mythologie op het natuurbehoud.” [On the influence of natural mythology on the preservation of nature.]
desmet, benjamin, “Film en Filosofie: Deleuzes bewegingsmachine.” [Film and Philosophy: Deleuze’s Movement Machine.]
franco, francesca, “Schaat het autonomiestreven het vertrouwen in mensen en instituties?” [Does the pursuit of autonomy damage trust in people and institutions?]
hinkle, elizabeth, “A Matter Of Birth And Death. The Human Being in the Public Sphere According to Hannah Arendt and the Early Writings of Martin Heidegger.”
hovda, jeremy, “Correspondence Concerning Wahrheit und Methode.”
hutmacher daniel, “Existential Psychoanalysis. An Examination of Sartre’s Project.”
jonescu, vlad, “Figure on Discourse. Discourse on Figure. Fragments of a Contemporary Aesthetics.”
iodin, alexei, “Hegel’s Relation to Transcendence and Singularity. The System’s Other.”
kim, tony, “The Socratic & Christianity. Reading & Reflections on the Philosophical Fragments.”
margot, bert, “Nietzsche’s vrolijke wetenschap: een weten dat tot leven komt.” [Nietzsche’s gay science: a knowledge that comes to life.]
miller daryl,” Nietzsche’s Dionysian Metaphysics. The Relation Between Wagner, the Present and Art.”
omarsdottir, linda, “The Bad Seed. A Philosophical Exploration of Wickedness.”
Towards a New Perspective on Morality through the Many Faces of Evil.”

OU YANG, MIN, “On Species: A Pluralistic Approach.”

PEARSON, JOHN, “Culture, Conflict and Communication: Can the literary public sphere maintain its functions in the face of changing conditions of social reproduction?”

PELLETIER, JENNY, “Composition to Distinction: The Real Distinction in the Early Work of Thomas Aquinas.”

QUIRIJNEN, KATRIEN, “Er is kunst. Een onderzoek naar de relatie tussen kunst en exterioriteit vanuit het werk van Levinas.” [There is art. An inquiry into the relation between art and exteriority in the work of Levinas.]


SUSAIMANICKAM, PETER, “Nietzsche’s Revaluation of Values: Revisiting his Project from His Moral Types.”


SPRUYT, KATRIEN, “Bijgelovige rituelen bij Thomas en Wittgenstein.” [Superstitious rituals in Thomas and Wittgenstein.]


STRUBE, FILIP, “‘Change the Subject’: de postmoderne dood.” [Change the Subject: the postmodern death.]

TALBOT, MICHAEL, “Prescience & Contingency: Boethius and Book V of The Consolation of Philosophy.”


ULLMANN, LAURA, “The Division of Labour and Communist Society. A close reading of the German Ideology.”

VAN EUPEN, SOPHIE, “Negationisme: een ‘oude mol’ in de tuin van het recht op vrije meningssuiting?” [Negationism: an ‘old mole’ in the garden of the right to freedom of expression?]


VANDENHOLEN, TOM, “Geen liefde zonder liefde. Een integrale liefdesvisie vanuit Thomas van Aquino’s ‘Ordo Caritati’ (S. Th. II - II, q. 26).” [No love without love. An integrated vision of love from Thomas Aquinas’s ‘Ordo Caritati’ (S. Th. II-II, q. 26).]

VANDERSTRAETEN, AN, “De perversie van het goede willen. Kant over het radicale kwaad.” [To will the perversion of the good. Kant on radical evil.]


VERGOTE, DORINE, “De filosoof en de fantasie. De pen van Sarah Kofman.” [The philosopher and fantasy. The pen of Sarah Kofman.]

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**RECENT MPHIL THESSES**

**Heylan, Jan,** “Quantified Modal Logic and Canonicity.”

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**Wylie, Peter,** “Metaphor and Indexicality.”
JAMES MCGUIRK, *Eros and the Indictment of Philosophy.* Promoter: Professor William Desmond.

This thesis is an exploration of the indictment of philosophy and that indictment’s relation to the notion of eros. The principal text used in the thesis is the *Symposium* of Plato. I believe that this is an extraordinarily rich piece of work in which a myriad of themes and ideas are explored. For my own purposes, I have organized my reflections on these themes around Plato’s exploration of the indictment of philosophy in the person of Socrates.

With respect to this intention, the thesis is divided into three parts. In parts one and two, I treat of an aspect of the indictment alongside a more contemporary thinker seeking to defend Plato against the charges of corruption and tyrannical excess. In part three, I put forward a reading of the speech of Socrates that seeks to defend philosophy and the philosophical deployment of eros as it is understood by Plato alongside reading a contemporary thinker faithful to this Platonic disposition.

In part one, I read the speech of Aristophanes as a warning against the hubris of philosophy vis-à-vis divine sovereignty. Aristophanes warns against the tyrannical ambition of philosophical eros and its attempt to arrogate what belongs most properly to the gods. Philosophical eros, he claims, threatens not only the peace between man and gods but also the very possibility of human happiness. Against this, I read the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. As I read him, Nietzsche does not so much reject the Aristophanic analysis as seek to transform its meaning. Nietzsche celebrates the challenge to divine authority in the erotic soul and herein locates the crowning human achievement. The “death of God” deprives us of a certain kind of meaning but Nietzsche believes he can redeem this loss in his own person through a transformation of tragedy into joy.

In part two, I read the speech of Alcibiades as indicting Socrates in particular and philosophy in general as morally corrupt. Many critics have read this speech as an appeal on behalf of lived particularity and uniqueness against the tendency of the eros of philosophy towards reduction of all that is singular to the universal. The philosopher claims to speak with authority on ethical matters but in isolating the unknowable from the real, he misses a significant aspect of what it means to be human. French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas agrees with this indictment in many important respects and has made warning against the reductive proclivities of western philosophy one of the keystones of his oeuvre. However, in attempting to establish a philosophy of the Other in which metaphysics is ethics, Lévinas employs certain fundamental Platonic insights such as the centrality of the relation between desire and the Good, and the notion of the Good as “beyond being”. So, while not straightforwardly a defence of Plato, Lévinas’s thought can be understood as an attempt to overcome the problem of the reduction of the other to the same by means of Platonic resources.

In the third part of the thesis, I claim that while both Aristophanes and Alcibiades highlight risks at the heart of philosophy, it is not clear that they have captured the es-
sence of Plato’s understanding of philosophy. Furthermore, the attempted defences of Nietzsche and Lévinas are also problematic. As such, I return to the text of Socrates’s speech in the Symposium. Here, I argue that a proper understanding of the relation between eros and philosophy requires an approach that I have characterized as hermeneutic. While it is true that the eros of philosophy leads Plato from a sensation of the particular to a vision of the universal, it is also true that this universal, as the Good is that which grounds the value of the particular as particular. Furthermore, Plato’s insistence on the fecund nature of eros entails the impossibility of understanding eros as purely self-serving since, at bottom, it is more essential to eros to give than to receive. In connection with this reading of the Symposium, I explore the work of William Desmond whose thought of the metaxological in Being is, I maintain, faithful to Plato’s sense of the eros of philosophy as both empowering and humbling. Desmond’s attention to the passive and active dimensions of erotic striving offers a more nuanced picture of philosophy than is offered by Lévinas or Nietzsche and brings to fruition certain insights of Plato’s thought that are only implicit in the work of the latter.

Promoter: Professor Rudolf Bernet.
Blind prophets and magical hypnotists, contemplative clergy and divine visionaries, wondering philosophers, investigative opticists and expressive artists, are altogether witnesses to an age-old fascination with the visual in general and sight in particular. Through them the history of philosophy presents itself as an ocular-centrism, a primacy of the eye both literally and metaphorically. The highest point of this ocular-centrism comes in the modern age. In the wake of the progress of the sciences the perspective of art and optics offer a rational foundation for vision, and this entails that the position of the seeing subject is reduced to a static and cyclopic eye. In Cartesian philosophy too, the visual field becomes reduced to the laws of geometric optics, and the subject becomes the criterion of rational vision — except when that subject for spiritual reasons uneasy with a “bodily” reasonableness or with natural geometry.

In these interrelations between a particular understanding of the visual and the specific statute of the subject Jacques Lacan sees in his Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse (1964) the departure-point for a new ontology of the visual, coupled with his own theory of the subject. Central to this is the notion of the look. The purpose of this thesis is to examine with Lacan what role the eye and the look play in ontology, subjectivity and desire. In the first part, Ontology and subjectivity, the modern reduction of the visual field to a geometric space and the correlative subject as a looking point of view is criticized. In contrast the importance of the look as an incorporation of light and of the subject as a looked at subject by the look will be emphasized. Phenomena such as spots on the cornea show that ontological speaking the look proceeds from the eye as the organ of vision. A comparison between the phenomenological analyses of the look in Sartre and Merleau-Ponty compels one to link the subjectivity of the subject to desire. The second part, Subjectivity and desire, presents a study of the Lacanian subject of desire.

Taking Lacan’s mirror stage as a departure point, we examine not only the genesis of the subject, but also pause to consider the question of how a critique of modern ocular-centrism
could fall into line with the Lacanian premise of the visual in the mirror relation. Keeping an eye on the well-known Lacanian triad of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real becomes, as Lacan calls it, object small a. An account is given of the Lacanian theory of corporality via object a as the part of the body that essentially becomes lost as the subject becomes joined to the symbolic order. Object a plays a role as the object of the drive and as the origin-object of desire. In a third and last part, Desire and ontology, the gaze as object a is examined in view of themes such as voyeurism and exhibitionism; the Uncanny and angst in connection with the gaze; painting, hypnosis, mourning and love.

Thus it becomes clear why desire really behaves through the visual structure of the phantasm and why modern ontology is inevitably spatial and ocular-centric. Conclusion: the subject is really characterized by the omnipotence of the eye and has an eye not to see evidence of this.

GEERT VAN COILLIE,

*Mimese, geweld en differentie. Een antropologische lectuur van de Oud-Griekse en joods-christelijke logos. Met een epiloog over de métis.*

Promoter: Professor Guido Vanheeswijk.
Co-Promoter: Professor Gerd Van Riel.

The present study is to be situated at the interdisciplinary crossroads where philosophy, classical philology and social sciences meet. Through a reading style of thinking and starting from the dialectical relation between language and thinking, in the twilight zone between education and research, we try to rejoin the classical-humanist and Jewish-Christian tradition with a view to reaching a broadened and deepened concept of rationality. We unfold the implicit image of man from the system of classical rhetoric into a ternary “patho-etho-logy”, i.e., a heuristic and hermeneutic instrument to fundamentally designate the place of man as a story-telling, dialoguing and reflecting being. Philosophical-scientific thinking, which dehumanises itself in that it denies the ethos, has always been characterised by a binary “patho-logical” structure. Time and again the vulnerable ethos is at risk of becoming the ignored victim of the violence by logos and its complement, pathos.

René Girard’s anthropology offers the outstanding model to a social science turned human and ethical again, which allows one to discover the reason why the mimetic human being denies himself a true and dignified knowledge about his own violent origins. The entrenched denial of the identity of the Other corresponds to the sacrificial polarisation of the unanimous violence against “the excluded third” on the primeval scene of culture. Man does not recognise the Other (or the scapegoat) as his own otherness or strangeness. The religious-ritualistic way of thinking continues the longstanding denial of the rejected and sanctified violence. The Jewish-Christian Revelation of the innocent victim and the Logos of the Gospel signify the breakthrough of the non-sacrificial truth about man. The great dramatic and novelistic literature unmasks the mythical-romantic lie of the difference between the I and the Other.

The anthropological re-contextualisation of the great linguistic and textual genres, i.e., narrative (narratio), drama (oratio) and thought (ratio), makes it possible to develop a “mimetological” hermeneutic of the ancient Greek literature in dialogue with the Holy Scriptures. The Greeks “pathologically” erased from their minds the awareness of the dangerous heteronomy of
the Other and they sublimated it into the ideal cosmic harmony on the one hand and into the intellectual and moral autarky (self-sufficiency) of the I on the other hand. Nothing else but the Logos of love – the perfect sacrifice and Jesus’ giving of Himself – reveals the violence of the universal persecutionary way of thinking in its many variants.

The enquiry is completed by an attempted mimetic reading of the Hellenistic métis (the cunning reason) and a typological comparison of Odysseus, Abraham and Jacob. The ruse of the mechanism of scapegoating is the matrix of culture and of human ethos. Mimesis, métis and violence mutually imply one another. Both ritual and ruse are violent, and yet this is all about a minor violence as a protection against major violence. The sacrificial origin of the métis does not appear except within the patho-ethico-logical view of man and world of the Hellenistic Christian culture. The ethical-religious drama of man in relation to his fellow man/neighbour and to God breaks with the vicious spiral of violence and cunning. In the narrative on the binding of Isaac sacrificial violence is debunked and brought to a halt. All main lines converge on the synthetic character of Jacob: violence and ruse; indifference and difference; rivalry and reconciliation; curse and blessing. God appears in the account of Jacob and the Angel in the precarious spot of the ethical Difference, in order to occupy himself the dangerous place of violence and to safeguard the relation to the Other.

RENÉ RANDSORP,
*De spil van Dao. Vertaling en wijsgerige, op Chinese commentarist geënte, analyse van Zhuang Zi’s Qiwlun.*
Promoter:
Prof. Em. Samuel IJsseling

The Chinese sage Zhuang Zi (370-285 AD) was, after Lao Zi, the foremost founder of classical Taoist philosophy. The collection of texts that bear the name of Zhuangzi was of great influence on later Taoist as well as Confucian and Buddhist schools of thought. According to the considerable number of publications about this work, even today there is great interest in China in Zhuang Zi’s body of works. In Japan these are especially valued for the important role these texts played in the formation of Chan (Zen)-Buddhism. The Qiwlun (Treatise on the leveling of things) is generally considered as the most important but also the most difficult of all of Zhuangzi’s texts.

The fact that Zhuang Zi’s philosophy is relatively unknown in western academic circles, and that in Dutch-speaking circles no systematic study of his work has yet been written, is one of the motivations for this study. The author of this doctoral thesis has translated the Qiwlun directly from Chinese, thereby making use of recent philological studies by Chinese Zhuangzi specialists. Its philosophical analysis of the Qiwlun is also based on an evaluation of philosophical commentaries by contemporary Chinese authors on this text (substantiated in the accompanying footnotes).

The first part of this doctoral thesis presents these commentaries, often referring to classical commentaries from the ancient tradition of Zhuangzi interpretation, so as to clarify the central thoughts of the Qiwlun emerging from
so many different possible lines of approach. This presentation takes the classical form of a line by line discussion, thus distinguishing between each part of the text. The second part of this thesis forms its central chapters 2 and 3, in which the ideas of separate sections of the Qiwulun are brought together, analyzed respectively along cross-sections of “epistemology” and “philosophy of language”. The core of Zhuang Zi’s thought, which one can in the most general sense describe as a constant appeal for a basic respect for the “ten-thousand things” (everything that exists), is introduced in the introductory chapter of the second part, with the aid of an “expansion” via exploration of parts of texts outside of the Qiwulun, which are further unfolded in the last chapter. At the close of the chapter the findings of this study are summarized retrospectively.

The main conclusion of this study is that the focus of Zhuang Zi’s thought about knowledge and language can be situated in his striving for the basic attitude referred to above, the promotion of receptivity. His philosophical interest is neither strictly “epistemological” nor strictly “analysis of language”, but more than this an ethics inasmuch as he argues for “flexibilizing the criteria of judgment”, and recovering the “instability of speaking” their ultimate point of orientation and finding apparent conditions in the total impartiality and unselfishness of Dao, that as a “way” that things as well as judgments about things are all bound together with each other in their multiplicity and diversity. This conclusion, resulting from a doctorate necessarily considered as a “hermeneutical preliminary work”, can provide a more theoretical basis for a critical judgement of the interpretations of the Qiwulan whose philosophical content can be interpreted as “agnosticism”, “relativism”, “skepticism” or “mysticism”.

LÁSZLO KOMORJAI, Ways of Meaning: The Role of Meaning in Language and Experience.
Promoter: Professor Leon Horsten.
The dissertation investigates some problems related to the connection of language and experience. Inside the sphere of experience we often witness how different sensual qualities shade off into each other. The possibility of such synaesthetic forms of experience is characteristic of any sensual quality, be it audio-visual, tactile, gustatory or olfactory. However, understanding, which is our ability related to language, seems to be directed to a completely different quality. Its object-sphere, that is, the “ideal realm of meanings”, is composed of much “thinner” stuff. It appears that meaning and sensual qualities, language and experience, belong to two well distinguished and completely isolated realms.

However, several forms of experience show that the above mentioned synaesthetic affinity is not exclusively related to various sensual fields, but even to the abstract realm to which meaning belongs. Meaning and sense data can be seen as different elements of a continuous spectrum, the phases of which - though they are different - are able to shade off into each other. All this demonstrates that language and experience are not related to each other as two externally connected spheres. Their affinity testifies to a deeper lying, common origin. Their relation is not only a relation of two spheres which, like form and content, correspond to each other merely externally, in a ready-made form, but there is an ongoing influence between them which keeps both of them in a potentially continuous becoming.

This impression is strengthened by the way in which the notion of meaning is ap-
plied by different philosophers to both spheres. Accordingly, in the dissertation the relation of language and experience will be studied through an investigation of the notion of meaning. A certain aspect of this concept will serve as the connecting link between the discussed realms. This aspect is inherent both in Frege’s notion of sense and in Husserl’s conception noematic, i.e., experiential meaning.

The Fregean concept of sense is often described as an inherently cognitive notion, and, as such, it is related either to the actual practice of using language or directly to experience. In the first main part of the dissertation (in chapters two and three) it is argued that such a “cognitive” interpretation of Frege’s concept is not tenable. However, the arguments of this part are not meant to deny the essential relatedness of these spheres. On the contrary, they are intended to pave the way for forging a different kind of link between the Fregean notion of sense on the one hand, and experience and the actual use of language on the other.

Before sketching a different picture about the above mentioned link in the last, seventh chapter, in a second main part (that is, in chapters five and six) Husserl’s notion of experience is discussed from a special perspective. The investigations of this part serve to emphasize two main points: first that Husserl’s notion of intentional experience (the “acts” of the Logical Investigations) is as objective as Frege’s notion of sense; and second, that his notion of experiential meaning, that is, the noema, is not the generalization of Frege’s notion of sense. Although the noema and the Fregean notion have precisely the same role, that is, to delineate or determine a certain notion of object, the latter notion itself has a different sense in Frege and in Husserl. The Fregean concept of object, which one might call the factual value of expressions, is a much less determined, a much less “heavy” one than the Husserlian notion of intentional object. This difference at the same time indicates the difference between their notion of meaning, since in both of their systems it is the notion of meaning through which the relevant notion of object receives content. (Or, as the same fact is often put in connection with Frege, sense determines reference.)

In the last chapter these investigations make it possible to outline a picture about the connection between the two different forms of meaning discussed. In this Husserl’s notion of “focal change” is used. This change can be explained in contrast first with reflection and second, with so-called Gestalt switch. In the latter forms of change the object and the direction of the regard itself change: the direction of the regard is either directed perpendicularly to the act which itself becomes thematic, like in the case of reflection, or forks, and is directed to its object through a completely different sense, like in a Gestalt switch. In a change of focus, the direction of the regard remains the same and only the focal point or the “balance” of the experience is shifted. In such a change the object itself remains the same in some sense. It becomes only more or less determined, or receives more or less “weight” in a specific sense. In this sense factual values are less determined than the intentional objects of phenomenology, which are again less determined than the objects of the so-called natural attitude. This makes it possible to understand the two different forms of objects discussed in the two main parts of the dissertation as the result of two different types of focus. Fregean sense and Husserlian noema, logic and phenomenology represent two different attitudes, which are mediated by a
focal change or, as it is called in the dissertation, by a “dimensional switch”.

Since in this scheme language and experience or, more precisely, concepts and intuitions belong to different “dimensions”, it is not possible to describe experience by a Kantian, hylo-morphic scheme, in which the intentionality of experience is the result of cooperation between conceptual and intuitive elements. Chapters one, four and seven, as a recurring theme consider how the Kantian view can be modified to meet the requirements of phenomenology, that is, how the intentionality of experience can be explained purely on the basis of experience itself.

TANYALOUGHEAD, Contradiction and Revolution. Following Maurice Blanchot.
Promoter: Professor Rudi Visker.
One of the foremost goals of Continental philosophy since Hegel has been: How do we retain the movement of Hegel’s dialectic and yet preserve a sense of absolute otherness? My research proposes that Blanchot’s thought is also centered on this goal, and that he has been successful in demonstrating how this might be accomplished. The pattern that we will find is this: Blanchot will accept and champion Hegel’s dialectic at a certain level, then Blanchot will describe a second level in which the dialectic does not operate. Thus, we will be left with a constant doubleness throughout Blanchot’s work. This “beyond” will be shown to both incorporate the Hegelian dialectic, and also to add a new and different side to it, which in effect, denies the dialectic its power, since the dialectic claims to encompass everything. What we propose to illustrate by doing this is that the manner by which Blanchot understands the world—and how he views the possibility of human knowledge—is very closely bound up with the idea of contradiction. Within this text, we will treat contradiction as an epistemological framework, and not merely as a technique of discussion. If we are to look for definitions and provenances of two of the most important terms of this text—contradiction and dialectic—the significance of the latter of these terms will surely fall to Hegel, while the former will take on its own, new meaning à propos Blanchot.

The main argument of this dissertation is broadly split into two categories: (1) Blanchot as he finds contradiction within those whom he reads (contradiction discovered), and (2) Blanchot as he forms his own ideas that pertain to the theme of contradiction (contradiction displayed). Regarding the first of these arguments, we find our proof in how Blanchot reads the works of Marquis de Sade, Friedrich Nietzsche, Simone Weil and Michel Leiris. The second of these two arguments follows Blanchot through his writings on honesty/ dishonesty, ambiguity/ clarity, simplicity/ complexity and on the key paradox revealed in literature. These two principal arguments together form our thesis that Blanchot has an epistemology of contradiction.

We then have a framework from which to make some bold claims regarding the implications and projection of Blanchot’s philosophy. There are many realms our analysis touches: friendship, death, aesthetics and the politics of revolution. We return to our analysis of how Blanchot attempts to both keep the dialectic and go beyond the dialectic. If contradiction is left unanswered—“un-recuperated” and “un-fixed”—then we have an open space left (as
indicated by a Hegelian structure)—a path set off that perpetually leads into we-don’t-know-where. With that in mind, we further argue that failure has a widespread and foundational significance for the whole of Blanchot’s thought, leading to a full notion of endless revolution. While it is indeed true that the future is the scene for the possible liberation, with Blanchot we doubt whether we can get there on the negativity of the dialectic alone.

Promoter: Professor André Cloots.
Like the Enlightenment philosophers, Whitehead believes in the possibilities of Reason. However, he immediately identifies Reason with the art of life, like the ancient philosophers who considered philosophy as an art, a style, or a way of life. “The function of Reason,” he says, “is to promote the art of life” (FR 4). Since Whitehead’s insights are scattered throughout his philosophical writings—and no one has yet tried to synthesize them—this dissertation gathers together the salient features of his thinking on Reason under the theme: the promotion of the art of life.

The first chapter focuses on the question of the status of Reason. The interpretative key is his notion of life as the affective, creative, and purposive process of the unification of given data towards a novel existence (NL 44-46). Contrary to the materialist-mechanistic way of thinking in modern philosophy, Whitehead contends that experience is not simply characterized by dry bones; it is already clothed with the flesh of a real being (Ezekiel 34:1-14/PR 85). This description reflects his metaphysics of feeling in PR and his theory of perception in Symb. Both perspectives show that for Whitehead, as for Merleau-Ponty and Kant, experience is the integration of physical and mental factors. Moreover, Whitehead embellishes his notion of experience not only with Romantic aspects but also with emergentist or evolutionary modes of thinking derived from Morgan and Alexander and related to Teilhard de Chardin. Arising from the progressive yet intricate integration of feelings, consciousness is not the paradigmatic form of experience but a specific form of feeling. Reason is the apex and not the base of experience.

The second chapter deals with the question of the function of Reason. The art of life as process or, more specifically, as the engendering of novelty entails a “three-fold urge: (i) to live; (ii) to live well; (iii) to live better” (FR 8). In the context of the downward flow of entropy and the upward trend of evolution, the aspects of Reason correspond with the three-fold art of life: natural—to live; practical—to live well; and speculative—to live better. Speculative Reason, which is the highest expression of the art of life, involves the search for general principles that are explanatory of reality. Speculative philosophy as the building of a house for the spirit to live resonates with the project of German Idealism. But Whitehead relativizes the possibilities of speculative Reason and redefines the meaning of metaphysics by transforming the doctrines of absolute idealism into a realistic basis and by stressing the constructivist and historical character of thought in line with contemporary philosophy of science (Popper Kuhn, Feyerabend, Lakatos) and with Nietzschean thinking. Ultimately, however, Whitehead emphasizes the interplay of the aspects of Reason in view of the dream of Solomon (2 Chronicles 1:7-12/FR 39, 74).

The third chapter involves the question
of the limits of Reason. The structure of the triadic aspects of Reason in FR is isomorphic with the framework of the tripartite division of human nature (viz., instinct, intelligence, and wisdom) in AI (46-47). Nevertheless, the correspondence of the two structures is not perfect because in AI Whitehead equates the art of life with wisdom. A true vision of the world (wisdom) results from the confrontation between the speculative scheme (created by us) and the religious, aesthetic, and moral intuitions (that are somehow given to us). The insight that speculative Reason draws refreshment from the finer intuitions in life (John 3:1-8/SMW 5), especially that of religion, paves the way for the reconsideration of some issues in Whitehead’s earlier works (e.g., SMW and RM) that are germane to the contemporary discussion regarding philosophy’s (re)turn to the religious (Vattimo, Gauchet, Ferry), namely: the relationship between metaphysics and religion, secularization and the notion of God, and the ideals of civilization (viz., truth, beauty, art, peace, adventure).

Thus, it appears that Whitehead is pulling modern Reason from both ends: from below, by relating it to natural agencies or to physical nature; from above, by relating it to spiritual agencies or to religion, aesthetics, and morality. Consequently, modern Reason is led to its breaking point. Although Whitehead’s different approaches to the problem of Reason are somehow marked by discrepancies, his reflections flow ultimately towards an integration of the values of Enlightenment and Romanticism (or towards a balanced perspective in between modernism and postmodernism), disclosing a metaphysics that emphasizes the necessity of a general vision of reality. However, it is no longer a metaphysics of Reason, or a metaphysics of a great narrative containing an overarching view of the whole of history from the point of view of modern Reason alone. Rather, it is a metaphysics of becoming or of the event (and, linked to that, of the unforeseeable). At the same time, Whitehead’s philosophy is an attempt to rationalize the event — by thinking the event and its conditions of possibility — including the event of Reason itself.

KOEN VERMEIR, Magical Science or Scientific Magic? Rationality and Irrationality and the Magic and Science Debate from a Historical and Philosophical Perspective. Promoter: Professor Herman De Dijn.

In a time when Harry Potter is the best known literary character, the popularity of pseudo-science threatens the sciences and ever more people believe in some sort of magic, a study of the relation between “magic” and “science” seems more than topical indeed. Magic and science are two practices that aspire to know and control the world. The relation between both in earlier periods, in alien cultures as well as in contemporary Western society is exceedingly complex. Today, science is often considered as the apex of rationality, while magic is dismissed as something irrational. But is this distinction so easy to make? In former times and alien cultures both practices intersected and were often indistinguishable. This points to a specific philosophical, historiographical and historical issue, which is researched in this dissertation. By means of a “philosophical history”, I investigate case studies on early modern “magical technology” and on magical and scientific theories about the powers of the imagination. I also develop
a “historical philosophy” in order to elucidate the relation between magic, pseudo-science and science. I show that the borders between different practices, among which magical and scientific practices, are ambiguous and controversial, while diverse mediating and cross-border practices also exist. In this dissertation, I develop new conceptual tools in order to help our understanding of the intrinsic “impurity” of all practices and their rationality.


What does just health care imply? Does it mean that people have a right to health care? Does it entail that there are rights-based social obligations to provide equal access to health care for everyone? If so, why? Why are health care interests so important that they deserve special protection? What kind of social good is health care? What are its functions and do these make it different from other commodities? Furthermore, how much equality should there be in health care? What inequalities are morally acceptable and how should the burdens of achieving equality be distributed? Which matters of health care belong to the domain of justice, and which to the domain of charity? To what extent should we allow personal responsibility to play a role in allocating health care services and resources, or in distributing the costs? And what does justice require with regard to long-term care for the chronically ill and irreversibly dependent? These are all examples of topics raised in contemporary debate about the requirements of justice in health care.

The starting point of discussion is the idea that the complexity of contemporary health care can be represented as an inconsistent triad, a set of three propositions of which any two are compatible but which together form a contradiction. A classic illustration of the inconsistent triad is the sign on the garage forecourt: We provide three kinds of services – cheap, quick, and reliable. You can have any two, but you can’t have all three. If it’s cheap and quick, it won’t be reliable. If it’s cheap and reliable, it won’t be quick. And if it’s quick and reliable, it won’t be cheap.

In the case of health care, the three rival values are: social efficiency, justice, and decent-quality care. Here, it also seems to be that we can have any two but not all three. If we want to provide comprehensive and qualitative care that is socially efficient, i.e., that promotes the public interest in a cost-effective way, it is likely that we enter into a health care system that offers such care only to those who can afford it. This raises objections based on considerations of justice. If, on the contrary, we want to provide decent quality care on the basis of people’s need rather than their ability to pay, it might turn out that the system is not socially efficient. And if we want to provide care equally to all those who need it, while preserving social efficiency, the package might be very limited and of low quality. Essentially, the central question is the following: how best to square the proverbial welfare circle? How can resources be matched to needs, or needs to resources in socially acceptable and economically feasible ways?

This inspired me to put forward the following research question: how can health care be incorporated into a theory of justice, while realising an acceptable balance between efficiency, justice and care? In this project, I investigate the various
philosophical categories, distinctions, and arguments used in matters of the just distribution of scarce health care resources. The main part of this PhD consists of a detailed analysis of the function and significance of just health care within three contemporary theories of justice: the Rawlsian theory of Norman Daniels, the capabilities approach of Martha Nussbaum, and finally, the resource-egalitarian proposal of Ronald Dworkin.

SHANE MCKINLAY,
Interpreting Excess. The Implicit Hermeneutics of Jean-Luc Marion’s Saturated Phenomena.
Promoter: Professor Ignace Verhack.
Jean-Luc Marion believes that phenomenology must begin from the givenness of phenomena. He sets out to free this givenness from any conditions that are external to it – phenomena should be seen as given, rather than in any way constituted. Elaborating a phenomenology of pure and absolute givenness is the principle aim of Marion’s phenomenological trilogy of Reduction and Givenness (1989), Being Given (1997), and In Excess (2001), which is the primary focus in this dissertation.

Marion’s insistence on the primacy of givenness in phenomenality entails a radical rethinking both of the phenomenon itself, and of the subject to whom it appears. In place of phenomena appearing as objects or beings, within the limits of horizons imposed by a constituting subject, Marion envisages phenomena as appearing without condition or limits, given by themselves alone. In such an understanding of phenomenality, the subject is no longer a sovereign ego that constitutes phenomena as objects; instead, the subject is the one on whom phenomena impose themselves. No longer understood as constituting origin, the subject receives itself in receiving the appearing of phenomena – the subject is now “the adonné.”

This rethinking of phenomenality culminates in Marion’s introduction of a new category of “saturated” phenomena. He claims that these phenomena give so much intuition that they exceed any concepts or limiting horizon that a constituting subject might attempt to impose on them. Therefore, saturated phenomena are given simply as themselves, and are privileged instances of the givenness of phenomena. Marion describes five possible types of saturated phenomenon (four corresponding to the divisions of Kant’s table of categories, and one which encompasses all four, and is thus “saturated to the second degree”), and then presents a “figure” as an example of each type (the event, the painting, the flesh, the face, and revelation).

Marion’s theory of saturated phenomena represents an original and innovative contribution to phenomenology. It significantly enriches our appreciation of phenomenality by insisting on the possibility of phenomena appearing to us in a way that exceeds our conceptual grasp. More radically, it establishes this excess as the paradigm for understanding all phenomena, so that “ordinary”, non-excessive phenomena are understood as having a diminished and limited form of the phenomenality that is seen fully only in saturated phenomena.

However, some of Marion’s claims are overstated, and are not supported by his own accounts of saturated phenomena. As a result, much of Marion’s reorientation of phenomenology is presented as a simple inversion, with the subject who previously actively constituted
phenomena as objects now being constituted by them as a passive witness.

This dissertation argues that Marion’s sharp delineation between active and passive roles is unsatisfactory, and that a more complex account of phenomenality is required. In such an account, a phenomenon’s appearing to a subject would be understood as active reception of what is given, rather than as the imposition of pure givens on a passive recipient. The present research reveals precisely this sort of complexity in Marion’s own descriptions of saturated phenomena. Contra Marion, it is argued that, in each instance he describes, these phenomena do not simply give themselves from themselves; rather, they are presented and understood in a hermeneutic space that is opened by a subject’s active and interpretive reception. The appearing of saturated phenomena depends on the interrelationship between the recipient and the world, and on the interpretive features of that relationship. In other words, Marion’s account of saturated phenomena contains an unacknowledged and implicit hermeneutics that militates against his claim to have arrived at phenomena as “pure givens.”

The hermeneutic dimension in the structure of saturated phenomena that is identified in this study demands two modifications to Marion’s phenomenology. First, his accounts of particular saturated phenomena, along with his general theory of saturated phenomena, should be modified so that saturated phenomena are understood as appearing in a hermeneutic space that is opened by the active reception of the one to whom they are given.

Second, because saturated phenomena function as paradigms in Marion’s phenomenology of givenness, and thus define the essential characteristics of all phenomena, Marion’s key claims about phenomenality in general should also be modified. Phenomena should not be understood as pure givens that appear on the basis of givenness alone; they do not have a ‘self’ that is the sole origin of their appearing; and they do not simply impose themselves of themselves on a fundamentally passive adonné. Instead of assigning primacy solely to the “pure,” “absolute” and “unconditioned” givenness of phenomena, the appearing of phenomena is better understood as a middle-voiced happening, so that neither phenomena nor the recipient are described in terms that are exclusively active or passive. Such a description reflects the essential interrelatedness of phenomena, the subject to whom they appear, and the world in which the event of that appearing occurs. This interrelatedness is hermeneutic not only in the sense that phenomena receive an epistemic interpretation subsequent to their appearance, but also in the ontological sense that interpretation is a fundamental part of its structure.


The dissertation explores the following question: can we be fair to Hegel’s dialectical explication of his conception of God (which rejects all conceptions of divine transcendence as sufficient for philosophy), and also affirm that the concept of divine transcendence could still be significant for philosophy after Hegel?

To explore this question, we examine Hegel’s three principal presentations of his concept of God, which occurred in his 1821, 1824, and 1827
presentations of his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. In the first place, we find that the 1821 and 1824 versions suffer from fatal internal deficiencies. In addition, we find the final possibility for being able to consider them as significant presentations depends on Hegel’s interpretation of St. Anselm’s version of the ontological argument, which itself treats of God as transcendent. The deep equivocity of Hegel’s interpretation – does Hegel regard Anselm simply as a “traditional” theologian to be relegated to the dustbin of history, or as a “speculative” philosopher of the order of Hegel himself – leads us to study Anselm’s philosophical theology, as developed across his Monologion and Proslogion.

We find that over these two texts, Anselm develops a philosophical dialectic of divine transcendence. Turning back to Hegel, we analyze his most definitive presentation of God, the 1827 version, and ultimately find that it can be interpreted as having Anselm’s work as a historical precedent. This implies that the systemic coherence of the 1827 version (a significant improvement over the earlier two versions) is not entirely based on Hegel’s own dialectical logic; it is based on a rational presentation of God (Anselm’s) which lies outside Hegelian systemic philosophy. This in turn means that Hegel’s own rational presentation of the concept of God is not the only way to provide a rational presentation of God, as he claimed in the 1827 version.

Reviewing what we have learned, we finally argue that this implies that a post-Hegelian philosophy of divine transcendence is possible, and close the dissertation with commentary as to what this could mean for contemporary philosophy.

VINCENT WARGO,
Promoter:
Professor Rudi Visker.
The question, “what does it mean to philosophize?” is rarely asked anymore. Yet, it is an important question because it discloses, in the deepest sense, what it is to be human. I use this question as a way of comparing the thought of Josef Pieper (Thomist) and Martin Heidegger. Through my work, I wish to re-commence a dialogue between Martin Heidegger and the Thomistic tradition that I believe was prematurely ended by the charges of onto-theology. The dialogue between Thomism and Heidegger’s thought is needed now more than ever because post-modern thinkers such as Jacques Derrida and John Caputo are beginning to go back to pre-rationalist models of thought to describe human subjectivity. Yet, it could be argued that any such retrieval could go awry if it is not enacted within the spirit in which that thought was first formed. Through the question “what does it mean to philosophize?” I hope to return to the original spirit that inaugurated philosophical thought.

My investigation of Heidegger’s thought begins with two fundamental ideas: Faktizität and Befindlichkeit. These concepts are important because they describe the situation wherein something like the “event” of philosophical thinking takes place. In connection with these ideas Pieper’s own writings become the source for a very powerful and astute critique of Heidegger’s thought. The problematic can be stated very plainly: where Heidegger conceives of philosophy as finite, defined by Dasein’s facticity and
determined by the moods of anxiety and boredom, Pieper sees the philosophical act as open to the infinite (God) and inwardly motivated by wonder and the desire for wisdom. This simple difference at the beginning pervades, then, the entirety of both men’s understanding of what it is to philosophize and its consequences are widely felt. However, the goal of this research is not merely to mark out the differences of opinion between these philosophers, but to go beyond appearances, to what is fundamentally at stake in their approaches. Pieper’s critique allows us to understand Heidegger’s work in a new light and shows us where Heidegger seems to have made arbitrary decisions. At the same time, Heidegger’s own conception of philosophy exposes the weakness of the tradition.

In the course of my dissertation, I deal with topics such as theôria, technê, poèsis, phûsis, festivity, hope, and wonder as conditions in which the act of philosophizing takes places. However, among these topics hope is the most important, and becomes the theme of the philosophical act for Pieper. As a consequence, we try to look for places in Heidegger’s thought where something like hope comes into play.

My dissertation is divided into seven chapters with the following themes. In Chapter One, I present Pieper’s conception of the philosophical act arising out of leisure and its relation to work, wonder and hope. In Chapter Two, I present Heidegger’s understanding of facticity and factual life as the radical origin for a new kind of philosophical project. Chapter Three deals with the formation of Dasein’s existentialia from the notion of facticity, and their distinction from the traditional categories of being. In Chapter Four, I compare Heidegger’s notion of Befindlichkeit with the Platonic idea of Divine Madness as interpreted by Pieper. Chapter Five consists in a confrontation between Heidegger and Pieper on the nature of the intellectual virtues. Chapter Six deals with the relation of hope to wonder in both Heidegger and Pieper, especially with regards to its ontological significance. In Chapter Seven, I explore the phenomena of death and the intimate relation of hope to myth and the possibility of its secularization according to Heidegger. Finally, in my conclusion, I summarize the results from the previous investigations and attempt to formulate a new model of the philosophical act.

Wha-Chul Son, Modern Technology and Democracy.
Promoter: Professor Ullrich Melle.
What, if any, is the relationship between technology and democracy? The primary purpose of this thesis is to investigate the theories of democratizing technology in terms of their philosophical perspective, theoretical consistency, and practical feasibility. In the course of this inquiry, close attention is paid to the historical context of the issue of democratizing technology. More specifically, the idea of democratizing technology is examined in the context of the transition from the “classical philosophy of technology” to the “empirical turn” approach in the philosophy of technology, which happened around the late 1970s. A critical analysis of the idea of democratizing technology can serve as an evaluation of the empirical turn in general. Our investigation constitutes a new venture, since there has as yet been no literature that introduces and examines these two positions together. Furthermore, since the idea of democratizing technology is related to all main issues
that have been dealt with in the philosophy of technology, this investigation can lead us to a new perspective concerning the role that philosophy of technology could and should play in the future.

The first two chapters lay the background of this research. In the first chapter, we investigate the main ideas of the so-called “classical philosophy of technology”. We place special emphasis on those issues in the classical philosophy of technology that offer interesting critiques and even call into question the possibility of democratizing technology. Jacques Ellul is treated as the representative of this position. The second chapter surveys the theoretical underpinning of the recent “empirical turn” in the philosophy of technology. It emphasizes the empirical knowledge of individual technologies in the discourse of technology. The empirical turn is introduced in terms of two approaches, namely, the descriptive approach and normative approach.

In the third chapter, two theories of democratizing technology, by Sclove and by Feenberg, are introduced. The idea of democratizing technology is considered as one of the most significant responses of the empirical turn approach to the questions raised by classical philosophy of technology.

The next two chapters contain critical evaluations of the democratizing technology theories by Sclove and by Feenberg. Chapter four offers a critique of the notion of technology used in their theories, in reference to two case-studies on nuclear waste storage and on the Internet. These studies reveal that Sclove’s and Feenberg’s theories do not reflect some of the most important characteristics of modern technology, namely its global character and interconnectedness. The fifth chapter is a critical analysis of the notion of democracy in the globalized world. With the help of the theory of David Held, it is shown that the fact of globalization makes necessary a thorough rethinking of the notion of democracy. Since modern technology is the main cause of globalization, it is very problematic when theories in the philosophy of technology do not take globalization into account. Democracy cannot be implemented in today’s globalized world as it could have been in the past. In these two chapters we propose that some ideas of classical philosophy of technology are more helpful in understanding and coping with this problematic situation.

The last chapter deals with the public perception of technology and the possibility of manipulation in modern technological society. Proposing the concept of the “techno-logical bluff”, Ellul argues that various discourses on technology promote a tacit and misleading belief that true humanity is achieved by modern technology and this, consequently, hinders people from making reasonable decisions concerning technology. I suggest that the theories of democratizing technology and the empirical turn in general run the danger of becoming a new techno-logical bluff, if their claims and suggestions are not properly nuanced and articulated. In other words, by solely concentrating on individual technologies and concrete solutions for the problems of the technological society, one can end up indirectly helping the general advancement of a totalitarian and dehumanizing technology.

I conclude that the relationship between democracy and technology is much more complicated and delicate than is often assumed. I also argue that the insights of classical philosophy of technology should not be abandoned because of hasty attempts to find an answer to
the problem of the technological society.


Promoter: Professor André Van de Putte.

Claims for the recognition of difference have become predominant in political struggles for national sovereignty or regional autonomy, as well as in a wide variety of social movements, which seek to combine the promotion of universal respect with a particular esteem for distinctiveness. In virtue of the principle of equal respect, these movements claim recognition of their particular language, their culture, their way of living, their religion, etc. As a proponent of critical theory, Nancy Fraser repeatedly points to the fact that the prevailing idiom of recognition is displacing the “old” demands for an equitable share of economic resources. The widespread attention for the “politics of difference” is marked by an imbalance to the extent that it would systematically marginalize the “politics of difference” is marked by an imbalance to the extent that it would systematically marginalize the “politics of redistribution”. Nevertheless, a parity of participation in social life might sometimes be better endorsed by redressing maldistribution, rather than by fostering an affirmative recognition of identity-related differences.

Fraser’s opposition is pertinent if directed against theories which are caught in the grasp of a one-sided idiom. However, it is unjustly addressed to the theory of recognition outlined by Axel Honneth in his Kampf um Anerkennung (1994). In the first part of this dissertation, I argue that Honneth’s critical theory of recognition should be evaluated on the basis of his previous Kritik der Macht (1989). In this latter work he delineates his critical observations regarding the way in which Jürgen Habermas continued the left-Hegelian tradition of the Frankfurter Schule after the latter’s rapprochement to Kant. In summary, Honneth’s “ethics of recognition” results from his objections to an “ethics of discussion” in which the intention of reaching understanding in a discussion among equals neglects the conflict about the enabling conditions for such an equal participation. According to Honneth, these conditions involve three forms of recognition (self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem) respectively resulting from relations of love, legal recognition and social esteem or solidarity. Together, they are the basic ingredients of a “formal ethical idea”, which functions as a critical standard for the normative evaluation of social relations. Honneth’s theory is not affected by Fraser’s general critique, because it addresses the question of economic distribution as a function of recognition in the spheres of social esteem and legal respect.

The second part deals with the main problems that were discussed in the debate between “liberalism” and “communitarianism”: the liberal view of the self (1), the universalistic approach of liberal theories of justice (2) and finally the problem of a democratic “ethos” (3). In brief, I argue that these problems can be internally connected on the basis of one central notion, i.e., the notion of recognition. Honneth’s formal ethical idea admittedly involves a tension between the right and the good – a tension that Honneth considers “inevitable”. Going beyond the dilemma concerning the priority of the right or the good, his theory
of recognition mitigates the liberal priority of the right without thereby taking a strong commitment to substantial values of a particular community.

Elke Legae, Supererogatie. Over de grenzen van de morele plicht en de mogelijkheid van plichtoverschrijdende moraliteit.
Promoter: Professor Paul Moyaert.

Moral intuitions are sometimes so deeply rooted in our everyday experience of the world that we do not readily regard them as problematic. Nonetheless, they do not always correspond to the rational principles, general ideals and theoretical schemes to which moral philosophers appeal when they attempt to ground moral judgement. In my dissertation I investigate to what extent such a discrepancy between intuition and theory is also present in our ideas concerning supererogatory actions, that is, roughly speaking, actions going beyond moral duty. In addition, I examine the implications of this discrepancy for the presuppositions on which moral theorizing rests.

My starting point is the fact that people are inclined to believe that supererogation exists. The performance of an act qualifies as supererogatory if and only if (1) the performance of the act is morally praiseworthy; (2) the performance of the act fulfils no moral duty or obligation but is beyond what is morally required, and (3) the omission of the act is not wrong, and does not deserve sanction or criticism. In other words, saying that supererogation exists means that people sometimes transgress the boundaries of moral duty in a voluntary (gratuitous) and praiseworthy manner. Examples of supererogatory actions include: anonymously donating bone marrow to an unknown patient suffering from leukaemia; Paul Rusesabina hiding hundreds of Tutsis in his hotel and so saving their lives during the genocide in Rwanda; people voluntarily spending time, money and energy to support or organize events helping the poor or the sick. Few people doubt that these are examples of morally praiseworthy actions. Nonetheless, it seems wrong or at least inappropriate to say that the people performing these actions are merely answering to the call of duty. On the contrary, (at least part of) the reason why we consider such self-sacrificing, courageous or generous deeds praiseworthy is that we believe that the agents responsible for them are voluntarily going beyond what can be morally expected of them. Hence, we assume that moral duties have a limited range: they do not cover everything that is of moral value. Rather, they leave open the possibility of optionally doing more.

In spite of this common belief in the possibility and moral value of going beyond duty, surprisingly many moral philosophers find it difficult to accept and explicate the idea of supererogation within the conceptual scheme provided by their own moral theory (for example, Kantian ethics, utilitarianism or ethical intuitionism). In my dissertation, I show why this lack of comfort with the idea of supererogation is a natural concomitant of modern moral philosophy. More specifically, I think two commonly made assumptions should be held responsible. First, the (meta-ethical) assumption that the concept of moral duty and the concept of moral value coincide. On this assumption, an action cannot be morally valuable unless it is morally required. Second, the (normative) assumption that moral considerations ought to be objective and impartial. On this assumption, it
is wrong to give more weight to your own well-being or projects or loyalties in moral deliberation (about what to do in a particular situation) than to the well-being or projects or loyalties of others. As soon as either of these assumptions is accepted, the idea of supererogation is bound to appear as logically deficient or as being based on moral illusion.

To investigate the strength of these two assumptions, I formulate three research questions: (1) what does it mean to say that an action is supererogatory (semantic question)? (2) is the concept of supererogation logically coherent (meta-ethical question)? (3) does the concept itself have any moral content or value (normative question)? An answer to these questions is given in five chapters, jointly leading to the conclusion that there is sufficient reason both to reject the aforementioned anti-supererogation assumptions and to accept the idea of supererogation as a coherent, determinate and morally valuable concept. By way of conclusion, some suggestions are offered as to how the moral significance of supererogatory behaviour can be understood from a wider perspective on the relation between duty and virtue.


This is an explorative work on Hegel’s dialectical-speculative concept of the “genuine / true infinite” (die wahrhafte Unendliche). The concept of infinity has been one of the most important concepts since the dawn of western philosophy. In ancient Greece, people were already astonished at the boundlessness of space and time, the mystery of numbers continuing forever, the paradoxes of endless divisibility and so on. Medieval thinkers related the concept of infinity to divine perfection. In modern philosophy, Kant was the first to systematically reveal the finitude of human cognition in the face of the infinite. According to Kant, one cannot have any theoretical cognition of the infinite. Given Kant’s critique of the capacity of human reason, Hegel takes the genuine infinite as the fundamental concept of philosophy after Kant. As such, one seems to face this alternative: either Hegel goes behind Kant to claim dogmatic knowledge of the infinite, or he further develops Kant’s thinking to its extreme.

In his Science of Logic, Hegel claims that Kantian critical philosophy must be taken as the starting point of German philosophy, whatever defects it may have. Taking this claim seriously, one has to account for Hegel’s concept of genuine infinity in the post-critical context. Instead of understanding Hegel’s genuine infinity as the Absolute, we will argue that Hegel’s concept of genuine infinity is the truth of the absolute. When the infinite is taken as totality, it will exist in a simple negative relation to the finite. This kind of infinity will be criticized by skeptics as the “spurious infinite” because it is no less negated by the finite. Insofar as the genuine infinite is the truth of the absolute, it must presuppose this immanent critique of the spurious infinite. For this reason, all kinds of “totality readings” of Hegel’s genuine infinity prove to be inadequate at the least.

In a Kantian spirit, Hegel finally grounds the truth of the absolute on the pure self-consciousness of human thinking, or the “free Concept” in Hegelian terms. It is this freedom
of self-relating Concept that defines the speculative nature of Hegel's concept of genuine infinity. For Hegel, the free Concept consists of absolute negativity, which manifests itself as the self-relating act of negation. It will be another story to show how this final determination of the truth of the absolute could be established against various kinds of skeptical arguments. But it at least becomes clear here that Hegel's genuine infinity must contain skeptical criticism of all definitions of the absolute. Insofar as genuine infinity constitutes the truth of the absolute, Hegel's logical-metaphysical system is finally grounded in the freedom of human thinking.
The Thursday Lectures series of the academic year of 2004-2005 included the following papers:

- John J. Haldane (University of St. Andrews): “Is There Any End to Philosophy?”
- Peter Welsen (University of Trier): “Schopenhauer’s Critique of Kant’s Ethics”
- Thomas A. F. Kelly (National University of Ireland, Maynooth): “God and Time: A Fresh Look at an Old Argument for God’s Existence”
- Michael O. Luntley (University of Warwick): “Attention and the Source of Norms”
- Laszlo Tengelyi (University of Wuppertal): “The Phenomenological Experience of the World”
- Theo Verbeek (Universiteit Utrecht): “Two Theories of Action in Spinoza”
- Jon Stewart (Søren Kierkegaard Research Center, University of Copenhagen): “Kierkegaard’s Critique of Hegel: A Reexamination”

A conference on “Cosmopolitanism: the Kantian Legacy” took place at the Institute from the 18th until the 20th of November. The following speakers participated in the conference. The keynote speakers were Nicholas Capaldi, Georg Geismann, Pauline Kleingeld, James Marsh, Thomas Mertens, and Martin Moors. Speakers in the parallel sessions were Garth Green, Andrew Kelley, Stephen Lake, Rebeca Lettevall, Liu Zhe, Donald Loose, Sylvie Loriaux, Karel Mom, Tom Rockmore, Irmgard Scherer, Gerrit Steunenberg, Ronald Tinnevelt, Paul van den Berg. Professor Frans de Wachter closed the conference with his valedictory lecture, which was introduced by

Professor André van de Putte. An interview which took place after the conference, as well as Professor De Wachter’s address are included in this alumni newsletter.

and Modernity] on that date. On the 6th of December, BART DE MOOR spoke about “Bio-
informatica: hoe algoritmen tot leven brengen?” [Bio-information: how to bring algorithms to
life?]; VERA HOORENS spoke on the 13th of December on “Onbevooroordeeld en onbev-
angen? Seksisme, racisme en ‘ageisme’ vandaag” [Unprejudiced and uninhibited? Sexism, rac-
ism and ageism today]; MATHIJS LAMBERIGTS on the 20th of December lectured about “Mgr.
Dondeyne’s opvattingen over godsdienstvrijheid: hun relevantie voor de 21ste eeuw” [Mgr.
Dondeyne’s views about theological freedom: their relevance for the 21st century]; BART DE
STROOPER on the 14th of February 2005 about “‘De ziekte van Alzheimer’” [Alzheimer’s dis-
ease]; on the 21st of February MARC HOOGHE on “Politiek zonder partijen? De toekomst van
de politieke partijen binnen een democratisch besluitvormingsproces” [Politics without par-
ties? The future of political parties within a democratic decision-making process], DANNY
HUYLEBROECK spoke about “De triomf van het embryo” [The triumph of the embryo] on the 28th of February; CHRISTIAN MAES on “Uitdagingen voor de nieuwste fysica” [Challenges for the latest physics] on the 7th of March. Then on the 14th of March, ANDRÉ DE
coster spoke about “Toenemende ongelijkheid op wereldvlak: een valse controverse?” [Growing
inequality on a global scale: a false controversy?]; on the 21st of March JOZEF VAN LANGENDONCK
spoke about “De actieve welvaartsstaat” [The active welfare state]; ROBERT SCHONHEYDT on
the 11th of April 2005 on “Klei en kleimineralen: van pottenbakkerij tot nanotechnologie” [Clay
and clay minerals: from pottery to nanotechnology]; PAUL MOYÆRT on “‘Het gewicht van het
geweten.’ Ethiek in het licht van de psychoanalyse” [‘The burden of conscience.’ Ethics in the
light of psychoanalysis] on the 18th of April; and JOOP VAN DER HORST on the 25th of April
about “Het Nederlands in de 21ste eeuw” [The Dutch language in the twenty-first century].

On the 1st of December, Prof. PATRICIA H. WERHANE (De Paul University) gave a paper
at the Institute, entitled “Wide Reflective Equilibrium as a Methodology in Applied Ethics”.

On the 2nd and 3rd of December, Dr. RAF DE CLERCQ and Professor LEON HORSSEN organ-
ized a two-day conference on the “Criteria of Identity” at the Institute of Philosophy. The
following presentations took place: DELILIA GRAFF (Cornell): “In defense of the simple criterion
of identity for qualia”; HUD HUDSON (Western
February 2005 marked the twentieth anniversary of Monsignor Albert Dondéyne’s death. To mark this occasion, the HIW, the Faculty of Theology, the University Parish, the Dondéyne House, the Dondéyne Lecture Chair and a number of longstanding university members, with the support of, among others, CERA, decided to celebrate 2005 as Dondéyne year. They wanted to recall and make known the significance of Dondéyne through a series of initiatives. In the Spring of 2005 a CD-rom was prepared in which the spiritual legacy of Monsignor Dondéyne and its significance is elucidated. The series of activities began on the 20th of December 2004, with a lecture by Mathij Lamberigt (K.U. Leuven), given in conjunction with the series of “Lessons for the 21st Century”. The lecture was entitled “Mgr. Dondéyne’s views about theological freedom: their relevance for the 21st Century”. The lecture was entitled “Mgr. Dondéyne’s views about theological freedom: their relevance for the 21st Century”. On the 4th of March 2005, Dietmar Mieth (Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen) gave the Dondéyne Chair Lecture entitled “From Moral Theology to Ethics and Back Again”. On the 30th of April, a Symposium took place at the Institute of Philosophy, in collaboration with the Wijsgerig Gezelschap (Philosophical Association) of Leuven, to consider themes with which Mgr. Dondéyne was concerned. Antoon Vandevelde spoke about “Tolerantie” [Tolerance], Toon Braeckman on “Pluralisme” [Pluralism], and
Baart Pattyn about “Waarheid en vrijheid” [Truth and Freedom]. A discussion closed the day. On the 29th of May, there was a broadcast on KTRO (the Brambos) on “Dondeyne’s leven en werk” [Dondeyne’s Life and Work]. On the 17th of October, there was a debate on “Geloof en Politiek” [Belief and Politics] in the Grote Aula of the Maria-Theresia College of the Theology Faculty. Other activities throughout the year included a film project at the Dondeyne House, entitled “Vreugde en Hoop” [Joy and Hope], under the guidance of Sylvain de Bleeckere, on the 8th, 15th and 22nd of March. In Spring of 2005, seminars at the Dondeyne House entitled “Verhalen over maatschappelijk engagement. In de spirit van Dondeyne” [Narrating social engagement. In the spirit of Dondeyne] took place under the direction of Luk Bouckaert.

A day of lectures took place at the Institute of Philosophy on the 9th of February entitled “Fundamental Issues in Ethics”. The lectures were organized by the Search Committee in Ethics. The lectures were as follows: Dr. Michael Hauskeller (University of Exeter): “The Limits of Scepticism on Natural and Moral Beliefs”; Dr. Monika Betzler (Un. München): “Sources of Practical Conflicts and Reasons for Regret”; Dr. Chr. Illies (Un. Eindhoven): “Kant meets Darwin. Why Cognitivist Ethics Should Embrace Evolutionary Theory?”; Dr. Achim Lohmar (Un. Köln): “Pluralism and Tolerance”; and Dr. Guido Loehrmer (Un. Bern): “Love as Origin of Moral Normativity. Harry Frankfurt’s Position Reconsidered”.

On the 9th and 10th of February, a series of lectures were organized by the Search Committee in Medieval Philosophy. Dr. G. Pini (sc. Normale Pisa) lectured on the 9th on “Seeing God’s essence: a reconsideration of the debate over cognition from Thomas Aquinas to Henry of Ghent”. On the 10th of February, Prof. P. Porro (Un. Bari) spoke about “Matter and Metaphysics: Thomas Aquinas on Abstraction, Separation and the Subject of First Philosophy”, followed by Dr. R. Friedman (Un. Köln) with “Peter Auriol, Averroes, and the Medieval Debate on the Nature of the Intellect”.

On the 17th of February, the Centre for Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven held a workshop on “Language Rights and Linguistic Justice”. André van de Putte, Dean of the Institute of Philosophy, welcomed all participants to the conference. Martin Blanchard (Montréal) chaired the first morning session, which discussed “Language Rights: A Legal Perspective”. During this, Sophie Weerts (Louvain) spoke about “Europeanization: Godsend or Misfortune for Linguistic Rights?”, and Alvaro de Elera (Heidelberg) on “From Values to Rules in Linguistic Legislation”. Peter Vermeersch (Leuven) then chaired a session discussing the question “Is Linguistic Regulation Just?”. During this, Helder de Schutter (Leuven) spoke about “Language Ideologies within Theories of Linguistic Justice” and David Robichaud (Montréal/Louvain) on “Linguistic Diversity and the Welfare State”. In the afternoon, Stefan Rummens (Leuven) chaired a session entitled “Equality Versus Linguistic Diversity”, during which Fernand Tanghe (Antwerp) presented a paper on “Language as Equalizer and Language as Culture” and Philippe Hmbye (Louvain) lectured on “Linguistic Justice as Fair Distribution of Linguistic Resources”. Ronald Tinnevelt (Leuven) chaired the final session,

Professor Richard Kearney (Boston College) held the Cardinal Mercier Chair this academic year. On the 1st of March he gave his inaugural lecture on “Narrating Desire. From Plato’s Symposium to the Song of Songs”. On the 2nd of March he spoke about “Narrating Terror. Philosophy after 9/11”. He gave two seminars, one on the 3rd and one on the 4th of March, respectively entitled “Narrating Pain, Trauma and Catharsis” and “Narrating the Sacred. A Poetics of Epiphany”.

The Institute celebrated the Saint Thomas Feast on the 8th of March this year with the celebration of Mass in the Chapel of the Leo XIII Seminary, followed by a lecture given by Professor Martin Stone. Professor Stone spoke about “Truth, Deception, and Lies: Lessons from the Casuistical Tradition”. A reception followed, during which there was a variety show by students of the faculty.

Professor Hans-Helmuth Gander paid a short visit to the Institute of Philosophy on March 23rd, 2005, as our annual Husserl Memorial Lecturer. His paper was entitled “On Attention”.

On the 18th and 19th of May, the DeWulf-Mansion Centre for Ancient and Medieval Philosophy (DWMC) of the Institute of Philosophy, together with the Centrum voor Antieke Wijsbegeerte Leiden-Leuven-Utrecht (CAW) held an international workshop on Plato’s ancient commentators, entitled “Plato Transformed”. On the 18th, Carlos Steele (Director of the DWMC) introduced the opening session of the workshop, which comprised a paper given by Dorothea Frede, “On the Use and Disadvantage of Aristotelian Virtue Ethics for Life”. Then on the 19th, Andre van de Putte, Dean of the Institute of Philosophy, welcomed all participants. This was followed by two sessions, on the Philebus and the Parmenides respectively. Dorothea Frede spoke about “Happiness in the Philebus” and was followed by Gerd van Riel, who spoke on “Neoplatonic Comments: Happiness and Pleasure in Damascius’ Commentary on the Philebus”. Then Luc Brisson gave a lecture entitled “Do the Intelligible Forms Maintain Their Identity and Unity, When They are Participated by Sensible Particulars? An Interpretation of the First Part of Plato’s Parmenides”, followed by Pieter D’Hoine with “Neoplatonic Comments I: The Origin of Species and Individuals. Proclus on the Extent of the ‘World of Ideas’”; and Christoph Helmig with “Neoplatonic Comments II: Can Forms Be Thoughts?” —
Neoplatonists on the Ambiguous Heritage of *Parm. 132b3-11*.

From the 23rd until the 25th of May, the conference “Deleuze, Whitehead and the Transformations of Metaphysics” took place at the Royal Flemish Academy, Brussels. Keith Robinson opened the conference by introducing the keynote speaker. Isabelle Stengers (ULB) then gave the first keynote address, “Thinking with Deleuze and Whitehead: a Double Test”. Didier Debaise (ULB) then followed with “Qu’est-ce qu’une approche speculative des événements? Convergences et contrastes entre Whitehead et Deleuze?”, and André Cloots (K.U. Leuven) spoke about “Whitehead and Deleuze: Thinking the Event”. On the 24th of May, the following presentations were given: Mick Halewood (Goldsmiths College, London): “Becoming Actual – Whitehead and Deleuze on Subjectivity and Materiality”; Andrew Goffey (Middlesex University): “Heterogenesis and the Problems of Metaphysics”; Leen de Bolle (K.U. Leuven): “Time and Subjectivity in Deleuze”; Judith Wambacq (K.U. Brussels): “Deleuze’s Concept of ‘A life’ Illustrating his Philosophy of Immanence”; Isabella Palin (K.U. Leuven): “The Meaning and Use of Abstraction in Whitehead and Deleuze”. James Williams (University of Dundee) then gave the keynote lecture entitled “Deleuze and Whitehead on Metaphysical Priority: Where Should We Situate Potentiality and Possibility?”. On the final day, the following papers were given: Sha Xin Wei (Harvard University/Concordia University): “Whitehead and Poetical Mathematics”; Roland Faber (University of Vienna): “‘Wash your brain, dada, dada, gulp some rain: Programmatic Dysfunction in the Chaosmos of Deleuze and Whitehead”;

Keith Robinson (University of South Dakota/K.U. Leuven): “Transformation as ‘Reversal’: Deleuze, Whitehead and the Fiction of the End of Metaphysics”; Steven Meyer (Washington University of St. Louis): “Ontologics: Reading De Man Before (and After) Whitehead and Deleuze”. The final keynote lecture closed the conference, and was given by Jean-Claude Dumoncel (University of Caen), who spoke about “Dieu, Création, Sauvetage & Calculus”.

and Paternalism”. Eva Feder Kittay (SUNY at Stony Brook, New York) spoke about “The Transparent Caring Self: Beyond Autonomy and Paternalism”, Eric Matthews (Aberdeen University) on “Is Autonomy Relevant in Psychiatry”, George Agich (Bowling Green State University, Ohio) about “Autonomy as a Problem for Clinical Ethics”, and Heike Schmidt-Felzmann (National University of Ireland, Galway) about “Authority and Influence in the Psychotherapeutic Relationship”. The day ended with a general discussion and conclusion led by Herman De Dijn (K.U. Leuven).


On the 26th of May, Mette Leech (Maynooth University) gave a seminar on “The Constitution of the Human Person and Its Fundamental Value in Light of the Phenomenology of Edith Stein”. Christian Kerslake (Middlesex University London) visited the Institute of Philosophy on the 9th and 10th of June. Professor Kerslake is working on a book on Deleuze and Lacan, and gave two presentations of his text in progress. This visit was organized by the CPWA (Center for Psychoanalysis and Philosophical Anthropology).
NEWS 2005-2006

From 21st-23rd September, the Belgian Science Policy and the Institute of Philosophy organized an international conference on “Truth and Public Space”. The conference took place at the Paleis der Academiën. On the 21st of September, Professor André Van de Putte, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, welcomed participants to the conference. He was followed by Joshua Cohen (MIT), who gave the opening lecture entitled “Truth Matters”. A session on “Truth and Deception” followed, with a lecture on “Truth and Politics” by Cheryl Misak (University of Toronto), to whom Stefan Rummens (K.U. Leuven) responded; and a presentation by Glen Newey (Strathclyde University) on “The People v. the Truth: Democratic Illusions”, to which Tim Heyssen (K.U. Brussel) responded.

On the 22nd of September, two sessions took place, entitled “Public Space v. Public Sphere” and “Power and International Public Sphere”. The first comprised a paper by Joshua Cohen (MIT) on “A Practical Public Sphere”, with Marc Maesschalck (UCL) responding; and a lecture by Bart Verschaffel (UGent) on “The Benefits of the Threshold. On the Importance of Semi-public Spaces”, to which Wim Weymans (K.U. Leuven) responded. Then Molly Cochran (Georgia Institute of Technology) spoke about “Theorizing International Public Spheres: Leveraging Power from the Bottom-Up”, and Valérie Kokoszka (UCL) responded to her; and Philippe Raynaud (EHESS) presented on “Truth, Power and Freedom: Two or Three Models of Interpretation?” and Toon Braeckman (K.U. Leuven) responded to him. The conference ended on the 23rd of September with a session on “Democracy”, during which Matthew Festenstein (University of Sheffield) spoke about “Truth, Trust and Liberalism” and Alain Loute (UCL) responded; and Robert B. Talisse (Vanderbilt University) presented on “A Folk Epistemic Justification of Democracy”, to which Ronald Tinnevel (K.U. Leuven) responded.

The Thursday Lecture Series of this year includes the following papers: Peter Byrne (King’s College London): “Kant, God and the Highest Good”; Gabor Boros (Eötvös University Budapest): “Seventeenth Century Theories of Emotion and their Contemporary Relevance”; Franco Volpi (University of Padova): “A Modification of Life which Makes Possible a Science of Life: The Young Heidegger’s Philosophical Project”; Timothy Mooney (University College Dublin): “Singularity, Effacement and Deception in Derrida”; Richard Cross (Oriel College, University of Oxford): “Duns Scotus: Christocentrism and Theological Methodology”; Raymond Geuss (Cambridge University): “Thucydides, Nietzsche and Williams”.

The Twelfth series of Lessons for the Twenty-First Century is as follows this year: Catherine Verfaellie: “Stemcellen: therapie voor de toekomst?” [Stemcells: a therapy for the future?]; Erik Schokkaert: “Intergenerationele rechtvaardigheid en pensioenen” [Intergenerational justice and pensions]; Gerry Evers-Kieboom: “Die ziekte in mijn familie, krijg ik die later ook? Predictieve genetische tests en hun psychologische betekenis.” [This sickness in my

On Wednesday 26th October, Professor Tszewan-Kwan (Chinese University of Hong Kong) gave a lecture at the Institute of Philosophy, entitled “Towards a Phenomenology of Pronouns”.

On the 5th of November, the CPWA (Center for Psychoanalysis and Philosophical Anthropology, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen and K.U. Leuven) organized a study day on “Gender and Psychoanalysis”. Philippe van Haute (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen) introduced the day. He was followed by Annemie Halsema (Universiteit Tilburg) who gave the paper “‘De moeder blijft buiten de taal’. Over het belang van psychoanalyse voor feministische theorie en haar problemen er mee” [‘The mother remains outside language.’ On the importance of psychoanalysis for feminist theory and its problems with that] In the afternoon, Veronica Vasterling (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen) spoke about “Psychoanalytische theorie vanuit feministisch gender perspectief: over dilemma’s, speculatieve vragen, onoplosbare problemen en andere struikelblokken.” [Psychoanalytic theory from a feminist gender perspective: on dilemma’s, speculative questions, unsolvable problems and other stumbling-blocks.]

On the 17th and 18th of November 2005, a colloquium took place through a collaboration of the universities of Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, entitled “Miroir et savoir. La transmission d’un theme platonicien, des Alexandrins à la philosophie arabo-musulmane” [Mirror/Reflection and knowledge. The transmission of a Platonic theme, from the Alexandrians to Arab-Muslim philosophy]. The colloquium was organized by the De Wulf-Mansion Centre, the Institut Orientaliste of the Université Catholique de Louvain, and the Centre d’Histoire des Sciences et des Philosophies Arabes et Médiévales, with the sponsorship of the J. Van de Wiele Fonds, the Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek-Vlaanderen, the Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique and the CNRS (France). The first day of the conference took place at the Institute of Philosophy. Professor André Van de Putte, Dean of the Institute of Philosophy welcomed the participants of the conference. The fol-

On November 19th, Professor PAUL MOYAERT gave an open lecture in collaboration with the Wijsgerig Gezelschap Leuven. The lecture was entitled “Het gewicht van het geweten. Ethiek in het licht van de psychoanalyse” [The weight of conscience. Ethics in the light of psychoanalysis.].

Professor GABOR BAKOS (Eötvös University, Budapest) is working in collaboration with two professors of the Institute of Philosophy, HERMAN DE DIJN and MARTIN MOORS, on a project for the VLAC (Vlaams Academisch Centrum) this year. His research focuses on the subject of the Enlightenment. Together these researchers will look into how the philosophical project of the Enlightenment (Spinoza, Malebranche, Locke, Hume and Kant) made the emotions and passions the object of the sciences and how these findings became integrated in systems of evaluation such as politics, morality and religion. Professors DE DIJN, MOORS and BAKOS organized a second Contact Forum through the VLAC-Brussels on the 25th and 26th of November, 2005, entitled: “Moral Theory of Emotions and Passions: The Concept of Love in Modern Philosophy”. On the 25th of November, the conference was opened by
Professor Niceas Schamp (Permanent Secretary, Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Sciences and the Arts), Professor Martin Moors then presented the concept of the conference (Leuven-Vlac). The following papers were then given: Gábor Boros (Budapest – VLAC): “Moral Theory of Emotions, of Love on the Threshold of the 18th Century”; Aaron Garrett (Boston University): “Hutcheson on Benevolence, Moral Sense and Rights”; Jaqueline Taylor (Tufts University, Medford, Mass.): “Hume on Beauty and Virtue”; Willem Lemmens (UA-Antwerp): “Spinoza and Hume on Emotions and Wisdom”; Manfred Baum (Wuppertal): “Moralisches Gefühl und Sympathie bei Adam Smith” [Moral Feeling and Sympathy in Adam Smith]; Mikos Vassanyi (Leuven): “L’Éthique du Fond du Coeur in Diderot and its quasi-theological context”. On November the 26th, György Petőcz (Director, The Hungarian Cultural Institute) gave an opening address. Then Martin Moors (Leuven – VLAC) followed with “Love God above all and your neighbour as yourself”: on Kant; and Heleen Pott (Maastricht) with “On Contemporary Debates on Love”. Herman de Dijn (Leuven – VLAC) closed the conference.

and the SS1930 Course on Practical Freedom”; Karl Hefty (University of Chicago); “Freedom and the Absolute in Schelling”; Micah Lott (University of Chicago): “Here at least we shall be Free”; Freedom and the Good in Milton’s Paradise Lost”; Todd S. Mei (University of Kent at Canterbury): “Rethinking Virtue: Freedom as the Highest Doing”. Martin Stone (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) closed the conference.

The Kardinaal Mercier Chair 2005-2006 will be held by Professor Günter Figal (University of Freiburg). He will give his inaugural lecture on the 28th of February on “Hermeneutics and Phenomenology”. Then on the 1st of March he will speak about “Intensity as a Hermeneutical Concept”, and on the 2nd of March about “Plato and Nietzsche on the Soul” and “Aristotle and Heidegger on Physi”.

Professor R. Gaita (King’s College London and Australian Catholic University) will give the 2005-2006 Saint Thomas Feast Lecture on the 7th of March.

On the 22nd of March, Jocelyn Benoist (Univ. Paris-I Panthéon-Sorbonne) will give the 2005-2006 Husserl Memorial Lecture.

There will be a Colloquium on Friday the 24th of March, 2006, on “Global Justice and National Responsibility” (Mondiaal rechtvaardigheid en nationale verantwoordelijkheid). Papers will be given by Veit Bader, Helder de Schutter (K.U. Leuven), David Miller, Margaret Moore, Roland Pierik, Ronald Tinnevelt (K.U. Leuven), Robert van der Veen, Antoon Vandevelde (K.U. Leuven).

On the 6th of May, 2006, there will be a Study day organized by the Wijsgerig Gezelschap on the theme of Multiculturaliteit [Multiculturalism]. The speakers will be Paul Scheffer (Universiteit Antwerpen), Ann Van Sevanant (Esthetica Hogeschool Antwerpen) and Rudi Visker (K.U. Leuven).

Two professors from the Institute of Philosophy will take part in a lecture series, “Cyclus Mystiek”, organized by the Spes-Academie in collaboration with the formation centre of Kulak. On the 31st of May, Paul Moyaert will talk about “Mystieke liefde: de omvorming van een liefde verteerd door verlangen naar een rustige, vervulde liefde” [Mystic love: the transformation of a love consumed by longing for a peaceful, fulfilling love], and Carlos Steel will present on the topic “De verzoening van filosofie en mystiek bij Plotinus” [The reconciliation of philosophy and mysticism in Plotinus].

In June 2006, Professor Jaap van Brakel will organize a workshop on the Philosophy of Chemistry.
The Institute of Philosophy is also the editor of a quarterly journal: the *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*. For the last 65 years this journal has published thematic articles and studies in the field of philosophy, as well as studies on the history of philosophy. In addition to this, the journal is also concerned with contemporary trends of thought and current debates, offering a wide range of philosophical voices.

Dutch, English, French and German contributions are accepted. Every article is accompanied by a summary in English (when necessary).

Tanya Loughead (PhD 2005) has been given a tenure-track position at Canisius College (a Jesuit university) in Buffalo, New York. She will be at Canisius as of Fall 2005.

Former Newsletter editor and alumnus Jason Howard has informed the Institute of Philosophy that his second year at Viterbo University is continuing to go well. He sends his greetings to students, alumni and faculty.

When two alumni of the Institute, W. Wolfgang Diedrich and Anya Topolski were married early in the summer of 2005 in Belgium, they chose to have some of their official wedding photographs at the Institute of Philosophy. One of these photographs is printed in this edition of the Newsletter.

On the 6th of August 2005, alumnus Jo Köhler and alumna Renée Ryan, current editor of the Newsletter were married in the university parish church of Leuven. A photograph of them on their wedding day is also included in this edition of the Newsletter.

W. Wolfgang and Anya Diedrich Topolski photographed with Edmund Husserl’s copy of Sein und Zeit, autographed by the author and now in The Husserl-Archives, Institute of Philosophy.

Renée and Jo Köhler-Ryan outside the Begijnhof church, Leuven, on the day of their wedding. Professor Martin Moors (Institute of Philosophy) officiated their wedding.
VISITING LECTURERS: 2004-2005

JOHN J. HALDANE (University of Saint Andrews)
PETER WELSEN (Universiteit Trier)
THOMAS A.F. KELLY (National University of Ireland, Maynooth)
MICHAEL O. LUNTLEY (University of Warwick)
LASZLO TENGELYI (Universiteit Wuppertal)
THEO VERBEEK (Universiteit Utrecht)
KEITH ROBINSON (Central Michigan University)
JON STEWART (Soren Kierkegaard Research Center, University of Copenhagen)
HANS-HELMUTH GANDER (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg)
PATRICIA H. WERHANE (DePaul University)
JOHN MARENBRON (Trinity College, Cambridge)
RICHARD SORABJI (King’s College London)
EDWARD EUGENE KLEIST (Loyola University, New Orleans)
MICHAEL HAUSKELLER (University of Exeter)

MONIKA BETZLER (Universität München)
CHR. ILLIES (Universiteit Eindhoven)
ACHIM LOHMAR (Universität Köln)
GUIDO LÖHRER (Universität Bern)
GIORGIO PINI (Scuola Normale Pisa)
PASQUALE PORRO (Universiteit Bari)
R. FRIEDMAN (Universität Köln)
ELIE NOUJAIN (Temple University, Philadelphia)
PASI SAUKKONEN (University of Helsinki, Finland)
AARON BEN-ZE’EV (Universiteit van Haifa)
CHRISTIAN KERSLAKE (Middlesex University London)
DANIELLE JACQUART (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris)
CHARLES BURNETT (Warburg Institute London)
DOROTHEA FREDE (Hamburg)
LUC BRISON (CNRS, Paris)

VISITING RESEARCHERS: 2004-2005

JULIEN FARGES (Université Paris IV-Sorbonne) Lubelski)
LEA TAKACS (Charles University, Prague)
KEITH ROBINSON (Central Michigan University)
ISHITIYAGUE HAJI (University of Minnesota, Morris)
WILLEM VAN DER MERWE (Universiteit Stellenbosch)
STEFANO MICALI (Universität Wuppertal)
PRZEMYSLAW GUT (Katolicki Uniwersytet

VALENTINA TURSINI (Libera Universitá degli Studi di Urbino)
ARKADIUSZ GUT (Katolick Uniwersytet Lubelski)
ELENA NIKOLAJEVNA ICHTCHENKO (Voronezh State University)
tsuYoshi Terasaka (Universität Würzburg)
tsuhoshi Matsuda (Kobe University)
THOMAS CARROLL (Sydney)
MARK VAN ATten (Parijs)
MARIA LUCREZIA LEONE (Lecce)
LAURENT PERREAU (Parijs)
MITCHELL JONES (Catholic University of America)
GORDON WILSON (University of South Carolina, Asheville)
ANDREA SEBASTIANO STATTI (Universiteit Milaan)
GUILLAUME FRÉCHETTE (Hamburg)
SEONG HA HONG (Woosuk University South Korea)
TETSUYA KONO (Tamagawa University, Tokyo)

KRISTINA SIMON (Köln)
ERAZIM KOHAK (Charles University Prague)
XAVIER ESCRIBANO (Universitat International de Catalunya, Barcelona)
DANIEL MARTINO (Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh)
LOUIS SANDOWSKY (University of Warwick)
DOROTHEA FREDE (Hamburg)
LUC BRISON (CNRS, Paris)
J. KIM (Chonbuk National University Korea)

MISSING ALUMNI ADDRESSES

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FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AT THE INSTITUTE

Assistantships

Description: There are a number of assistantships assigned to the Institute of Philosophy by the Rector of the University, or awarded to the Institute by the Belgian National Science Foundation. These assistantships are assigned to individual research departments. They carry with them both research and teaching responsibilities. Qualifications: A Master’s Degree from the Institute of Philosophy and demonstrated exceptional scholarly promise. The National Science Foundation Awards also require European Community citizenship. Number: The number varies according to the availability of funds. Stipend: The assistantships are awarded on both a full-time and a part-time basis. They carry with them a monthly salary. Tenure: One to six academic years. Application: The available assistantships are announced regularly in university publications. Application is made through the Personnel Office of the University.

Stipends for the International Program

Description: These stipends allow doctoral students to gain teaching and academic experience in the BA Program, as deemed necessary by the Director of the International Program. Qualifications: Prior to being offered a stipend, applicants must have received their Master’s Degree, and been accepted as possible doctoral candidates. Applicants must have an excellent knowledge of English grammar and composition. Number: 3 stipends. Tenure: One academic year, renewable. Application: Applications, together with an official transcript and a letter of reference, must be received no later than May 1st.

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Doctoral Scholarships

Description: The University awards Doctoral Fellowships for exceptional doctoral candidates who have been selected and put forward by a faculty member of the University. The intention is to stimulate researchers of an exceptionally high calibre. These fellowships are usually reserved for students nearing the completion of their doctoral studies. Qualifications: Applicants must be doctoral students at a faculty of the University, nearing the completion of their studies. Number: Depends on the availability of funds for a particular year. Stipend: Full tuition, plus a stipend of maximum 750 euros per month (unmarried), 1,000 euros (married). Tenure: One year, renewable. Application: Applications supporting the candidate are submitted by a professor of the University. The candidate’s curriculum vitae and a short description of the research are required. The deadline is February 1st.
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Post-Doctoral Fellowships

Description: The University awards post-doctoral fellowships for exceptional foreign scholars wishing to come to Leuven for a period of research. Junior Fellowships are available to holders of a doctoral degree with a professorial appointment at a college or university.

Qualifications: Candidates must have a doctorate, must be invited by a University faculty and be nominated by a professor of the University.

Number: Depends on availability of funds for a particular year.

Stipend: Junior fellows receive a stipend of 1250 euros per month (unmarried), 1500 euros per month (married). Senior Fellows receive a stipend of 1750 euros per month (married or unmarried). Fellows may also apply to have their travel expenses reimbursed.

Tenure: Up to one academic year depending on the length of the research project. Renewable.

Application: Application forms must be filled out and submitted by a professor of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven together with the curriculum vitae of the candidate and a brief description of the proposed research.

Developing World Scholarships from the K.U. Leuven

Description: These scholarships are available to students from developing countries (Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union countries are not included). They are available for candidates wishing to study in the Master and Doctoral Programs, and for candidates engaged in post-doctoral research. Qualifications: The applicant must be a citizen of a developing country, holder of a university degree, and 30 years of age or younger. The applicant must not be studying or already have studied in an industrialized country (including Belgium). Further information on qualifications is available from the International Centre of the University.

Number: Depends on applications and availability of funds. Stipend: Full tuition, plus an additional stipend ranging from 445 to 710 euros per month. Some costs will be reimbursed.

Tenure: Up to 4 years. Application: Forms are available from the Office for International Relations, International Centre, Naamsestraat 22, Leuven B-3000, Belgium. tel. 32-16-32 40 24; fax 32-16-32 40 14. Applications must be received no later than November 30th of the previous academic year.

Fulbright Fellowships and Grants

Description: A variety of fellowships and grants are available through the Fulbright Commission for study and travel in Belgium. Awards are made for graduate study (Master’s and Doctoral work) and for postgraduate work. There are also teaching and research fellowships available for scholars. Qualifications: Applicants must be United States citizens, not currently living in Belgium or Luxembourg. Number: Open.

Stipend: Depends on the Fellowship or Grant awarded. Tenure: This also depends on the individual case. Application: You must apply through the Fulbright Program Adviser on your home campus in the United States. At-large applicants must apply through the US Student Programs Division, Institute of International Education, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY, 10017-3580; tel. 212-984-5330. The deadline is October 31st of the previous academic year.
The Belgian-American Educational Foundation Fellowships

Descriptions: The Belgian American Educational Foundation (BAEF) encourages applications for fellowships for advanced study or research during the academic year 2004-2005, at a Belgian university or institution of higher learning. Qualifications: Applicants must be citizens of the United States and either have a Master’s degree or equivalent degree, or be working towards a Ph.D. or equivalent degree. Preference is given to applicants under the age of 30 with a reading and speaking knowledge of Dutch, French, or German. BAEF Fellows must reside in Belgium during the tenure of their fellowship. Number: Eight. Stipend: $17,000. If the fellow chooses to remain less than the full 12 months, the stipend will be prorated accordingly. The fellowship period must be at least 6 months. Tenure: One year. Application: Applicants should make their own arrangements to register or affiliate with a Belgian university or research institution. In addition to the application form, applicants must furnish 3 letters of recommendation, a letter of nomination from the Dean or his or her school, a brief biographical statement, and a statement of purpose. Application forms can be downloaded from the BAEF website at: http://www.baef.be/content/fellow_us_to_bel.html. For application forms or additional information contact the Foundation at the above address, call 203-777-5765, or email: emile.boulpaep@yale.edu. Completed applications are due no later than January 31, 2004.

The Flemish Community Fellowships

Description: These fellowships are offered to students at a variety of levels who wish to spend a year or more at a university in the Flemish Community. Qualifications: Varies from country to country. Number: Also variable. In the United States, there are 5 scholarships available annually. Tenure: Ten months (October through July), twice renewable. Application: In the United States, applications are available from the Belgian Embassy, 3330 Garfield St., NW, Washington, DC, 20008. Tel. 202-333-6900; fax 301-229-7220. In other countries, contact your own Ministry of Education. The deadline is February 1 of the previous academic year.

DeRance Scholarship

Description: Scholarships available for seminarians or priests throughout the world who wish to study philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy. Qualifications: A Catholic seminarian or priest with sufficient academic background and acceptance by the community at the American College, Leuven. Number: 5 per year. Tenure: 1 year, renewable. Stipend: Full tuition, plus room and board at the American College. Application: Applications are available from the Rector, The American College, Naamsestraat 100, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium. Tel. 32-16-22 19 55; fax 32-16-23 14 17. The deadline for applications is May 30th of the previous academic year.

United States Veterans Training Benefits

Description: The Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral Programs at the Institute of Philosophy have all been approved by the Veterans Administration for awards for qualified US veterans and their dependents. Qualification: Determined by the US Veterans Administration. Number: Open. Stipend: Determined by the US Veterans Administration. Tenure: Determined by the US Veterans Administration. Application: Write to the US Veterans Administration, Department
of Veterans Benefits, Washington DC, 20420.

United States and Canadian Government Student Loans

Description: The Institute of Philosophy, K.U.Leuven is an approved school within the US and Canadian Government Student Loans Programs. US and Canadian students may apply for a student loan through the K.U.Leuven. Qualifications: Applicants must be US or Canadian citizens. Number: Unlimited. Stipend: The amount of the loan depends on the amount requested by the student and the limits set by the respective governments. Tenure: One academic year (loans must be repaid when the student has completed his/her education). Application: Applications are available in the United States through the Financial Aid Office at your home campus or through a bank. The school code number for US applicants is 006671. The section on the form to be completed by the school or institution can be sent to the following address once the section to be filled in by the student is complete: Edmund Guzman, Office for International Students, Naamsestraat 22, 3000 Leuven, Belgium. Tel. 32-(0)16-32-37-64; Fax. 32-(0)16-32-37-73.

SOROS Foundation Scholarships

Description: Scholarships for exceptional Hungarian researchers to pursue advanced studies at an approved university. Qualification: Approval by the selection committee in Budapest. Number: Approximately 8 per year. Stipend: 675 euros per month. Tenure: One academic year. Application: For further information and application forms, write to The SOROS Foundation Secretariat, P.O. Box 596, H-1538 Budapest, Hungary.

ERASMUS Program

The Erasmus exchange programme gives EU students the opportunity to study abroad for one semester or for an entire academic year. Within the framework of bilateral exchange agreements, students may choose a university in a fellow EU country, and have the courses they follow abroad taken up in their Leuven study curriculum.

The H.I.W. currently has exchange agreements with the philosophy departments of the following universities:

Czech Republic: Charles University Prague (Univerzita Karlova v Praze); Finland: University of Helsinki; France: Université Lille III – Charles De Gaulle, Université Paris X – Nanterre; Germany: Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Katholische Universität zu Eichstätt, Albert Ludwigs Universität Freiburg, Universität zu Köln, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Bayerische Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg; Hungary: Eötvös-Lorand University Budapest; Ireland: University College Dublin, National University of Ireland – Maynooth; Italy: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Milano, Università degli Studi di Padova, Università di Pisa, Università Ca’ Foscari di Venezia; The Netherlands: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen; Poland: Catholic University of Lublin, University of Warszaw; Portugal: University of Lisbon; Spain: Universidad autonoma de Madrid; Sweden: University of Linköping; Switzerland: Université de Fribourg, Université de Lausanne; United Kingdom: The Queen’s University of Belfast.

The Erasmus coordinator of the HIW is Prof. Gerd Van Riel.
KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN
Institute of Philosophy
Alumni Association Membership Form

If you are not already a member, or if you have recently changed your address, please take a moment to fill out this form and join our Alumni Association. As a member of the association, you will receive a copy of the Alumni Newsletter and your name and address will be included in our Alumni Directory (Please Print Legibly).

Name: ................................................................................................................................................................................

Date and Place of Birth: ........................................................................................................................................................

Profession / Title: ............................................................................................................................................................

Home (Permanent) Address: ........................................................................................................................................

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Telephone: ............................................................................................................................................................................

Which degrees did you earn from the Institute Philosophy?

[ ] BA Year: .................................................................................................................................................................

[ ] MA Year: .................................................................................................................................................................

[ ] PhD Year: .................................................................................................................................................................

[ ] Other Year: .................................................................................................................................................................

Other Education (degrees from other colleges of or universities / Year):

Do you have any news for the next issue of the NEWSLETTER? (e.g. new employment, promotions, publications, activities, etc.). Attach separate pages if necessary.

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The Leuven Philosophy Newsletter
c/o INGRID LOMBAERTS
Kardinaal Mercierplein 2, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium
Fax [32] (0) 16 32 63 22
DO YOU NEED YOUR DIPLOMA?

A diploma is an important and useful document, yet some alumni/aes
have yet to claim theirs.

If you are in Leuven, you can claim your diploma by coming to the secretariat.
If that is not possible, you can order your diploma to be sent to you by registered mail.
Simply fill in the form below and send it to

International Programme Office,
Kardinaal Mercierplein 2,
B-3000 Leuven,
Belgium.

You can also e-mail your request to international.office@hiw.kuleuven.be

REQUEST FOR A DIPLOMA

Name and Surname: ............................................................................................................................................................................

Street Address: ......................................................................................................................................................................................

City and Postal Code: ...........................................................................................................................................................................

Country: .........................................................................................................................................................................................

Diploma(s) Requested: .................................................................................................................................................................