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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Dear alumni,

Spring time means you’re getting news from the Institute of Philosophy. This is a shop that does well. Last year, in 2011, we had 15 doctoral defenses. During the last academic year, 52 students graduated as Bachelors in Philosophy, 62 students became Master in Philosophy, and 31 students completed the MPhil program. Our international program is attracting more and more students. At the same time, there’s a rejuvenation of our staff. At the end of September 2011, two of our most well-known and esteemed professors, Prof. Burms and Prof. Bernet, became emeriti professors. You can read an interview with them in this Newsletter issue. You will also find a presentation of our new professors: Prof. Nicolas de Warren, Prof. Karin de Boer, Prof. Stefan Rummens, Prof. Stéphane Symons and Prof. Filip Buekens. At the end of this academic year, Prof. Moors will retire and then it will be quiet on that front for some years.

As always, the intellectual life at the Institute is flourishing. Prof. Christoph Schmidt (Hebrew University Jerusalem) delivered last year’s Mercier lecture, and we had Prof. Halbertal (also from the Hebrew University) for the Thomas lecture. Prof. Susan Neiman from the Einstein Forum in Potsdam, author
of a beautiful book on Moral Clarity, joined us as keynote speaker of the Philosophy Feast. This year we invited the well-known Prof. Peter Sloterdijk for the Feast. At the occasion of the publication of his latest book, Du sollst dein Leben ändern, he will speak about The Soul. We expect the theater in Leuven to be fully booked.¹

‘You must change your life.’ The title of Sloterdijk’s book urges the philosopher to think. In his book, Sloterdijk describes how in our culture, and also in the East, there is a long tradition of people who turn away from the world, who meditate, fast, and renounce material things. Our age has become hyper-materialistic, and this also calls for reactions. Another important finding is that people – at least in Western Europe – have become insecure. This is not new; in a world with a very low expectation of life, insecurity was everyday fare. In the Middle Ages, people were afraid of itinerant troops and gangs all their lives. The dawn of Modernity brought along a drastic rootlessness for many people. Or remember those days after World War II. A shiver went through the community of scientists and philosophers: thanks to the nuclear bomb, men were now really able to destroy themselves. Then we built an extremely securing and inclusive welfare state, at least in Western Europe. Simultaneously, there was a long period of peace on our continent. Some philosophers claimed that tragic consciousness was banned from our culture, rocked asleep by belief in progress and consumerism.

This oblivion was, however, of short duration. We know more new knowledge and technology will be developed in the next ten years than in the last twenty. This creates new possibilities, but it also brings new threats. We feel that the center of the world is moving eastwards. When you travel to East India, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, you cannot but be impressed by the gigantic changes that take place there, and by the enormous energy and inventiveness that is developed in the local metropolitan areas. Compared to that part of the world, we live in an old and weary society.

Moreover, what is really alarming are the increasing global and systematic risks, like global warming; between 2 and 6 degrees by the end of the 21st Century. Scientists tell us that if it’s more than 2 degrees, it will be an absolute doom scenario. Whether it will be 2 or 6 degrees depends on the success of our policy of greenhouse gas reduction in the next decades. In the last four years, another threat arose: the collapse of the international financial and economic system. People experience this as even more threatening than the climate crisis. Machiavelli suggested this ages ago: people experience a threat to their possessions as worse than a (somewhat less acute) threat to their life. First, we had the bank crisis. Some financial institutions went bankrupt, but – to avoid worse – a great part of their debts were taken over by the governments. This immediately turned out to be a problem for some weak links like Iceland and Ireland. Moreover, it led to an accumulation of debts and risks for the authorities. Now we’re in a second phase, where dubious debts are taken over by supranational institutions, by the European central bank and the IMF. The problem is, however, that there is no further authority to which debts can be slid over. We live on a gigantic soap bubble. Economists hope for a soft landing by injecting a big doping shot in the form of the creation of new money and debts. But that’s more of the same. Eventually, the bubble might burst, which would lead to a wide-scale version of the Greek scenario. The losses would then have to be swallowed in the form of a sudden and gigantic impoverishment of large parts of the

¹ Note from the editor: The theater in Leuven was indeed fully booked, but Prof. Sloterdijk had to cancel his trip to Leuven due to illness. Prof. Roger Scruton was willing to replace him and deliver the introductory lecture.
world — and for once, that could be our part of the world.

Philosophers look at all this from a distance. You can say: we live above our means, a correction is necessary. We will lose some comfort, but we’ll still be one of the richest societies in the world. A little step backwards feels like a catastrophe for some people, but maybe it is just fair. What’s philosophically interesting in all this is, in the first place, the return of the catastrophic, or maybe even apocalyptic, perspective. To live at the edge of the catastrophe: this was mankind’s fate for thousands and thousands of years. The Stoics, Buddhism, the various philosophical theories on the art of living: they were all inspired by the continuous proximity of wars, epidemics, infant mortality and many other calamities. Reading those philosophers now, from our overfed consumer perspective, is radically anachronistic. The cold war, the climate crisis and the financial crisis taught our generation to be conscious of the fact that heaven can suddenly fall on our heads, that catastrophes, or even an apocalypse, can happen.

Etymologically, the Apocalypse is a revelation. The Apocalypse reveals to us something fundamental about our world. René Girard once wrote some beautiful pages on this, and the French economist and philosopher Jean-Pierre Dupuy recently actualized this in a ‘metaphysical thriller’, *La marque du sacré* (Carnets Nord, Paris, 2008). The Apocalypse doesn’t refer to an end of time in the future. It doesn’t take place in historical time. It is a revelation that took place long ago and teaches us that the violence that hits us is not revenge or a punishment from God, but has a purely human origin. The Apocalypse doesn’t refer to a unique event, but rather to a sequence of discontinuities, the crossing of a series of critical thresholds, the appearance of lines of fracture, quickly bricked up. And then, suddenly, this leads to outrageous violence, that hits large groups of people. In other words, the Apocalypse is already included in many small decisions people make – decisions by means of which they often try to dam up disasters, unconscious of the fact that, by doing so, they prepare the big catastrophic bursting of the dike.

The climate crisis and the international financial crisis both seem to fit into this scheme wonderfully well. The problem is that the democratic institutions that are supposed to issue appropriate rules are also in crisis. Rules and agreement upon those rules should present the answer to the crises we are confronted with. Those rules should stand above all doubt, ‘au-dessus de la mêlée’. They ask for democratic legitimacy and have to be issued by trustworthy leaders and depart from reliable procedures. The question is whether our secularized societies still possess the capacity of self-transcendence which we need to keep the catastrophe at a distance. The question is also whether there are still philosophers who can inspire us in these debates, beyond the formulation of too simple charges against neo-liberalism or the cultivation of a romantic nostalgia of an imaginary past.
Dear Alumni:
Easter break has come and gone, the daffodils are still in bloom, and the buds are swelling on both the weeping beech and the wysteria in the courtyard of the HIW. And as we approach, slowly but surely, the final classes of the spring semester at the end of May, it’s time to take stock of the 2011-12 academic year, at least as far as the International Programme is concerned.

As Dean Vandeveldt notes in his Introduction to this issue of the Leuven Philosophy Newsletter, this has been the second year in a row of major personnel changes among the permanent academic staff at the HIW, and it’s worthwhile pointing out that several of our new professors are international professors, in the sense of not being Flemish or Belgian. Thus, as you can read in interviews with them in this year’s Newsletter and last’s, Karin de Boer (The Netherlands), Nicolas de Warren (USA), and Andrea Robiglio (Italy) bring with them a tremendous amount of international experience and a large number of international contacts, which can only help the HIW’s international profile and International Programme. Of course, all of our new Flemish appointees have international experience, and three of the new professors, Filip Buekens, Jan Opsomer, and Stefan Rummens, come from positions at foreign universities (Tilburg, Cologne, and Nijmegen, respectively). In that connection, it’s a pleasure for me to note that Prof. Opsomer has agreed to become the HIW’s “Doctoral Officer”, a new faculty position that involves helping doctoral students nearing graduation to get their foot in the door on the job market by giving them advice on applications, CV’s, and interviews; Opsomer is the right person for this job, since, before returning last year to Leuven (where he received his PhD), he had university jobs both in the United States and in Europe. The position of Doctoral Officer, as well as other measures described in last year’s Newsletter, are part of the HIW’s ongoing efforts to make graduates of our Doctoral Programme as competitive as possible in the world of professional philosophy. Certainly a part of that will involve taking advantage of the international expertise and experience of the HIW faculty – as well as of the HIW alumni. More on the latter at the end of this Introduction.

Like a year in anyone’s life, with its birth-
days and holidays, the HIW’s academic year is punctuated by events and ceremonies that give it a familiarity, a regularity, and a rhythm: school start, the six Thursday Lectures, the Thomas Lecture, the Mercier Chair, the Husserl Memorial Lecture, graduation. At the HIW, that list could be expanded. What’s important about these events is that they bring together a good part of the HIW’s intellectual community on a regular basis, they are familiar and known about far in advance, and yet each year they offer some genuinely new input to the local philosophical environment. They are regular opportunities to make us look afresh at some subject or another. In this way, 2011-12 is much like any other year, although we took the opportunity this year to be inspired especially by our own new staff members, with Thursday Lectures by Helder De Schutter, Tim Heyse, and Jan Opsomer, and with the Thomas Lecture by Andrea Robiglio. Another major event took place on March 23, 2012: the HIW’s second annual Graduate Student Conference. Like last year’s conference, it was a pleasure to see more than 40 MA, MPhil, and PhD students present enthusiastically, and on the whole extremely successfully, the fruits of their own research. March 23 happened to have been a beautiful day in Leuven, so it was all the more impressive that (except during lunch, when most of the HIW was out in the courtyard!) there were substantial audiences for each of the several parallel sessions. Professor Nicolas de Warren gave the keynote lecture, a chance for much of the HIW to get to know yet another of its new professors.

When I look back at the 2011-2012 school year, a special place is occupied by several of the initiatives that have been taken in connection with the HIW’s upcoming teaching accreditation (onderwijsvisitatie). Every seven or eight years, the HIW, like all faculties and programmes in Flanders, goes through this accreditation process run by the Dutch and Flemish governments in tandem. It’s our turn to go through the process again in 2012-13, and as a result the HIW’s Vice-Dean for Teaching, Bart Raymaekers, has been busily making arrangements for the drafting of the large “Self-Assessment Report” that forms a core element in the material that the HIW needs to prepare for the accreditation process. In order to gather information that can help with drafting the Self-Assessment Report, I have been involved in several “hearings” with international students at the BA, MA, and MPhil levels, as well as with the “didactic teams”, the groups of teachers who actually give courses in the various degree programmes we offer. Together with Erwin Blendeman and Emilia Brodencova, I sat with each of these groups for several hours, peppering them with prepared questions, but enjoying the free-flowing back and forth discussion between the participants concerning all aspects of the programmes. All of the hearings gave us much food for thought, but each was of rather different character. Interestingly, although the MPhil students had remarks and suggestions, they nevertheless seemed on the whole very satisfied with the programme in its current form – but then again the MPhil programme went through a pretty radical overhaul about two years ago. The MA students gave us some concrete suggestions for changes we could make to the progression of courses they need to take, and as far as we could we’ve already implemented these changes so they take effect from the 2012-13 academic year. The biggest surprises were in the BA hearings: the students and the corresponding didactic team converged on a set of suggested changes to the structure of the programme and especially the progression of the courses to be taken. Many of these changes will already be implemented starting in 2012-13, with the result that the BA programme has received a fairly significant reorganization.
that we think gives it a more logical and more pedagogical structure, to the benefit of both students and teachers. Although this time around the proximate cause of these hearings was the teaching accreditation, I'll look forward to holding especially student hearings on a regular basis in the future: besides giving me the chance to meet some of our students in a relaxed atmosphere, the hearings gave us important feedback that we could use to make our educational programmes more responsive to the students' needs and desires.

This Newsletter contains some further information about educational initiatives at the HIW. See, for instance, the description of the long-distance team-teaching that Andrea Robiglio conducted at Leuven together with Marquette University's Richard Taylor – who was in Milwaukee! And see the description of the educational project “Bridging the Gap”, which aims to create a framework for bringing the Flemish and the International students together in both formal and informal educational situations. The Newsletter also includes a description of an educational initiative in India as well as of the philosophy scene in the Philippines. HIW alumni, like yourselves, are involved in both of those.

Let me leave you, for this year, with the following. All of the renewal and innovation in our educational programmes, from the BA to the PhD, are with an eye towards helping our students get a great philosophical education. We're proud of our International Programme and of the education we offer through it, and we'd like to ask you to help us share it with as many prospective students as possible. We know, in fact, from our student hearings that our alumni are one of the best ways that we have to get out the word about Leuven and the HIW. So, please tell your own students, and tell your colleagues. Moreover, don't hesitate to get in touch if you have questions or comments about Leuven, the HIW, or its International Programme. And we look forward to sending you more news of the HIW next year.
NEW FACULTY MEMBERS AT THE INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY

With Filip Buekens — philosopher of language, analytic epistemologist, accidentalist, and critic of Freud and scientific reductionism — the Centre for Logic and Analytic Philosophy gained a versatile researcher and a brilliant teacher. Jan Heylen talked with him about his scientific interests and his connections to the Institute of Philosophy.

Professor Buekens, you are a critic of scientific reductionism. Could you briefly defend this position?

Between metaphysical fiction and the bare landscape of science, there's the manifest world view. In order to be able to engage in scientific research, one has to accept the global integrity of the manifest world view. Neurology and evolutionary psychology in particular investigate into the enabling conditions of our cognitive economy, but investigating into these enabling conditions presupposes not assuming that this manifest mental economy systematically misleads us, leads us up the garden path. In recent years, I spoke about this on several occasions with Arnold Burms, who once more pointed out to me the importance of Strawson's Freedom and Resentment: abnormality can only be observed against the background of normality. Evolutionary psychology cannot prove that our manifest world view is completely incoherent. This is, of course, a very charming claim. To quote Ernest Gellner: 'bare brazen assertions can have bold authority'. But one always needs to stay calm in this kind of matter. A lot of books are being published nowadays in which we are 'just' a brain, in which no one can be blamed because determinism is true, etc. Philosophers tend to like radical options. It is a temptation you should resist. And it is of course fascinating to examine the fallacies in reductionist arguments. Paul Churchland is convinced we have no beliefs. There are only brain states. He believes that is true. But if he is right, then, naturally, he cannot believe it.

You are a well-known opponent of Freud, Lacan and Zizek. Could you briefly explain why?

Not all three for the same reasons! Freud's theories have always struck me, because they can be so easily applied. It was one of the first criticisms Freud heard from his colleague Wilhelm Fliess, when he read Die Traumdeutung in 1900: 'But with this method, you can explain everything!' It led to the sudden end of their friendship. In Freud's Vergissing (Freud's mistake) I describe psychoanalysis as a meaning machine, a system that helps you understand what's going on, but without insight or comprehension. This was also Wittgenstein's criticism of Freud. Lacan was a master in creating a promise of insight, and it is possible to get people to become attached to your discourse by speaking in a hermetic (our ancestors would have said: prophetic) way. We want to understand the world and ourselves, and Lacan's whole oeuvre contains the suggestion that you will get this insight. He is the subject who is supposed to know. Shortly, I will publish an article in which I show that this urge for self-understanding can lead to illusions of understanding: our natural folk psychology can sometimes run wild.

This, of course, doesn't mean that continental philosophy cannot be of great value.
I’m not interested in the distinction between continental and analytic philosophy, but between good and bad philosophy, philosophy that forms an answer to an excessive desire for insight. I find phenomenology particularly interesting, and hermeneutics inspiring. Phenomenology is becoming terribly relevant again by means of interaction with philosophy of mind. When I was an MA student at the Institute of Philosophy, I wrote the very first MA thesis on Jacques Derrida. His early work contains extremely interesting insights about language, which Davidson, for example, also elaborates. There’s nothing wrong with that. When it comes to Zizek, what I think and said about him led to a falling out between me and half of Flanders’ progressive thinkers. That man is a charlatan.

Is it true that Prof. De Dijn and Prof. Burms left an important mark on your way of thinking?

It was my first study (general linguistics) that stimulated my interest in analytic philosophy. As a philosophy student, I was moved by the insights of Herman De Dijn, who, by the way, was the first to teach Donald Davidson at the HIW. What we read of him now is what came to life in his classes then, week after week. He attaches great importance to symbols, whereas to me institutions are very important. De Dijn made me see that naturalism must not necessarily be reductionist.

For many years, you are a staff member of Tilburg University. What is your position towards the Institute of Philosophy and the Catholic University of Leuven?

I warmly appreciate the catholic character of this university. The essence of the Enlightenment consists of the fact that the functioning of an institution as institution became transparent, and that we stopped thinking that everything – including our religious beliefs – belongs to a natural order. This doesn’t mean that we have to kick away the institution itself. It is not because you understand – correctly – that a ‘natural’ frame of thought is in fact an institution, that the institution itself is worthless, that it had, or can have, no function, and that it cannot be compared to other institutions. The ‘new atheists’ often tend, starting from their atheism, to disqualify the role and function of religion as an institution. But to me this distinction is very important. On the other hand, my position leads to another, very dangerous question: what should be done when there are discrepancies between religions that see themselves as institutions, and religions who don’t? These are striking questions. I use Searle’s theory about institutional facts to describe the problem more precisely. It is a nearly virgin territory in analytic philosophy.

It is a widespread criticism that analytic philosophy leaves no room for existential reflection.

I am an accidentalist: accident plays an extremely important role in our life. My decision to study philosophy was a ‘split second’ case, and I never regretted it. Or think about the importance of accidental encounters, or a book that stays in your memory, even if the attractive cover was the only reason you bought it. You met the women you love by chance. Our life is neither a drama, nor a comedy. For me, these are very reassuring thoughts. It also means that not everything necessarily has a meaning, that not everything fits into a ‘grand scheme of things’. Some things just happen. To want to understand everything is a philosophical fiction. I have a forthcoming publication on this topic: where does this urge to understand come from? How can it be interpreted philosophically and psychologically? Why do we see signs everywhere and in everything? To restate Freud: he was right when he said that sometimes a cigar is just a cigar!
In October 2011, Karin de Boer was appointed as Professor in Modern Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy. She had spent some time in Leuven before: while she was studying philosophy at the University of Amsterdam, she spent a year in Leuven. This was just before the creation of the Erasmus exchange program. She obtained her PhD at the VU University of Amsterdam with a dissertation on Heidegger and Hegel. In 2002, she was appointed as Lecturer at the Philosophy Faculty of the University of Groningen. Not long after that, she spent a second year in Leuven, replacing Herman De Dijn. She is a member of the Center for Metaphysics and Philosophy of Culture, and this semester one of the subjects she teaches — as a part of her Modern Philosophy text course — is Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.

How did you end up with Modern Metaphysics?

From the start, metaphysics somehow attracted my attention most of all. I think everybody has this kind of feeling, the sensation that there are subjects that really fit you, or challenge you. For me, it started with the metaphysics of Heidegger and, in a different way, with the metaphysics of Hegel. I took my first course on Heidegger in my third year, and I fundamentally disagreed with the lecturer. This to me was a challenge to find out what Heidegger really meant. With Hegel, it was the other way around. I heard my first lectures on Hegel from Professor Peperzak, who went to the US later. Peperzak, at that time, was appointed as Radboud Professor in Amsterdam. His lectures remain very dear to me, and I learned a lot from them. His presentation of Hegel's system was so beautiful, that I was really moved. It was only much later, when I really started to work on Hegel, that I understood the limitations of Peperzak's reading of Hegel. This made me look at Hegel's work in a more critical way.

Which subjects are at the heart of your research interests?

In my PhD dissertation, I tried to show that there is a certain similarity between the methods of Heidegger and Hegel, without losing sight of the crucial differences. What is important to me is the way in which a certain line of argument is developed, or the principles that re-appear in different contexts. Very often, philosophers don't explicitly write about the nature of their method. I like to examine what really happens in a text, and to make the nature of the philosopher's method a subject of my investigation. In Hegel's case, of course, there are text passages where he explains what he means by dialectics. But even then, what Hegel in fact does is one thing, which doesn't necessarily correspond in every respect with what he says about his method.

In a way, I'm moving backwards through history. After my PhD, I spent years investigating the philosophy of Derrida, as part of a research project on Derrida and Hegel. After that, I worked on Hegel alone, but from a perspective that was inspired, among others, by Derrida. Then I returned to Kant. At this point, it's hard to imagine how my research will look in five years, but I know for sure that there are many aspects of Kant's philosophy that I want to take a closer look at.

Do you see big differences between the way of teaching in Groningen and Leuven?

It's a bit early to comment on that. What I did in Groningen is mostly History of Modern Philosophy, more specifically of the late 18th and 19th Centuries. Groningen doesn't have a separate research center for Metaphysics, but on the other hand, there is a course on 19th Century philosophy for BA students, so it gets a lot of attention.

Ten years ago, I taught in Leuven as well. I replaced Herman De Dijn for two semesters. I enjoyed teaching in Leuven, especially in the
International Program: a group of students from all over the world, a part of which returns home after getting their degree. I had the feeling that I could make a difference for some of them, that I could give them something they could carry home to the country they were coming from.

If an outsider would ask about the importance of Modern Philosophy and Metaphysics, what would you say?

I would emphasize the critical impulse of it: questioning certain self-evident truths, and trying to find their exact meaning and function. You find this form of critique in Kant, evidently, but I think you also clearly find it in Hegel’s philosophy. Hegel’s political philosophy, for example, has a very critical tendency, although this is not something one would notice immediately. Hegel’s philosophy of law, even though it is a text from the early 19th Century, contains some conceptual distinctions that are still relevant for how we think about society, for example regarding the relation between politics and economics. That’s why for me it is important to continue my research on Hegel, simply because Hegel’s political philosophy is very comprehensive and concerns all aspects of society.

If you look at Kant and metaphysics, the distance to real social problems is, of course, much bigger. I won’t forcedly defend the view that Kant’s theoretical philosophy is socially relevant, but I do think that every society needs room for fundamental forms of self-reflection and self-criticism.

To conclude: how do you like Belgium, or more particularly, Leuven?

My husband is Flemish, so Flemish culture is not totally strange to me. I like to come here. But of course, there are cultural differences. I’m sometimes surprised to see a certain nonchalance with regard to practical things. One of the many examples is the Vesalius Street, where my office is located. There’s such a terribly leaning footpath! Everybody walks over it as if nothing’s wrong, while I’m wondering how, right in the center of Leuven, there can be such a leaning footpath, and this since many years. But then I realize that this is my Dutch mentality: in the Netherlands, everything has to be straight. Maybe we care too much about the form. What I like at the HIW is the fact that content prevails over form.

Interview by Caroline Malevé

On February 1, 2012, Nicolas de Warren joined the Husserl-Archives. Prof. de Warren is a Husserl scholar, who ended up in Leuven after years of research and study at different universities around the world. As a research professor, he has only minor teaching duties, which allows him to fully focus on his research. Trevor Perri talked to him about his background, current research interests and first impressions of Leuven.

Can you tell us something about your background, your educational history, and how you came to study philosophy?

My mother is French and my father is Sri Lankan. I was born in Paris and lived there until I was a young child. At some point, we immigrated to the United States. After finishing high school in the United States, I returned to Paris to study for a year. I then decided to study physics, returned to the United States, and started studying at Boston University. In my third year of studying physics, I took a philosophy of physics
class with a passionate philosopher of science, Abner Shimony, who opened up the horizon of philosophy for me. The decisive encounter that finally convinced me to change from physics to philosophy (aside from the fact that theoretical physics is truly difficult) was a course I took with the Czech philosopher, Erazim Kohák. It is largely due to Kohák’s teaching as well as his compelling personality that I began seriously to study philosophy.

Do you remember the specific topic of the course you took with Kohák?

It was an introduction to phenomenology. We read Husserl’s *Crisis* as well as some works by Heidegger and Jan Patočka. This was in 1989 and Kohák had just recently translated some of Patočka’s writings into English for the first time. In fact, Patočka’s writings had been smuggled out of Prague with Kohák’s involvement and deposited in Vienna. It’s similar to the story of Husserl’s writings. Kohák escaped from Czechoslovakia after the Second World War; his wife, however, was American and was thus able to enter the country and smuggle copies of Patočka’s writings to Vienna. Since then, they have been returned to the Czech Republic and are now safely housed at the Charles University of Prague.

While at Boston University, I also had the chance to study with Krzysztof Michalski, a Polish philosopher who had studied with Gadamer and who was friends with Karol Wojtyła, Pope John Paul II. Michalski founded and is currently the director of an institute in Vienna called the *Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen*. So, you see, my formative teachers in philosophy were one philosopher of modern physics and two exiles from Eastern Europe interested in phenomenology!

Where did you do your graduate studies?

For various reasons, after graduating from Boston University, I decided to move to Germany. I went to Heidelberg with two suitcases, 1500, and little knowledge of German. After living there for about a year, I learned enough German to pass the language exam that allowed me to enroll at the university. At the time, in 1991, Gadamer was still alive. I met Gadamer and began working with some other people there. Specifically, I studied with Reiner Wiehl, who was the first German to write on Whitehead (and who also wrote excellent papers on Spinoza), and Michael Hampe, who worked on a wide variety of topics; both were very kind to me. It’s strange, but I went to Germany with the idea of studying Husserl, Heidegger, etc., and instead happily found myself reading Whitehead, Spinoza, American pragmatism, and contemporary Analytic philosophy.

After 5 years in Germany, I moved back to the United States in 1996 and entered the graduate program at Boston University. There, I continued to study with Michalski, who was still there. Kohák had since returned to the Czech Republic. Other important teachers for me at Boston University were Stanley Rosen, Alfredo Ferrarin, and Dan Dahlstrom, who became my dissertation advisor.

What was the topic of your dissertation?

Initially, I wanted to write a dissertation on Neo-Kantianism—specifically, on Herman Cohen’s epistemology and philosophy of science; however, I became more and more fascinated with how the problem of time fit into the project of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*. I thus wrote my dissertation on the Fifth and Sixth Logical Investigation and Husserl’s famous lectures on inner time-consciousness.

Do you remember when you decided that you wanted to pursue an academic career?

I don’t think that there was ever a moment
When I thought: I want to be a philosopher or I want to teach. It’s something that just happened without warning (and perhaps without any thinking). In the 1990s, when I was in graduate school, philosophy was not as professionalized as it has now become. One could exist in a graduate program without framing one’s course of study in view of finding a position or becoming a professor. There is something liberating in studying for the sake of studying, with a kind of Candide-like ignorance of the word’s inevitable demands and compromises. When I was a graduate student, no one ever worried about getting published, going to conferences, the ranking of the school, etc.; the point was to breathe in an atmosphere of philosophically interesting ideas and arguments. Today, it seems to me that graduate students are prematurely forced to become professionals; but having missed a real experience of philosophical childhood, it’s not clear to me how one can truly attain maturity (for my part, I’m still waiting...), especially in philosophy.

What are your current research interests?

At this time, I have four basic interests. First, I would like to develop a theory of the imagination based primarily, but not exclusively, on phenomenological approaches to the imaginary. I am not only interested in developing a philosophical vocabulary, but in looking at specific manifestations of the imaginary—for example, dreams, children’s imaginary friends, virtual reality, the experience of video-gamers, etc.

Second, I am interested in different theories of forgiveness. I take the topic of forgiveness as a way to talk about the problem of secularization, the secularization of moral concepts, and the relationship between philosophy and religion. The concept of forgiveness is often seen as a unique contribution of Christianity to our moral vocabulary and thus opens the question of whether there is a meaningful notion of forgiveness that can move beyond the horizon of Christianity in some way. In this regard, I am also interested in the unforgivable and what distinguishes something deemed “unforgivable” from other, even extreme, occurrences of moral indignation.

Third, and this is very large project, I would like to study systematically the impact of the First World War on twentieth century philosophy and to consider, among other questions, why so many philosophers responded to the First World War as if something philosophical was at stake in the war, but ended up saying things that, from our point of view, range from the shamelessly nationalistic to sheer craziness. It seems to me that the First World War was one of the last historical events that philosophers thought had any meaning for philosophy. It is amazing that everyone felt compelled to respond to the war through the means of philosophy, but at the end of the day, few retained any integrity or lucidity, with one exception, Bertrand Russell, who objected to the war and was jailed for it. I am also mindful, however, of resisting this temptation to judge philosophical responses to the Great War as “crazy” or “swept by the times.” These are perhaps some of the most difficult philosophical texts to understand since it seems so easy to think that we know better. Something philosophically essential comes to end with the War; perhaps even any meaningful idea of Europe and Western History. It is the war, in other words, that made “metaphysics”—and every association with this traditionally highest pursuit of humankind—such a philosophical insult. I am also interested in exploring a hypothesis—namely, that the impact of the First World War on philosophy introduces a dynamic that eventually leads to the distinction between analytic and continental philosophy. An archeology of this distinction finds its origins in the First World War—that
is my claim. Though it is not immediately produced by the First World War, the First World War sets into motion a certain dynamic that, and with a number of other reasons, leads to a polarization of philosophy around national identity and language. How else to explain the tone of Gilbert Ryle's articles against Heidegger or Popper's somewhat fanatical *Open Society and its Enemies*?

Finally, at a certain point of your life you realize that people are stupid in the most curious ways and that even the most intelligent people (philosophers, for example) are not immune to stupidity. I am interested in stupidity and trying to understand how stupidity is not simply a form of ignorance, a mistaken belief, and, most importantly, not antithetical to intelligence. The interesting case is, of course, how highly intelligent people can nonetheless think and/or behave stupidly. My life will have been well lived if I can come to understand something about human stupidity—its manifold ways of being—without thereby proclaiming myself more intelligent.

At the time of this interview, you have been in Belgium for exactly one week; would you mind saying what your first impressions of Leuven and the Institute of Philosophy are?

Well, the weather could be better. But, I'm told there's hope yet. More substantially, one thing that comes to mind is how impressive the library of the Institute is, especially in an age when a library is no longer seen as essential for the cultivation of philosophy. I can think of very few places that have such an excellent philosophy library. It really testifies to a dedication to philosophical literacy, but not in any monolithic sense of what such literacy entails. A non-monolithic understanding of philosophical literacy has always been a necessary ingredient for any interesting philosophy, as opposed to a philosophy that is merely clever or just scholastic.

In October 2011 the HIW welcomed an old acquaintance. For years and years, both as a PhD scholar and postdoctoral researcher, Stefan Rummens was a member of the Leuven research group in political philosophy (now called RIPPLE). After wandering abroad for some time, with a research stay at the New School for Social Research in New York, one in Frankfurt am Main, and a three year lectureship at the University of Nijmegen, he was recently appointed as professor in ethics at KU Leuven. He lives in Brussels and is the father of two children: Luka (six years) and Kasper (three years).

What brought you to studying philosophy?

I wanted to study physics first, but was very attracted to philosophy at the same time. When I started my first BA, I enrolled for both physics and philosophy. I realized very quickly that I was spending almost all of my time on philosophy. But I wanted to obtain my physics degree too, so I quitted philosophy around Christmas to fully concentrate on physics and get my degree. After that, I picked up the thread of philosophy.

And then you decided to write a PhD in philosophy?

That’s right. But I always tried to combine both philosophy and physics. My MA thesis was concerned with philosophy of science, and the initial subject of my PhD project was the realism debate in philosophy of science. This debate raises the question of whether some unobservable entities that are presupposed by science really exist. However, my project stranded...
rather quickly. The reading of Wittgenstein convinced me that the problem I was concerned with had no meaning outside the scientific language game, and thus could have no additional meaning as a philosophical question. This kind of internal realism made me conclude that my question had in fact no object.

I then took a radical decision and changed my track completely. I had been interested in political and social topics for a long time, so I started to write a PhD in political philosophy. Here too, my Wittgensteinian background played a role: Wittgenstein shows that some philosophical problems are pseudo-problems, but his argument doesn’t work within a political or ethical context. In politics and ethics, decisions must be made. Unlike questions from metaphysics or philosophy of science, the question ‘what ought I to do?’ cannot be left unanswered or made to disappear.

So I started to write a PhD on the basic moral values of Habermas’ theory of democracy. In political philosophy, a distinction is often made between substantialist and procedural theories of democracy. My point was that Habermas, strictly speaking, belongs to neither of these approaches. His theory is a constructivist one: it departs from some basic moral values like freedom and equality, but those always have to be concretely elaborated through a process of deliberation within a specific context.

How do you look at the heritage of this PhD today?

After my PhD, I followed two tracks. One was the continuation of my research into the problem of basic democratic and moral values, which I tried to relate to concrete political problems like populism, political extremism, the role of religion in the public sphere and freedom of speech. On the other hand, I tried to explore the limits of Habermas’ theory of democracy, mainly by using the philosophy of Claude Lefort to raise the question about the relation between deliberation and representation.

Basically, I think that Habermas’ project to ground universal values transcendently in the basic presuppositions of language and communication has failed. My criticism is especially that Habermas’ philosophy is profoundly rationalistic. But the question remains: how universal is democracy, or how universal are some moral values? This question brings me back to Wittgenstein. In his last book, On Certainty, Wittgenstein argues, against radical skepticism à la Descartes, that there is no language game where everything can be put in doubt. When you consider empirical objects like, let’s say, the table in front of me, there are certainties that are beyond doubt. The certainty of the language game within which we act, using these objects, precedes the radical doubt. The question I want to explore now is whether this insight can be extrapolated to a moral context. Wittgenstein himself does not ask this question, and there’s very little literature available about it. I think this track can possibly open some interesting perspectives on the question whether values like freedom or equality can be called universal. Wittgenstein’s philosophy is in fact very impressive, although his impact on philosophy in general was rather limited. The reason for this is probably because his criticism of philosophy is so drastic.

You were appointed as professor in ethics. Does this mean that you leave political philosophy behind?

I certainly don’t give up my interest in political philosophy. The ethical dimension always played a role already. My work on the problem of democracy has a strong ethical focus. But the question what Wittgenstein has to offer to ethics and meta-ethics now adds a new line to my research.
You also teach a lot of courses. What is your experience regarding teaching?

At this moment, I teach four classes: an introduction to philosophy for first BA students in engineering sciences, ‘Introduction to ethics’ in the HIW’s international program, the MA advanced course in ethics, and philosophy of law at the Law faculty. During the past years, I worked at the Department of political sciences in Nijmegen. This interdisciplinary experience was very positive, but anyhow, I’m glad to work and teach at a philosophy department again. The enthusiasm of philosophy students, more particularly the international ones, is very contagious. Moreover, I think that Leuven, with its strong research group in political philosophy, is about the best place in the Low Countries for my type of research.

Interview by Matthias Lievens

After the retirement of Paul Cruysberghs, the Centre for Metaphysics and Philosophy of Culture was looking for a new professor in Aesthetics and Philosophy of Culture. Stéphane Symons, former FWO postdoc researcher and specialist of 20th-Century philosophy of art and culture, turned out to be the ideal candidate. Vincent Caudron presented him some questions about his research and teaching.

Please tell us what your current research is about.

My research is mainly situated in the area of 20th-Century German and French philosophy. I wrote my PhD on Walter Benjamin, and the whole Frankfurter Schule remains a recurring theme in research about the relation between politics and art, philosophy of history, and the character of different artistic media (especially literature, painting, photography and cinema). I understand the Frankfurter Schule in a very broad sense and allow authors and thinkers from the periphery of this school to occupy an important place in my research: to me, people like Georg Simmel and Siegfried Kracauer are more relevant than ever before, partly because of their interdisciplinary approach and their untraditional opinions on what defines the character of our modern society. Besides that, I often return to French post-war authors like Derrida, Deleuze and Lyotard, or to contemporary thinkers like Rancière and Giorgio Agamben. Their analyses of Modernity and of the role of art are very sharp and often contain very convincing and stimulating arguments.

As a new professor, you have a lot of teaching assignments. Which courses are you teaching, and what is your teaching method?

Both in my research and in my teaching, I concentrate on philosophy of culture and on aesthetics, or philosophy of art. The courses on philosophical aesthetics in the Department of Art History form an important part of my teaching. The non-philosophical context makes this a very interesting and gripping, but also a very complex, task: because of the heterogeneity of the group (both art history and philosophy students), I cannot presuppose too much philosophical background knowledge from one part of the group, but at the same time, the other students know little about history of art and contemporary artistic evolutions. This is why my classes at the Arts Faculty usually depart from one general theme, like the relation between art and politics, which I elaborate together with the students, using some pioneering texts from aesthetics and art criticism.

I use a similar approach (starting from
A completely different course is the Dutch Philosophy and Culture seminar, which is part of the Philosophical Skills Training for first BA students. There is no doubt that this is one of the most innovative courses, since it consists of a direct introduction to some forms of contemporary culture and art: five times a year, in groups of 15, students go to an artistic performance or event (theater, dance, exhibition, film, concert) which I selected. Afterwards we have a philosophical discussion about it. This is a very refreshing method of work, both for me, the teacher, and for the students – at least that’s what I hope. It allows us to step outside the university walls and engage in contemporary cultural life. However, it is not an easy task to do something philosophical with a content that carries no explicit philosophical message. Various skills and background knowledge are required to deduce a good theme from an artistic performance and then think it through and discuss it from all sides. I heard that KU Leuven would like to follow our example and create a similar course for all BA programs. This is, of course, an excellent idea: the artistic experience remains an ideal starting point for critical and social reflection, and it offers a nice platform for spontaneous and uninhibited discussions and debates.
ARGUMENTS AND STYLES OF THINKING

An interview with Professor Arnold Burms on the occasion of his retirement

It is well known that your work transcends the distinction between analytical and continental philosophy. How do you interpret your relation to both philosophical currents?

One should make a distinction between a narrow and a broad conception of analytical philosophy. The narrow conception roughly coincides with the program that was initiated by Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein. This program still constitutes the core of analytical philosophy: philosophy of language, logic, theory of meaning and related domains. However, there also exists an analytical philosophy in the broad sense, to which not only philosophy of mind but also domains such as ethics or political philosophy could belong. And it is not obviously correct to assume that analytical philosophy in the broad sense is some kind of ‘applied’ philosophy of language. Rather, it is a particular style of philosophizing, which is characterized by argumentation and discussion. This explains why in analytical philosophy it is relatively easy to participate in a debate where the partners share a common language.

Why would this be more difficult in continental philosophy?

As a matter of fact, we do notice that it is more difficult to situate philosophers like Heidegger, Levinas, Foucault, Derrida or Deleuze within a larger debate about some topic or other. Incidentally, Deleuze explicitly rejects discussion. He believes that true philosophy does not advance through discussion. This view might be an exaggeration, but it is not nonsensical. Continental philosophers tend to construct a manner of thinking that is strongly marked by an individual style and language. Hence, if one wants to discuss a particular theme in a continental philosopher, one should always situate it in the broader context of his work. By contrast, analytical philosophers deal with problems that can more easily (but not perfectly) be divorced from the larger context of a specific author’s approach. In other words, one can easily enumerate a range of general problems which are
issues of debate in analytical philosophy. Of course, I do not claim that the problematic of continental philosophers is in no way connected to separate problems that emerged in the history of philosophy. Nevertheless, one cannot reduce the philosophy of, say, Deleuze to a series of responses to a set of problems which are shared by many other philosophers.

How can we understand your relation to both styles of thought? On the one hand, your work addresses problems that can be separately identified. And you have often participated in philosophical discussions. On the other hand, you regularly employ the work of continental philosophers to clarify your own views.

The fact that I like discussion and debate is contingently related to my personality. It is not based on the conviction that discussions should play an import role in philosophy. Discussion has simply always suited me, especially when I was younger. Personally, I would not be able to engage in a philosophical practice that is not in some way connected to analytical philosophy in the broad sense. I need a particular theme and an argumentative structure. This structure need not be technical, but every step of the argumentation makes one automatically imagine a possible countermove.

Do you mean a kind of ‘ideal’ discussion that should not take place in reality?

Yes. Whether or not real discussion suits you is a contingent matter. But even my choice for ideal discussion came in a sense unbidden. It did not result from the conviction that this philosophical style is in any way ‘better’ than continental philosophy. I do not want to ‘promote’ analytical philosophy and I am quite happy to make use of continental philosophy. Nevertheless I do believe that analytical philosophy has great didactic advantages. Within an analytical context, one often starts from something very elementary, from a problem that is highly accessible. This can less easily be done through the terminology of a great author.

Can you discern an evolution in your rapport with both styles of thought?

This question is a bit more complicated. I first became acquainted with analytical philosophy through the work of authors like Ryle, Ayer, Austin and, a bit later, Wittgenstein. I was mainly attracted by their willingness to trace the origin of a particular problem. Why does it fascinate us in the first place, what are we actually looking for? Consider the discussion about freedom and determinism. I was not so much interested in the question whether or not we are really free, but rather in the question what we are really worried about when we fear that determinism threatens human freedom. What is at stake here? Perhaps the answer to these questions will show that what we are trying to protect against the threat of determinism is not at all incompatible with determinism. In other words, I was attracted by the willingness to step out of a certain discourse and to discover the motivation behind it. However, I later discovered that this concern with the origin and motivation of problems was becoming less prominent in analytical philosophy. Instead of being subversive with regard to any well-fixed academic discourse, analytical philosophy had become a particular discourse itself, a discourse which was only suitable for insiders and specialists.

On the one hand, your work does not attempt to solve ‘applied’ ethical questions. You don’t see philosophy as an activity that should tell us what to do in concrete circumstances. On the other hand, you are member of the think tank ‘Metaforum’, where you reflect on issues such as overregulation within our society. Can you explain the connection between your rejection of philosophy as a critical activity and the criticism that you nevertheless express in this think tank and on other occasions?
I used to think that my interest in philosophy has no normative basis. And it is still true that my motives for philosophizing are in a sense not morally inspired. Nevertheless, there are issues that intrigue me from a strictly theoretical point of view but would not interest me so much if they were not at the same time intermingled with moral concerns. Consider the example of ‘Metaforum’. The issue of ‘overregulation’ interests me in a philosophical sense, but at the same time I find it difficult to distinguish my philosophical interest from my commitment in the struggle against overregulation. Hence it is not correct to say that these moral and political issues intrigue me in a purely theoretical sense. When I say that my philosophical interest is not motivated by moral concerns, I rather mean the following. There are many moral and political issues that strike me as very important. I might give a list of themes that many other people would consider relevant as well. However, this hierarchy does not determine the issues I would like to philosophize about. What mainly interests me from a philosophical point of view does not necessarily coincide with the things that are the most essential from a moral point of view.

So far, you have said that your own work is not motivated by moral concerns. However, independently from your own work, do you think it is possible to use philosophy as a guide in daily life?

I am not in favor of the idea that the main task of philosophy should consist in dealing with the important problems of our time. A philosophical concern can be deeply related to a moral or political concern without being subordinate to the latter.

Could this be related to the difference between positive and negative criticism? Even though you don’t see philosophy as a positive guide to life, your work negatively shows what remains ignored in certain common attitudes. For instance: the ideal of autonomy as the expression of a narcissistic culture. Or the symbolic that remains ignored in ethical discussions?

Yes, my normative concern has a focus that is mainly negative: I usually attempt to show that some well-known way of thinking is conceptually flawed because it is generated by a kind of blindness or delusion. In that sense much of what I am interested in is normatively inspired.

Just like Wittgenstein, one of your great philosophical examples, you are able to raise important philosophical issues which can’t be immediately identified with traditional debates, even though this does not exclude subsequent associations with traditional views. I am thinking of ‘continuation of meaning through a material connection’ or ‘retributive punishment understood as symbolic restoration’. Did these intuitions already wander through your mind at an early stage?

Some of these themes intrigued me independently from a familiar philosophical problem. This is certainly true about the idea of ‘continuation of meaning through a material connection’. If I remember correctly, the first example I thought of was suggested by someone else. I was still in high school then. One of my classmates said: ‘I believe that we attach too much importance in our thinking to the symbolic. One doesn’t understand that a dead human body is simply nothing else but matter. One pretends it to be more than that, whereas it’s merely a symbol.’ This remark triggered my interest in a particular aspect of the symbolic, namely in so far as a specific type of symbols is constituted by material continuation. A dead body is the material continuation of a person while no distinctive properties of the personal are being continued. The only thing we have is a material connection which, however, receives a symbolic meaning. At that time, I did not have the faintest clue of how this idea could be made relevant to philosophy. After a while, I began to see how it could be applied in several
philosophical discussions.

The case of ‘symbolic restoration’ is a bit different: at a certain moment, I became interested in the justification of punishment, which is of course a famous philosophical problem. Within the context of this topic I got the idea that the function of punishment is similar to laying down flowers on the place of an accident.

In your philosophy of art, you have always emphasized that art cannot be seen as a means to express independent thoughts. And yet you are more than anybody else capable of using examples from literature and film to make your philosophical point. Does this imply that you see philosophical meaning too as evocative?

These examples from novels and poems have sometimes served to evoke insights that can't be easily acquired without using literature. But more often I used such examples to illustrate an argument that is not strictly dependent on literature. These examples were simply useful because they were easily recognizable and strikingly formulated. One could say that this is a non-evocative use of literature.

I am thinking of two examples from your work that were mentioned during the symposium on your work: the example of the comforting thought that ‘Jannie once kissed me’ (from Bloem) differs from the example of the other who should tell me what my eventual meaning is (from Vroman).

The first example is indeed much more evocative, because it communicates an insight that can’t be described in a non-evocative way. One searches for an example of something that makes one say: ‘this is what finally counts in my life’. In order to demonstrate that there exist moments in which we have such a thought, one needs an example that illustrates the general phenomenon. The whole argument actually amounts to showing that these experiences exist. The example constitutes the argument as it were. However, one could also take such an example from daily life. One doesn't necessarily need a poem, as long as one refers to a moment in which someone says or thinks: 'this is what makes life meaningful'. For instance: when Jezus is brought into the temple, the old Simeon says: Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation (Luke 2:29-32). Simeon does not seem to care about continuing his life anymore: it is fulfilled, because he has experienced something which transcends him. It is interesting that one cannot gain this insight apart from an evocative example and yet it has theoretical value.

You have given many lectures that are suitable for a larger audience. The same holds for your publications. In contrast, international publications and conferences did not say a lot to you. Can you explain us why?

I don't know whether it is really the case that international publications didn't mean a lot to me. The possibility of publishing internationally might probably have attracted me more strongly if my philosophical interests had been more obviously connected to existing debates. But, actually, I would only partially manage to situate the topics of my interest in a context of well-established problems and argumentations. And I have never made sufficient efforts to bridge this gap. I would have been quite pleased with having many international publications. They only required me to adapt more than I have actually been able or willing to do.

What about lectures and texts for a larger audience? The fact that you have not been active in an international context does not yet explain why you have done so much outside the academic world.

In my view, there doesn't exist a gap between purely academic philosophy and philosophy for a larger audience. The idea of a distinction between real, professional philosophy and
popularized versions of philosophy for a larger audience is meaningless to me. Philosophy can have a specialized character and this can be justified. However, the philosophy that is suitable for a larger audience need not be easy. Many great philosophers have had an great impact on an enormous amount of people. To be sure, sometimes one has to explain something that appeals to shared knowledge, which is always somewhat contingent. People have read the same texts, they are familiar with certain discussions, etc. These academic explanations are not immediately accessible for outsiders. Yet this doesn’t imply that academic philosophy is ‘true’ philosophy, as opposed to the more simplified version that is presented to the outsider.

Why would this academic specialization be necessary?

One only has a genuine philosophical problem or theme if one can develop it in some way or other. Philosophy is always confronted with the problem of how to proceed. You have got a particular idea. How do you subsequently elaborate this idea? This is the problem of continuation. An isolated philosophical thought does not have great weight; it needs to be developed. The simplest way to do this is to situate this idea into the familiar context of a debate. By creating a framework within which a philosophical theme can be developed, academic philosophy helps to solve the problem of continuation. Strictly speaking, this could also happen outside an academic context. For instance, many people start philosophizing from scientific engagement or from some other commitment.

Students have always admired your classes, and this was not only related to the long breaks. What did teaching bring for you?

In my career there was no distinction between research and teaching, because I have always seen teaching as talking about the things that were of interest to me. Perhaps this made me less sensitive to an assignment that a teacher must fulfill as well, namely to pass on the knowledge that happens to belong to one’s discipline. There are some things one simply has to know if one studies philosophy. The job of teaching also implies that one passes on the canon of one’s domain. I have been sincerely worried from time to time by the problem that I wasn’t the kind of professor who adequately transmitted the official knowledge the students were perhaps expected to acquire.

Interview by Gerbert Faure
THE RICH JOURNEY OF A TIRELESS THINKER

Professor Bernet becomes emeritus professor

Rudolf Bernet was one of the two professors who became emeriti professors this year. For many decades, he was the epitome of phenomenology and Husserl studies in Leuven. On Saturday, November 26, 2011, he delivered his valedictory lecture with the intriguing title “Kanntiverstan”. The full text of this lecture was published in the Mededelingen van het Wijsgerig Gezelschap 2012.

At the occasion of his retirement, colleagues, friends and former students of Prof. Bernet wrote a Festschrift with essays on themes that characterize his research and interests, Life, Subjectivity & Art. Essays in Honor of Rudolf Bernet. In homage to Prof. Bernet (and also as a teaser), you can read the introductions of Roland Breeur and Ullrich Melle in this Newsletter.

Preface

En tant que philosophe, Rudolf Bernet a toujours beaucoup voyagé. Il a visité pratiquement toutes les universités et les institutions qui revendiquent et respectent la phénoménologie. Discipline dont il est lui-même un des représentants les plus respectés. Mais outre cela, il a lui-même régulièrement comparé l’activité philosophique à un voyage. La pensée vise perpétuellement un ailleurs, un au-delà, et l’attitude un peu distante, voire désintéressée qui caractérise celle du voyageur à l’étranger peut très bien décrire celle du penseur.

Or, qu’est-ce que voyager ? Un vrai voyage, écrivait un bon nombre d’années Rudolf Bernet, connaît un départ, un séjour à l’étranger, et le retour. Analogiquement, son propre voyage philosophique, pourrait-on avancer (et pour faire vite), connaît un départ chez Husserl, un séjour à l’étranger, et un retour au Maître.

Étonnants voyageurs, pourtant, que ces philosophes, qui bercent leur infini sur le fini des mers... Le plus étrange, en effet, ce n’est pas leur départ enthousiaste, ni ce séjour «ailleurs» qui rafraîchit et délivre l’esprit des routines : le plus étrange c’est le retour. Car on part pour revenir. Sans cela, le départ est un exil ou une fuite. Mais que signifie retourner à son point de départ ? A son locus natalis, voire naturalis?

Question pénible à résoudre, d’autant plus que non seulement la vie dans ce lieu en question ne s’est pas arrêté en notre absence, mais qu’en outre, l’appréhension qu’on en a change à mesure que notre périple se prolonge. Le voyage-même rend le lieu aussi méconnaissable que l’Ithaque retrouvée l’était pour Ulysse. Le temps l’avait dévancé.

Rudolf Bernet a régulièrement abordé cette question. Comme lui-même le souligne dans plusieurs articles, Kant avait déjà remarqué combien le « Heimweh der Schweizer » avait quelque chose de particulier. A cet effet, Rudolf Bernet renvoie lui-même aussi à ce passage savoureux du Dictionnaire de la musique dans lequel Rousseau explique que le célèbre « Ranz-des-Vaches », cet air « si chéri par les Suisses », fut défendu dans l’armée sous peine de mort, tellement il fit « fondre en larmes, désérer ou mourir ceux qui l’entendaient, tant il excitait en eux l’ardent désir de revoir leur pays ». N’ayant lui-même pas quitté son poste académique, il faut croire qu’il n’a pas dû l’entendre souvent aux Archives Husserl de Leuven. Mais qui sait, cet air résonne-t-il peut-être secrètement dans la plupart de ses écrits...

Les textes de ce volume rendent hommage au riche parcours de ce penseur inlassable. Ecrits par des compagnons de route, des amis, des collègues, ou des chercheurs ayant eu le privilège de travailler avec lui, ce livre est bien entendu lui-même comme une excursion qui illustre l’espace intellectuel parcouru par Rudolf Bernet. Ou mieux encore, ce livre est comme une petite halte, un air de repos, le temps de quelques réflexions, avant de reprendre la route.

Roland Breeur

Preface

Lieber Rudolf,


Vor allem in Sachen Husserl habe ich viel von Dir gelernt. Das ging an mit Deiner leider nie publizierten Dissertation, in der Du die Entwicklungslinien von Husserls Göttinger Phänomenologie rekonstruiert hast. Deine immer an den Texten orientierten scharfsinnigen Analysen zum Noema, zur Reduktion, zum Zeitbewusstsein, zu Wahrnehmung und


Angesichts der glücklichen Tatsache, dass Du noch in vollem Schwung bist, darf die philosophische Öffentlichkeit, wenn Du erst einmal von den universitären Funktions- und Betriebszwängen befreit bist, noch viele wichtige philosophische Entdeckungen und Anregungen von dir erwarten. Der große und bedeutende Kreis der Autoren, die zu dieser Festschrift beigetragen haben, und die thematische Breite der Beiträge ist ein Beweis für die hohe Anerkennung deiner bisherigen philosophischen Arbeit auf ganz verschiedenen Gebieten und in unterschiedlichen Richtungen. [...]

Herzliche Grüße von nebenan

Dein Ullrich
Christoph Schmidt was born in 1956 in Helsinki, grew up in Germany and has been living in Israel since 1977. He teaches at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. He wrote a PhD on the hermeneutics of Schock, Adorno, Schoenberg and Heidegger and published many articles on political philosophy and theology, on philosophy of culture and intercultural philosophy. In May 2011, Christoph Schmidt was invited to give a lecture and teach two seminars as holder of the Cardinal Mercier Chair. Dennis Vanden Auweele spoke with him about his lecture and his journey to philosophy.

How did you first get interested in philosophy?

My interest in philosophy began with experiences of estrangement and alienation. When I was in my later teens, everyday life lost its immediate sense of familiarity, and so did my self-experience and experience of others. It was the sudden awareness of being 'me' that expelled me from my childhood and made me wonder how to make sense of all of this. I remember my sport teacher in school explaining how to stress the muscles when throwing a discus, how to work on my biceps and triceps, which he did with perfect medical knowledge. This made me laugh and wonder, how can we possibly have such perfect medical knowledge of such delicate scientific things, but the whole event of 'being here' looks like an absurd game without any sense. After my early readings of Ernst Bloch (the philosophy of hope), and later Martin Heidegger ('Being and Time'), I finally found thinkers who would start their investigations from these border experiences and would at least give me some security that I was not going insane. This turned out to be especially helpful since the question of 'being', as well as my own question of 'being here', had become central to my life as a question opening me not only for the mystery of life, but always and again for new possibilities and perspectives of dealing with the openness to this mystery. It was, as I am now able to say, a journey which led me to the study of philosophy in the first place, and later to a more religious understanding of this mystery.

After all this was the journey inspired by the old Delphic decree to 'Know Thyself', the Socratic claim to live a life in truth. This life of truth is, as I came to learn, unfolding in different existential, ethical, political or religious 'dramaturgies of truth' involving always already the other. Before truth becomes neutralized as a theory of the adaequatio rei et intellectus, it is an existential event reminding us of the intriguing fact that we need the other as our mirror in order to get a glimpse of knowledge about ourselves. In this sense, the journey to philosophy led through the understanding of its therapeutic aspect to its religious meaning, which – rather than expressed in a descriptive language – can be experienced best in prayer and praise.

Your journey towards philosophy, emphasizing religious mystery of the 'being there', clearly allies itself to the Continental approach to philosophy. How do you, if at all, appreciate the more analytically oriented approach?

The question of being has been declared nonsensical by, e.g., Rudolph Carnap and Ludwig Wittgenstein. They suggested that on the mys-
tery of the existence of the world one cannot really elaborate, and that accordingly silence would be the appropriate attitude. So the early analytical philosophers could not be considered for an adequate discussion of the meaning of 'being', neither on an existential nor a political level. This has changed in consequence of Hans Otto Apel and Richard Rorty who have both pointed to the parallels in Heidegger's and especially Wittgenstein's later thinking. Gadamer, too, pointed to the very fact of a common linguistic orientation in both, however different. We shall know more about these relations when the longer text of Heidegger on Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* which is in the Marbach archives will be published. Accordingly, the classical lines between continental and analytical philosophy are not really defined quite as strictly as they used to be. One only has to think of analytical thinkers like Bernard Williams who have dealt with questions like 'truthfulness' or Martha Nussbaum who wrote a fine book on 'love's knowledge' in order to see that both traditions can help us to approach the 'mystery of our life' in its ethical and even religious dimensions. There is a certain precision to analytical thought that I in fact very much appreciate.

In terms of the Socratic investigation into the 'truth of the self', both traditions have made their substantial contributions to its renewal. Michel Foucault in his last lecture on the Socratic concept of 'parrhesia' has reconstructed this project in its different existential, ethical, political and epistemological layers, and Martha Nussbaum and Bernard Williams have investigated the depth of the idea of truthfulness and love for this dramatic encounter of the self with itself through the other. In this sense, for both traditions the Delphic oracle is valid, and even if the analytical stress is laid on logic, language and science, there can be no doubt that the 'Know Thyself' remains the very act that has to accompany all our 'ways of world making' – to use a formula of the analytical philosopher Nelson Goodman.

*In your Cardinal Mercier Lecture you discussed the views of J. Habermas and J. Ratzinger on political theology. Could you, for those not present, summarize their views?*

The most astonishing aspect of the debate between Jurgen Habermas, still the leading figure of critical secular enlightenment, and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (then still head of the Christian doctrine), is their basic agreement. The 'critique of pure secular reason' has in fact with some delay connected with the 'critique of pure dogmatic belief' developed in Vatican II, so that today both do not only respect the claim to truth of the other, but remain open for critique and the positive suggestions of the other. There can be no doubt that the two discussants are worried about certain excesses of a hermetic reason as well as of fundamentalist forms of dogmatic belief.

My suggestion was that this post-secular relation between secular society and church beyond mutual delegitimization presupposes an overcoming of both the classical enlightened 'political theology' which tended to identify its utopia with the messianic ideal of the 'kingdom of God' and Gnostic versions of Modernity. While the former aims at a perfect merging between the messianic content of religion and political society, the latter demands a total detachment of modern secular society from all religious traces, as this is the case in Hans Blumenberg's famous book on the legitimacy of the Modern age. In the first case we get a messianic suspension of religion in Modern politics, very much akin to the messianic suspension of Judaism in Christianity, while in the second case we get the reverse picture of a total detachment from Christian religion similar to the Christian Gnosis of Adolph von Harnack for instance, which wishes to detach
Christianity from its Judaic sources in the Old testament. I argue then that a post-secular relation between secular society and church has to be a ‘post canonical’ form of enlightenment adopting Lessing’s classical consequence of Judaism, Christianity, Modernity, beyond messianic suspension or Gnostic detachment, so that the three elements can open themselves for the dialogue envisioned. The question will be, of course, whether this model can be implemented in the other monotheistic cultures, and especially in modern Islam.

Why do you think this debate is pertinent for philosophical discussion outside of Europe, let’s say, in the Middle East?

As indicated in the answer before, the Habermas-Ratzinger debate about a post-secular relation between politics and religion does not only concern the European context dominated by the Christian tradition, but also, of course the Jewish and the Islamic context. In many ways the redefinition of the enlightened project is a consequence of the horrors of the Holocaust, which has led to a radical rethinking of the place of Jews and Judaism in the ‘unfinished project of modernity’. Islam, although it has developed its own modes of cultural identity in European civil society, is unfortunately, still dominantly perceived today as a radical political threat to the European project of secularity, and has thus influenced the debate on a possible post-secular enlightenment from a totally different perspective. While both Judaism and Islam are concealed by two radically different ‘veils of violence’ in the European context, the question of a possible post-secular mode for Jewish and Islamic societies in the Middle East has become one of the most crucial questions, namely in how far modern Arab societies and the Jewish state can indeed implement a full separation of state and religion in order to liberate politics from all theological agendas, and more importantly, to emancipate religion from its political dependency. Jewish Society, although under a growing religious pressure, is still better off than the new Islamic democracies following the Arab spring. But in both cases it seems that only the establishment of a just civil society based on human rights will guarantee full freedom of political and religious minorities, like the Copts in Egypt or the Arabic minority in Israel. Unfortunately, Jewish and Islamic Orthodoxy have not yet developed a positive attitude towards secular culture beyond a certain pragmatic approach. But the establishment of a post-secular relation between Orthodoxy and secularity as suggested in the Munich debate would not only promote civil freedom in these different contexts, but also create a new fundament affecting the possibilities for peace. But in light of a new Islamic politics in the East and the growing tendency of Israeli politics to prefer the Jewish element of the Zionist state over its democratic aspect, the impression is unavoidable, that history is in retrogression when endorsing national modes of political theology.

After the different sessions, I could notice a lot of students mentioning that your approach seems very attuned to the way things seem to be done at the Institute here. Would you concur? What thinkers (both present and past) would have influenced you?

I was very grateful for the opportunity to come to Leuven and present different aspects of my investigations into philosophy and theology. Since the religious component, namely the Catholic orientation of these interventions, is obvious, I found myself in a very positive and inspiring environment. My immediate connection to Leuven is given through my friendship with William Desmond whose work I am very interested in and in whom I find a similar religious-philosophical Eros. Of course, I would not compare his impressive work with my own modest investigations, but still, I found in him...
an important partner for a dialogue on these matters. Leuven appeared to me as the ideal stage for this ongoing conversation.

*A final question, how did you appreciate your visit to Belgium?*

I think it was the first time after 40 years that I visited Belgium. And I came only for four days. But I was immediately taken by the atmosphere of Leuven with this fine mixture of a rather secular vitality with restaurants & coffee shops everywhere, and the omnipresence of churches and monasteries next door. It reminded me a bit of Jerusalem — but, if you wish, Leuven seems to be much closer to a rather post-secular design of this mixture!
A REPORT ON THE COURSE OF ‘MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS’, SEP-DEC 2011

The course of ‘Medieval Philosophical Texts’ offered to graduate students of philosophy at the HIW at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven kicked off in September 2011 with the aim of familiarizing students with different medieval accounts of ‘creation’. Despite its unusual methodology of tele-lecturing, which drove away some students at the beginning of the semester, the class proved to be a resounding success. Prof. Andrea Robiglio (KU Leuven) co-taught the course with Prof. Richard C. Taylor (Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin), who was available in the classes through a Skype feed. The students benefitted from conventional real-world lectures, integrated at the same time with a set of virtual components for 2-way interaction.

How is it possible to lead a class, one might ask, with two professors, one of whom is only virtually available? One thing that is certain is that it leaves one with little opportunity for drowning in one’s reveries, or for taking a quick afternoon nap, since the impediment to it is here doubly present!

The 12 sessions of the course consisted of 9 in which Prof. Taylor provided video lectures on medieval Islamic philosophers, and 3 in which Prof. Robiglio offered live lectures on Latin philosophers of the Middle Ages with a special focus on Thomas Aquinas. The lectures would make up the first hour of the class time after which the floor would be given to the students for a second hour of discussion, during which both Prof. Robiglio and Prof. Taylor were present. Unlike how one might picture online connections to be like, thanks to the advanced technological set up and the attendance of an omniscient technical assistant, Prof. Taylor’s presence in class was felt to be profoundly real. In the course of time he became well acquainted with most of the students, and showed genuine interest in the students’ predicaments, as well as their learning process despite our physical distance.

Class discussions were superbly effective in propelling learning toward new vistas and encouraging student confidence in dealing with complicated philosophical issues. Every ques-
tion would be taken up first by Prof. Robiglio, and then by Prof. Taylor. Getting to hear the viewpoints of two accomplished academics in the field of medieval philosophy was of incredible worth. One would have to attend academic conferences to occasionally get a chance to listen to such a good display of intellectual discourse. Although sometimes the notions raised were beyond our grasp, we did appreciate the opportunity to have explained to us why each of the two lecturers held the positions they did on specific philosophical issues.

One of the important factors contributing to the success of the course was the recorded lectures of Prof. Taylor, the texts of which were available on the screen alongside the power point slides. These videos were uploaded on the electronic learning environment of the Association KU Leuven (Toledo) to be later accessed by the students. The prepared videos which naturally needed less time to communicate the content of the lectures would free up precious class time to be used in the second hour for interaction between the co-professors and the students. Unasked questions could be posed later via e-mail. They were replied to by both professors, and were posted anonymously on the website of the course for further reference of other students. This proved to be of inestimable value while we were preparing to write the mid-term essay. After the submission of the mid-term essay, both the instructors expressed satisfaction with the high level of student engagement with the topics of the course. Those who were interested also received compelling remarks on their essays. Those of us who asked for it appreciated the close reading of our work by both Prof. Robiglio and Prof. Taylor, and their appropriate, thought-provoking comments.

Another element contributing to the efficiency of the course was its well-thought organization. Both professors were unified in promoting the aims of the course and in collaborating to encourage student participation and involvement in the process of the unfolding of philosophical arguments. The course website, maintained by Prof. Taylor, also included practical information on the course, a detailed syllabus with additional resources, and instructions on writing argumentative philosophical papers. The syllabus was meticulously composed to provide students with compulsory and suggested reading materials for every session, as well as a summary of the topics to be discussed. This proved to be a great tool for a clear procession of ideas as each of the philosophers and their differing views on the topic of ‘creation’ were introduced.

In the end, the outcome of the class for me transcends the course and its results. Not only did I, as an auditory learner, profit from ‘watching’ the lectures a second time, but I also got the chance to deepen my understanding of the ways of deliberation of very complicated philosophical minds of the medieval period, like al-Farabi, Avicenna, al-Ghazali, Averroes and Aquinas, as well as the sources in which their thinking found influence. I would like to thank Prof. Taylor and Prof. Robiglio, who encouraged each of us to dare to ask, and strived all along to bring the physical distance we had to a minimum.

Saleheh Sharifmoghaddam
(MA Philosophy, KU Leuven)
THE PROJECT ‘BRIDGING THE GAP’

The Higher Institute of Philosophy is unique in many ways, but in one way especially. It is one of the few faculties in Flanders with a complete English program in addition to the Dutch program. Since the Academic year of 1970-1971 there exists a 'Bachelor's degree in philosophy'. Three years later a Master's degree and a PhD were added. This ensures that, starting from the bachelor-level, a large group of international students are present, not only students with English as their mother-tongue but students from all over the globe.

We could conclude that this ensures the international character of the institute, and that we only have to reap the benefits of having such a rich and dynamic international student body. That would not be correct however. Different feedback from the students show that the Dutch-speaking community and the international English-speaking one live side by side. Students from the different communities see each other rarely. The lectures, the seminars, and the extra-curricular activities are largely separate. In short, the ideal of internationalization is not put into practice.

Thus, despite the international character of the student body, the process of internationalization, and developing a more integrated community, has not yet been realized to its full potential. Internationalization remains a problem that requires attention. The problem isn’t that we are incapable of superceding cultural differences, but rather that the linguistic divide presents a significant obstacle. It divides the students into two communities: one community that prefers to use its mother tongue to organize easy-going extracurricular events, and one community that necessarily uses English as its language of communication.

But internationalization is also a value, certainly in philosophy. The lack of transnational communication between the big philosophical nations is saddening. If we are really looking for truth, and not just pandering our national constituency with – for them – well known concepts, then we have to look at how the same discussions and the same concepts are being dealt with in other cultures. Cultural relativism is not the end-point of a discussion, but it is a rich opportunity that enables us to apply a comparative methodology to cultural affairs. That is why a Flemish philosopher today has to be able to make his case as fluently in English as in Dutch.

For this reason we want to tackle any possible problems that internationalization might pose. The best way to do this is by making the international and the Flemish students form a more integrated community, so as to organically enhance students’ fluency in English and their international awareness. These are the main goals of 'Bridging the Gap', a two-year long project, financed by the Office for Educational Policy. The project’s promoter is Prof. Raymaekers, Prof. Friedman is the co-promoter of the project. The project’s researchers are Adèle Jourdan and Piet Goemans, and Marie-Anne Verdeyen from the ILT (Leuven Language Institute) provides linguistic support.

In a first stage, we will identify the contributing factors that divide the two student bodies. In a second stage, we hope to develop avenues by which students are encouraged to interact with one another across national, cultural and linguistic borders. The issue will be tackled in four key areas: academically in the...
context of a) English-speaking master seminars, b) the graduate student conference and c) the assistant tutor support system, and socially in d) the context of the 'buddy programme' and additional extracurricular activities that strive to increase interaction between incoming international and Flemish students.

The first academic level of this project concerns seminar practices. Thus far, the first semester focused on interviewing both students and professors alike to gather feedback regarding the former's social and academic experiences and the latter's assessment of students' performance in graduate seminars. Having established that one key problem preventing students from participating more fully in seminars concerns the overwhelming number of students enrolled in certain seminars and a social discomfort in expressing oneself in English, in the second semester, we plan on experimenting with seminar formats that allow students to discuss in smaller groups that encourage more integrated and comprehensive participation and that stimulate discussion skills. Throughout the semester, we hope to derive additional feedback through interviews with current masters students to assess the effectiveness of different seminar formats in encouraging participation and a more vibrant academic community.

The second element of the 'Bridging the Gap' project, namely the graduate student conference, is again aimed at encouraging both Flemish and international students to interact
with one another in a more informal and cohesive manner. This year, we hope to have an increase in the number of Flemish participants and plan on providing a presentation tutorial session with the participating master students in order to prepare them for the conference.

The third aspect of the project concerns doctoral students who are teaching or tutoring bachelor or master seminars or lectures this semester. While support has previously been provided for such teaching assistants, this year hopes to further stress the integration between Flemish and international students in such a way that allows both groups to learn and benefit from one another’s respective experiences.

Finally, given that the key way in which the two student communities remain somewhat distinct from each other is in their social environment, the ‘Bridging the Gap’ project aims to further enhance the ‘buddy programme’ at the Institute. While the NFK has a strong programme that connects first-year bachelor students with older students, in the past, it has been difficult to find Flemish ‘buddies’ for incoming international students. In the next academic year, we hope to advertise the international buddy programme to the Flemish community to promote awareness and enthusiasm to bridge the gap that has existed to date. We hope to over the course of the year provide more social opportunities for the ‘buddy pairs’ to meet and engage with one another; in particular, we hope to establish an immediately integrated academic community amongst master students by developing a welcome event in the first week of the fall semester that not only allows all incoming graduate students to meet one another and professors but that is also a vibrant and effective way for ‘buddies’ to meet.

Ultimately, we hope to encourage a philosophical community that is not driven by a distinction between Flemish and international students but that is a more encompassing community of HIW students. We hope that with additional focus placed on seminar participation and extracurricular socializing students will feel comfortable and confident expressing themselves in vibrant discussions and debates in English, especially given that the MPhil programme will ultimately be incorporated into a two-year masters English programme.

Report by Piet Goemans and Adèle Jourdan
A NEW LIGHT IN THE TROPICS

The establishment of Lumen Christi Institute at Maji ya Chai, Arusha, Tanzania

It is a great honour for me to have the opportunity to write about the establishment of Lumen Christi Institute at Maji ya Chai, Arusha, Tanzania in East Africa. With deep gratitude I cherish the wonderful time I spent in Leuven, doing my MPhil and PhD at the HIW and I greatly admire and appreciate all the teachers and staff of this great Alma Mater. On behalf of our Institute, I wish to gratefully acknowledge and place on record the continuous support and help we have been receiving from Leuven in the form of Library books as well as through the voluntary services of Prof. Emeritus Paul Cruysberghs and his wife Mrs. Marijke de Jong and Prof. Emeritus Dirk Hutsebaut and his wife Mrs. Lutgart Tricot, on the academic staff.

1. The Concept of a Higher Institute of Learning/ University in Africa

The Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (Fransalians) have twenty-three years of remarkable experience in evangelical, developmental, humanitarian and educational work among the people of Africa. The Congregation is utterly aware of the tremendous awakening in Africa and her promising future in spite of myriads of social, political and economic problems experienced by her people. The key factors contributing to the increasing presence of poverty and suffering for the vast majority of the people in the continent include: ethnicity, inter-religious tensions, civil strife, unemployment, bad governance, abuse of people’s rights, famine, floods and other natural disasters. Above all, the challenge of HIV/AIDS to the already impoverished population in Africa calls for a forthright and inclusive response. Many African countries are facing serious societal and economic disruption because of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the productive age groups of the population. The average life-span has drastically come down in many countries. Entire communities are infected and affected in all parts of the continent with the brunt of it all being more evident in Sub-Saharan Africa. It then remains a stark reality that HIV/AIDS in Africa is not only a challenge but a huge responsibility for the entire humankind.

Confronted with the presence of such stark realities in Africa, the Fransalians felt the acute necessity of future leaders of the community equipped with knowledge and competence to adequately respond to the increasing demands of the poor and marginalized groups. The most successful tool for such a response to be effective and lasting is to educate and equip both the locals and agents of community development with sustainable skills and knowledge in...
order to enable them to assume their respective vocation and mission as agents of change. The very idea of a Fransalian University for Africa was born out of this cherished desire of the Fransalians to help create as many agents of change as possible to work for sustainable community development programs in different parts of Africa. Therefore the concept of a Fransalian University for Africa was in principle accepted by the 2003 Extra-Ordinary General Chapter of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, while reflecting on the foundations and impact of MSFS presence in the continent. This Chapter envisioned the establishment of such an institution in Africa as a proper response of the Congregation. The Chapter felt that this new venture will contribute towards the empowerment of local communities and to accelerate the process of self-development.

2. Aims and Objectives
The proposal is therefore to establish an Institute of higher learning in Africa equivalent to a University comprising the traditional academic pursuits besides a number of departments designed as animation centres of development, offering integrated community empowerment programs targeting the youth, women, grassroots community leaders and church personnel from the different regions of Africa. The envisaged core programs include: Philosophy, HIV/AIDS eradication approaches, Resource Mobilization for Communities, Advocacy, Youth Animation, Pro-women development approaches, Counselling, Participatory Appraisal Programs, TOT programs, Cultural integration, Democracy and Human rights.

The Institute is committed to making a concrete contribution to the developmental efforts of the Church in Africa by providing a development-oriented formation to the MSFS missionaries as well as to those of other religious Congregations or dioceses. The Institute strives to train committed priests, religious and lay people for the Church’s Mission of reaching out to the poorest of the poor and the marginalized, committed to integral development, dialogue, enculturation, empowerment of women and care for the environment. The Institute aims at a priority programme of formation and empowerment of women, children and youth in Africa.

Responding to the great urgency of development in Africa through the formation of indigenous personnel, the Institute serves as an agent and medium of empowering the people of Africa and thus makes the African nations ever more self-reliant and vibrant through a process of steady development and progress in all spheres of life. The Institute is committed to enter into various forms of social action in Africa promoting human rights, justice and peace. It is committed to train lay leaders to be effective animators in Africa.

The Institute by its very nature strives to safeguard its African character with a specific focus on African culture, languages, music, dance and all such art forms. Self-observation is the first step to self-transformation. This in turn leads to organizational and social transformation with lasting effects. This is the principle behind the LCI. All the programs at LCI are geared towards helping the individual to be an effective agent of social transformation through this very demanding process of self-transformation. The mission of LCI is to help everyone to contribute further for the growth of goodness and the beauty of the continent of Africa by means of holistic education, developmental and training programs. Ours is a commitment to selfless love through justice, peace and reconciliation by means of quality education and formation aimed at renewal, progress and transformation. Lumen Christi Institute is the result of this
A Fransalian Vision for emerging Africa. Twenty-three years of Fransalian presence and experience in the continent of Africa has resulted in the formulation of this vision. In the context of the various painful and discouraging realities in Africa, the Fransalians in Africa are urgently confronted with the need to be well-equipped with knowledge and competence to adequately respond to the increasing demands of the many poor and marginalized groups.

3. The Faculties and the Academic Programmes Envisaged

A. Faculty of Philosophy and Religion (First Phase was already launched in September 2010)
- Department of African World Vision and Philosophy
- Department of Western Philosophy
- Department of Eastern Philosophies
- Department of World Religions: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism
- Department of African Religions
- Department of Comparative Religion

B. Faculty of Social Sciences and Culture (Expected to begin in September 2014-15)
- Department of Languages (Swahili and Other Major African Languages, Western Languages: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German etc.)
- Department of Sociology
- Department of Anthropology
- Department of Art & Culture: Folklore, music, dance, other art forms etc.
- Department of Political Science
- Department of Social Work, Human empowerment & Social rehabilitation
- Department of Ecology and Environment
- Department of Economics
- Department of Business Administration, Accountancy, Auditing

C. Faculty of Education and Human Resource Development (Expected to begin in September 2015-16)
- Department of Education – Teacher Training
- Department of Training Counsellors for Aids Patients/Street Children/Prison Ministry
- Department of Technical Education
- Department of Physical Education

D. Faculty of Theology (Date not yet determined)
- Department of Catholic Theology
- Department of Church History/History of the Churches in Africa
- Department of Missiology/Mission Museum/Library/Documentation Centre

E. Faculty of Mass Media and Communications (Expected to begin in September 2019-20)
- Department of Journalism
- Department of Information Technology: Computer Sciences and Electronics
- Department of Audio-Visual Communication Technologies (Radio, TV, Cinema)
- Department of Distance Education/Correspondence Courses

F. Faculty of Sciences (Expected to begin in 2022-23)
- Department of Physics
- Department of Chemistry
- Department of Biology, Botany, Zoology
- Department of Mathematics & Statistics

G. Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (Date not yet determined)

4. The Present Status
The Lumen Christi Institute came into being when its Administrative Block was formally blessed on the 23rd May 2009. The year 2010 has been a year of infrastructure development. The Administrative Block has been further extended with sufficient and spacious lecture halls and other basic required amenities. A
Scholasticate for the MSFS students attending the philosophy programme has been completed in 2010. A hostel for a residential programme for the laity has been completed in 2011. The construction of a chapel is already underway. The new extension of the Administrative Block was inaugurated on the 14th May 2011.

The Lumen Christi Institute has formally launched its three-year cycle of the Philosophy Programme on the 8th September 2010. There are at present twenty residential students (from Uganda, Kenya and Mozambique) attending the first and second year of the philosophy programme. In the coming years, a steady increase in the number of students joining the Institute, mainly from the Eight African countries where the MSFS are present, is expected.

In the academic year 2010-11, apart from the Philosophy programme, LCI has successfully conducted a number of programmes such as HIV/AIDS Awareness Course (Training of Trainers Programme), Swahili Language Course, and Renewal programmes in spiritual animation. The programs envisaged for the current academic year include: HIV/AIDS Awareness Course, Empowerment of Women and Leadership Training, Pastoral Counselling Course, Swahili Language Course and Catechetical Training and Retreats. There are currently seven resident staff and few visiting professors from the various institutes in Tanzania and from the Universities abroad, especially from KU Leuven.

‘A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step’, they say. In starting the Lumen Christi Institute, we have dared to begin a journey of similar proportions and have taken a few initial steps. Beginnings are always adventurous and beset with teething troubles. However, we hope to go ahead slowly but steadily.

Let me conclude this article by expressing my sincere hope of getting continuity in help and support from KU Leuven, and more specifically from the HIW. We are thinking of a possible future affiliation, the exchange of professors and the provision of books. We are also thinking of the support of alumni interested in acquiring teaching experience in this part of the world. We welcome everyone (Karibuni Sana) to be part of LCI and come to Arusha for a breath-taking wild life safari in one of the surrounding parks and to Tanzania in general, to enjoy the beautiful nature and the warm hospitality of the people.

Report by Fr. Thomas Kochalunchuvattil, Msfs
(Rector/Dean of Studies, Lumen Christi Institute)

If, like Fr. Thomas, you’re an alumnus of the Institute of Philosophy who realized an interesting philosophical project, and if you’re willing to write an article about it for the Newsletter, please let us know! We love to stay informed about how our alumni are doing and we suppose our Newsletter readers do too. Please send your suggestions to ines.vanhoutte@hiw.kuleuven.be
LEARNING FROM THE MEDIEVALS

A Recent Trend in Philippine Philosophy

You’ll find a very cosmopolitan philosophical landscape in the Philippines, with each of the major philosophical traditions represented by their champion universities in Metro Manila, the nation’s capital. The usual caricature when it comes to the top four philosophy faculties usually goes like this: The Ateneo De Manila University, founded by the Jesuits, serves as the bastion of the Continental Phenomenological Tradition. The Pontifical University of Santo Tomas, which is the oldest existing university in Asia and founded by the Dominicans, is true to its Aristotelian-Thomist roots. The University of the Philippines Diliman, the premier state university, clearly defines itself through the Anglo-American Analytic Tradition. While the De La Salle University, founded by the De La Salle brothers, is the more eclectic type, drawing from all three traditions though currently with a special fondness for Existentialism and Eastern Philosophy. You’ll find of course many individual exceptions to the rule, but until now the broader stakes and territories hold true.

You can also imagine how it has been a challenge to pursue a consistent philosophical dialogue between the different faculties, if at all. However, as we will show in a while, there does seem to be a venue of inter-faculty collaboration thanks to the effort of KU Leuven alumnus Dr. Jovino Miroy, who in 2007 founded the Philippine Society for Medieval Studies. The first officers of the PSMS included faculty members from all four universities, and it has been active in expanding its presence in other universities and seminars. One of the first publications of the PSMS was entitled “Quaerans”, which was a collection of articles on medieval philosophy and literature written by contributors from all four universities, as well as others.

This trend towards medieval philosophy can also be witnessed in terms of book publications and local forums. For example, the previous chairman of the UP Philosophy department, Dr. Earl Stanley Fronda, was able to publish his book, “Wittgenstein’s (Misunderstood) Religious Thought” (2010) under the Philosophy of Religion series of Brill, which served as a landmark achievement in the UP Philosophy department. The book...
argues that to truly understand the religious ideas of Wittgenstein, one should compare him with the medieval apophatic theologians such as Pseudo-Dionysius, Aquinas, and Nicolas of Cusa. By coincidence, the book published by Dr. Jovino Miroy in 2009 in Leuven was entitled “Tracing Nicholas of Cusa’s Early Development.” This convergence of interests led the PSMS to organize a forum called “Apophatic Theology”, where Dr. Fronda and Dr. Miroy served as main speakers, as well as another recent KUL PhD Graduate, Fr. Kenneth Masong, who contributed insights on Derrida and the philosophy of language. Fr. Masong is now the Dean of Studies of the Mother of Good Counsel Seminary, and also teaches on a part-time basis in Ateneo.

Another notable book publication was by Dr. Liza Ruth Ocampo, the vice president of the Philippine Society for Medieval Studies. The book is entitled “The Dignity of the Thinking Person”, which is a prolonged reflection on Aquinas’ philosophy of human nature. Dr. Ocampo, though currently a faculty member in UP Diliman, chose to publish her book under the University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, another example of inter-university collaboration.

Of course the Philippine Society for Medieval Studies by no means represents the strongest philosophical trend in the Philippines right now. Each university has its own exclusive projects, like the bioethics research of UP Diliman, the Ateneo’s emphasis on philosophizing in the Filipino language, or UST and La Salle’s specific strengths in Asian philosophy. However, the PSMS currently seems to be the only organization which inspires active participation and cooperation from all the philosophy faculties already mentioned, and which has established a presence and connections in other universities and seminaries as well. When asked about his long-term goal for the society, Dr. Miroy says, “We hope to establish a tradition of strong scholarship on Medieval Philosophy and medieval culture. Filipino writers have long drawn from the medieval tradition, like the Gaspar Aquino de Belen and Francisco Baltazar, even Jose Rizal, who imagined starting the Revolution against Spain by storming the gates of the Beaterio de Sta. Clara. It is our hope that such scholarship would result in the reform of the Church and society.”

Filipino Philosophy and Medieval Philosophy

Another quest that many local philosophers share, albeit in varying degrees and pursued in different ways, is the search for a genuine Filipino philosophy. The definition of what makes a genuine “Filipino philosophy” has been the subject of much debate. Is it a matter of merely philosophizing in the Filipino language? Or does any philosophizing done by a Filipino count as Filipino philosophy? How dependent must it be on the canons of Western philosophy? What is its connection to Eastern philosophy? What are its central concepts? Is it just a waste of time? When it comes to these questions, the search is still very much on-going.

However, my own Ph.D. research here in Leuven involves riding the crest of this recent trend towards Medieval Philosophy, and combining it with this search for a Filipino Philosophy. I am inspired by the “creative retrieval” of Thomas Aquinas by Norris Clarke. One of his discoveries was that relation is equally important as substance in the thought of Aquinas, and that it would be more accurate to talk of substance-in-relation rather than just substance alone. All created substances are in constant relation to other substances, sharing with each other, communicating with each other, resulting in an organic web of being rather than separate islands of being.
How does this relate to Filipino philosophy? Well, in UP Diliman an eminent psychologist named Virgilio Enriquez, who also founded the Filipino Psychology movement, identified kapwa as the core value of Filipinos when it comes to all other ethical and practical values. Filipinos have been well known for their “smooth interpersonal relationships” (as one American researcher put it), that is, the tendency to put the preservation of personal relationships as the number one priority, even if it means sacrificing other more objective values. For example, instead of arguing and debating through logical argument, a Filipino would much rather just accept or pretend that he is wrong, to preserve friendship and goodwill (as an instructor in UP Diliman, I can indeed report that most students have a certain resistance when being taught how to win arguments through incisive logic). One can also see influences of this attitude when it comes to very close family ties, the commonplace of extended families, friendships and benefactor relationships defined by utang-na-loob (debt of goodwill), and some negative and positive aspects of Filipino politics (i.e. most of the corruption in the Philippines involves large networks of “friends” rather than individuals; the famous 1986 “People’s Power” Revolution can be seen as a united effort of the people to oust a dictator only through a powerful shared sentiment, without any violence).

But what is kapwa? This is where it gets interesting. The literal English translation would be “other” or “others”, but the English does not capture the very strong sense of belonging that is included with it. One scholar poetically defined it as “self in the other”. Though the sense of kapwa is quite often lived out by many Filipinos, it has been a challenge to articulate it, especially with a clear philosophical vocabulary. That’s where I think the creative retrieval of Aquinas comes in. Beyond substance-in-relation, however without any distinction of parts. In kapwa person and relation are taken together as a homogenous, inseparable whole, meaning that in kapwa I cannot abstract the “person” as being relation-less, as Western concepts of individuality would have it. The person is always in constant relation, and most importantly, in constant relation to me. My responsibility towards him and our sense of belonging is not only on the ethical level, but is also fundamentally grounded on the metaphysical level. The objective of my research is two-fold. First, I feel that this creative retrieval of Aquinas offers a lot of resources in articulating and strengthening our local understanding of kapwa, to give it a better fighting chance within academic circles, especially in the face of erosive postmodern ideas. Second, I feel that this project contributes something valuable to Thomism, especially to the “Thomist Personalism” movement inspired by Karol Wojtyla, because here just might be an example of Thomist Personalism not just in theory but in real life, as it can be subconsciously lived out by a people.

This being said, my own research is only part and parcel of one of the most recent trends in Filipino philosophy when it comes to learning from medieval philosophy. And truly, this is a trend that would not have been possible without the opportunities provided by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven for people like Dr. Jovi Miroy and myself. For that we are very grateful.

For more information about the PSMS, visit www.asiamedieval.org

Report by Jeremiah Reyes

1 Ideas on the “person” can either be obtained from the “Thomist Personalism” movement of Karol Wojtyla, who gets his ideas from the phenomenology of Max Scheler, or perhaps one can derive insight exclusively from Aquinas’ ideas on the person in the context of his discussion of the Trinity.
Plato's *Parmenides* is notoriously difficult to interpret for two reasons. First, the dialogue seems to destroy the centre-piece of Plato's system, the Forms. Second, its longer second half seems to be utterly contradictory and the method employed there resembles nothing else in the Platonic corpus. The Neoplatonic school, however, intrepidly interpreted this dialogue as containing the heart of their metaphysics. This dissertation, thus, is about how one late Neoplatonic philosopher, Proclus, tried to explain how the method itself works and how this seemingly disparate method is in harmony with the other Platonic and Aristotelian dialectical methods. It also addresses the difference between the activity of the soul when it engages in the propaedeutic dialectic and the highest dialectic.

Javier Carreño Cobos - *The Time of Fiction. Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology of Phantasy*. PhD supervisor: Professor Rudolf Bernet

This dissertation analyzes the development of the Husserlian concept of phantasy, both in Husserl’s main works and in his posthumously published materials. The initial concern of this development is to establish phantasy's eidetic features as a form of apprehension proper, culminating with the formulation of two distinct phantasy modifications: a purely reproductive phantasy modification and a perceptual phantasy modification. This development can be succinctly described as the progressive realization that phantasy is more than a mere intuitive appearance of an object that is apprehended as absent. For phantasy entails the modification of the internal, originary consciousness of the fantasied object. In fact, phantasy could never intuitively give something fictive if it were not experienced in internal time-consciousness as the neutralizing modification of an originial consciousness that was never originally lived.

With the realization of the dual character of phantasy as reproductive phantasy and as perceptual phantasy, this dissertation argues that Husserlian phantasy can offer insights into various issues in aesthetics and the philosophy of literature. Although Husserl does not propose a complete theory of fine arts, his findings offer valuable insights to the reader of aesthetics and literary theory.

Nico Debrier - *Raadsels in het duister: Een studie van de cartesiaanse ideeën en hun belang voor eenheid en dualisme in Descartes' theorie van de geest*. PhD supervisor: Professor Roland Breeur

One of the most important philosophical questions is: what is man? René Descartes (1596-1650) states that man consists of a union between body and soul; in itself each part of the union is necessary but insufficient to actually define man. In Descartes’ view, the human body is a machine constructed by the laws of Nature in line with the rest of the universe. In as far as man is considered as a machine, he is no different from an animal. However, because man has a soul which enables him to ‘understand’ and ‘feel’, the soul becomes a key differentiator between man and animals.
Because it is self-evident that man consists, at the very least, of a body, both the preceding and contemporary philosophical theories were constructed based on this aspect alone. This dissertation considers Descartes’ reactions to these theories. The above themes are analyzed from the perspective of Cartesian 'ideas', which help to determine man’s view of the world. Since these ideas are, in turn, both physical and non-physical, this allows for the view that man is more than just a body, but is a real union of body and soul.

EVA DE CLERCQ - Women’s rights in need of a new body politics. PhD supervisors: Professor Rudi Visker and Professor Adriano Fabris (Università di Pisa) (co-tutela)
The main thesis of this research project is that women are more likely than men to let themselves be “seduced” by symbolisation and that this has something to do with the female body which is specifically vulnerable. Another core thesis of this dissertation is that women’s rights are in need of a new body politics which leaves more room for symbolisation. This claim can easily be interpreted as a defence of women’s rights. While De Clercq does not wish to discount the importance of the political struggle to give women control over their bodies, the politics of rights is not her primary focus. The emphasis rather lies on the need of a new body politics for women’s rights, suggesting that a pure politics of rights, when mechanically applied, is not enough. Drawing on the ambiguous meaning of the notion of vulnerability, the dissertation offers an innovative approach to the topic of the female body in relation to women’s rights; going beyond the age-old dichotomy of casting women as either passive victims or conscious agents. Thanks to a profound confrontation with the works of Judith Butler and Adriana Cavarero on the concept of bodily vulnerability, it also offers a new insight into the different feminist “schools” to which these two philosophers belong.

JENNY PELLETIER - The Science of Metaphysics in the Work of William of Ockham. PhD supervisor: Professor Russell Friedman
The subject of this dissertation is Ockham’s notion of metaphysics as it emerges sporadically and intermittently throughout his speculative work. Ockham concurs with other medieval thinkers that metaphysics studies being as such, as well as the attributes that all beings exhibit. Similarly, he conceives that metaphysics studies God as a first cause or prime mover. Metaphysics, according to Ockham, is a unified aggregate of evident and naturally knowable propositions that are collected together on the basis of their subject and predicate terms. Metaphysics is not, strictly speaking, about being in general, but about the concept of being that signifies all beings. Nor is it about the attributes of being, but about the concepts that signify the attributes of being. Nor again is it about God or kinds of beings, but about the concepts that signify God or kinds of beings. The importance of the concept is dictated by Ockham’s propositional account of science where scientific propositions are ultimately composed of mental concepts. This stems from his unshakeable conviction that while reality is absolutely singular and particular, our concepts can be general and universal. The role of the concept comes to the fore as the principal and guiding theme of Ockham’s metaphysics.

This dissertation is accordingly divided into three parts that take up science, the concept of being and the concept of God respectively. In each, Pelletier presents the wealth of indispensable logical and theological background material necessary to grasp the full effect of Ockham’s brief but pithy remarks about the nature of metaphysics.
Courtney Fugate - The Teleology of Reason. An Examination of the Sources and Structure of Kant's Critical Philosophy. PhD supervisor: Professor Martin Moors

In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant defines philosophy in the true sense to be a teleologia rationis humanae, i.e., a doctrine (logia) of the end (telos) of human reason. This would indicate not only that Kant's conception of philosophy is itself teleological in character, but also that he sees this same teleology as constituting the internal purposive or normative structure of human rationality.

This is surprising for two reasons: Firstly, with few exceptions Kant's philosophy is understood as a chief expression of the anti-teleological worldview typical of modern thought. Secondly, from a historical point of view, Kant's expression is surprising because of its insistence that the teleology with which wisdom is to concern itself is one of human reason itself.

The aim of this dissertation is to show from historical, genetic and systematic grounds that teleological motives do in fact lie at the heart of Kant's critical turn, and that a precise analysis of teleological structures can both illuminate the basic strategy of the critical system's most foundational arguments and provide a key to understanding the unity of Kant's philosophy. This work, which analyzes both Kant's pre-critical and critical writings, can thus be understood as providing a detailed historical and systematic articulation of the interpretation of Kant's claim that philosophy in the true sense consists of a teleologia rationis humanae.

Gwendolyn Dolske - Literature as Philosophy: The Existentialist Case. PhD supervisor: Professor Paul Cruysberghs

Philosophy and Literature exist as discrete disciplines, each with a function specific to their particular aims; however, at times they intersect in such a way as to escalate their purposes without fracturing their identity. These moments of intersection, primarily in the case of Existentialism, is the focus of this dissertation. Literature became a method for philosophizing for existentialist thinkers like Kierkegaard, Camus, Sartre, and de Beauvoir, for whom the decision to write literature is just as important as the existentialist questions themselves. Thus the interlacing of philosophy and fiction poses a few points of inquiry: what advantage, if any, does this manifest? What are the goals and aspects of Existentialism that call on this sort of coalition? Simone de Beauvoir writes that it is not by chance that the existentialists wrote both fiction and non-fiction. This dissertation examines the nature and reason for this "not by chance" by developing the particularities of each thinker. It then focuses on their fiction, treating it as a logical extension of their philosophical position. Kierkegaard, Camus, Sartre, and de Beauvoir maintain important differences in their philosophy; more poignantly, despite these differences their investigations into existence lead them all to view literature as philosophy. Literature demands a dwelling in the ambiguity of existence and thus leaves us without traditional sorts of conclusions. This is a philosophy of lived experience; therefore the barrier between philosopher and student, or non-academic, diminishes. The manner in which the material is communicated, namely the novel, had to change in order to bring about the "lived experience."

Francie Roberts - Divine Ideas as Pattern for Human Knowledge. Bonaventure and Thirteenth-Century Franciscan Theology on Divine and Human Knowledge. PhD supervisor: Professor Russell Friedman

According to Bonaventure, divine ideas are the expressive exemplar similitudes of all God is
capable of causing, and the divine ideas are patterns for all that is created in accordance with them, both for creatures in general, which function as vestiges of the divine ideas, and for the human mind, which is made in God’s image. Owing in part to the creative link between divine and human minds, the three basic relations of causality, similitude and assimilation are foundational to both divine and human knowledge, and certain human cognition requires direct attainment of, and assimilation to, the ideas that exist in the divine mind. Bonaventure’s doctrine of knowledge is preferable to those of his predecessors to the extent that it is more nuanced and consistent and to the extent that it roots all creation and understanding in God as its first principle and explains all knowledge, both human and divine, in terms of causality, similitude and assimilation. Bonaventure accounts for divine knowledge and human knowledge, at the levels of both lower and higher reason, in a manner that is comprehensive and internally consistent. His doctrine also has applications for contemporary cognitive theory, since the Seraphic Doctor shows that causality, similitude and assimilation are basic relations that must be accounted for by any cognitive theory if it is to yield a plausible account of cognition.

Guy Claessens - Het denken verbeeld. De vroegmoderne receptie (1533-1650) van Proclus’ Commentaar op het eerste boek van Euclides’ Elementen. PhD supervisor: Professor Gerd Van Riel; co-supervisor: Professor Steven Vandenberghe (Universiteit Gent)

The Early Modern reception of Proclus’ Commentary on the First Book of Euclid’s Elements confronts us with a remarkable paradox. Despite the text’s crucial role in Early Modern epistemology, one of its central philosophical features, namely imagination’s productive role in geometry, seems to have been almost entirely ignored. Only in the beginning of the seventeenth century was Proclus’ notion of a productive imagination received as such, i.e. as a productive power. According to Kepler, the geometric figures generated by our imagination are not only mere reflections of innate concepts, but expressions of the harmonic relations making up the archetypical pattern of the sensible world. The reason why Proclus’ geometrical imagination can now function as a productive power lies in the rejection of the Aristotelian claims (1) that geometrical figures are abstracted accidentia, and (2) that imagination is exclusively connected with the senses. Moreover, the changed opinion about the epistemological reliability and legitimacy of the senses allows Early Modern thinkers to state that geometric imagination not only mirrors inborn knowledge, but also operates as a hermeneutical principle mediating between the sensible world and the soul. The input of the mathematical imagination significantly broadens, and geometrical figures are now able to express quantitative relations present in the sensible world, or to function as starting points to decipher such relations. The modified imagination in the Early Modern Period is therefore exemplary of mathematics’ new status as a “formal language”, i.e. no longer an inventory of ideal mathematical entities, but a science of relations and structures.

Annelies Degryse - Politiek/Handelen. Een reconstructie van Hannah Arendts politieke filosofie. PhD supervisor: Professor Bart Raymaekers

Hannah Arendt’s political philosophy is most widely understood as a theory of political action. In line with Jürgen Habermas, a majority of Arendt scholars consider her concept of action as similar to Aristotelian praxis. By understanding the Greek polis as Arendt’s ideal form of government, they further narrow the concept down to a political concept.
In this dissertation, Degryse challenges this ‘Aristotelian’ reading of Arendt. The reconstruction of Was ist Politik? shows how Arendt, beside political freedom, distinguishes another concept of freedom: freedom as spontaneity. She defines ‘action’ as this pre-political form of freedom as spontaneity. Now the question arises, what does she mean by this broadened concept of action, and how is it related to the polis? Both problems are solved by presenting a new reading of Arendt’s political philosophy. In doing this, Degryse distinguishes between a ‘phenomenology of the human condition’ - the systematic part of Arendt’s philosophy, where she sets out her world view -and ‘phenomenological history’ - the historical part of her philosophy, where she investigates people’s interpretations of their own condition throughout the ages.

MARC ANDERSON - Hyperthematics. An extension of Josiah Royce’s Philosophy of Interpretation. PhD supervisor: Professor André Cloots

This dissertation, which consists of two parts, examines and extends the philosophy of American idealist Josiah Royce. The first part is a study of the influence of four contemporaries upon Royce’s philosophical development, including that of R.H. Lotze, William James, F.H. Bradley, and A.N. Whitehead.

Here it is shown how various facets of what would become Royce’s philosophy of Interpretation are developed, more specifically, its character as a broad and logic based metaphysics, as a pragmatic metaphysics of the active ideal, and as an applied metaphysics which takes its start in successful human action. A comparison with a similar approach – Whitehead’s approach – is then made, in order to map out the potential development of such a philosophical foundation.

The second part extends and applies Royce’s insights into what Anderson calls Hyperthematics, a methodology of applied metaphysics. Beginning from Royce’s foundational assumption that every problem which the world presents has its interpretation, the attempt is made to first uncover the sets of assumptions, or hyperthemes, which are consistent with the foundational assumption, and which comprise hyperthematic or action harmonizing metaphysical frameworks, by musing upon four areas wherein human action appears to be harmonized, viz. dance, games, narrative, and music.

Having uncovered various hyperthemes, a further attempt is then made to consider an area of human activity, i.e. the commercial corporation, wherein the assumptions adopted do not appear to consistently harmonize action, and to then apply the consistent hyperthemes to that area and show how by adopting new assumptions, it can be rebuilt metaphysically so as to promote harmonized action according to the need of its particular problematic.

VALENTINO LUMOWA - Engaged Subjectivity and Modernity. A Study of Charles Taylor’s Philosophical Anthropology. PhD supervisor: Professor Bart Raymaekers

This dissertation is an investigation into Taylor’s project of philosophical anthropology, which essentially involves two complementary parts: the transcendental and the historical. While the transcendental part arrives at an essentially engaged theory of the self and a list of the ontological elements of being human, the historical part shows the irrefutable path that should be taken in order to rip off the cloak of anonymity of sources of the moral self. The critics of this project can be divided into two groups. The first group (Abbey and Smith) simply takes for granted the inextricability of the transcendental and the historical, and is more concerned with artificially distinguishing the two parts. The second group (Olafson,
The dissertation is an attempt to fill the gap left by the two groups. Lumowa concedes to the first group by trying to artificially distinguish the transcendental from the historical in order to understand Taylor’s philosophical journey. But, instead of taking for granted the link between the two, he provides two arguments to demonstrate the necessity of the transition from the transcendental to the historical. On the other hand, although Lumowa agrees with the message inherent in the challenges made by the second group, namely that Taylor’s two-dimensional project of philosophical anthropology is not as clear as he wanted it to be, he rejects their accusation that Taylor completely fails to fulfil his promise.

Tyler Tritten - Beyond Presence: The Later F.W.J. Schelling’s Criticism of Metaphysics. PhD supervisor: Professor Martin Moors

The thesis of this work is that the late Schelling’s positive philosophy not only surpassed German Idealism and helped to institute its successors, but does the same for the entire tradition of the metaphysics of presence insofar as the absolute knowledge of Hegelian Idealism and the will construed as will to power in Nietzsche are thought to close and fulfil that tradition. The first part of the dissertation situates the problem of meaning, i.e. the nihilistic problem, in contemporary philosophy and shows that Schelling addressed the same problem. The problem is identified as presence, but also that contemporary philosophy’s attempts to surpass presence actually exacerbate the problems of relativism and nihilism (Derrida, Wittgenstein, Foucault) rather than solving them. Subsequently, the dissertation explicates Schelling’s methodology, primarily the relation between method and object. It is shown that the most appropriate method for Schelling’s object of study, a free deed, is one that operates per posterius, a historical philosophy including both a priori and a posteriori elements. Parts two through four of the work correspond to the Past (eternity), Present (historical time; myth and language) and Future (as a post-historical epoch or the “homoousie” of times) respectively. Be it in his more abstract and ontological doctrine of the potencies or his view of myth or language, Schelling repudiates all forms of meaning as derivative of representation and identity, i.e. he repudiates all the essential components of onto-theology or the metaphysics of presence.

Milena Valeva - Theoretical Foundations of Ethical Banking. Lessons to be learned from Islamic Banking. PhD supervisors: Professor Luc Van Liedekerke and Professor Albert Löhr (Internationales Hochschulinstutit Zittau)

This dissertation sets out a framework for an ethics of banking. Valeva first addresses the question of the theoretical foundation of normative banking practices, which allows her to reconstruct the deficient normative understanding of banking in Germany. Building on this insight, light is thrown – beyond the communicatively protected meaning of the Shari’ah – on the meaning and rationality of Islamic banking. Finally, a new general theory of ethical banking is presented. The distinguishing feature of this theory, which forms the foundation for the broadening of intension of the concept of ethical banking, is the meaning-oriented rationality of human action. Founding this general theory in a theory of action allows the author to harmonize purpose-oriented and value-oriented rationality, thus contributing to a stabilization of banking practices.
This dissertation considers a basic theme in the field of metaphysics: the Cartesian position on the problem of how our subjective, a priori concepts are necessarily related to beings in their being, or can be said to possess objective validity. The question is properly situated in the domain of metaphysics, although it can be considered the basic question of epistemology - the justification of our claims to knowledge of objects in nature - for the reason that this question pertains in a deeply structural way to the mind’s ontological connection to beings as such.

A thorough examination of the Cartesian argument on how our ideas relate to beings in nature, and of the ontological structures which underlie this argument, leads to the conclusion that the Cartesian theory of cognition represents not only a revolution in epistemology, as a consequence of the determinative role of our understanding’s innate simple natures in all cases of knowledge, but also a revolution in ontology, specifically in regard to the ultimate source of the intelligibility of beings in their being and to the limitation of the nature of our knowledge of beings in their being to appearances.

The objective validity of ideas is established in the Third Meditation’s proof from effects, and thus clear and distinct perceptions truly correspond to actual beings and their properties in the order of nature. But this ontological veracity remains Cogito bound; it is conditioned by the subject’s finite power of knowing, which becomes verified in its capacity to make distinctions. Ontology in the Cartesian system remains conditioned by the finitude of human cognition, even though within the conditions of his finitude we can find absolute certainty, a certainty which can be termed, following Paul Ricoeur, apodictic but inadequate.

**NEWS 2010-2011**

**Personalia:**

Two professors became emeriti professors on October 1, 2011: Rudolf Bernet and Arnold Burnts. Simultaneously, the Institute of Philosophy welcomed four new professors. Karin de Boer came from Groningen to Leuven to place her expertise and knowledge of Modern Philosophy at the disposal of the Centre for Metaphysics and Philosophy of Culture. Stefan Rummens left Nijmegen and returned, as senior lecturer in Ethics, to the faculty where he obtained his PhD in 2004. Stéphane Symons, previously one of the Institute’s FWO postdoctoral fellows, was appointed as tenure track lecturer in Philosophy of Culture and Aesthetics, in succession of Paul Cruysberghs. Filip Buekens received a 20% appointment for Philosophy of Language.

At the start of the Spring semester, in February 2012, a fifth professor joined the HIW staff: Nicolas de Warren, specialist in Husserl’s phenomenology, left Wellesley College to occupy Rudolf Bernet’s position at the Husserl-Archives.

Bart Raymaekers was promoted to the rank of full professor, starting October 1, 2011. The other lucky ones were Bart Pattyn, who was promoted to the rank of professor, and Roland Breeur and Andreas De Block, who became senior lecturers.
Research Centres:
On January 1, 2011, two of the Institute’s research centres merged into the new Centre for Metaphysics and Philosophy of Culture. Paul Cortois was elected as the centre’s coordinator. The Centre for Logic and Analytical Philosophy got a new co-ordinator in 2010-2011: Roger Vergauwen. The terms of office of Toon Brackman, Ulrich Melle and Gerd Van Riel, co-ordinators of the Centre for Ethics, the Husserl-Archives and the De Wulf-Mansion Centre, were renewed for four years.

Thursday Lectures and Lectures for the XXIst Century:
Three Thursday Lectures took place in 2010-2011:
October 14, 2010: Jaap van Brakel (KU Leuven) Comparative and Intercultural Philosophy. Necessary and not so Necessary Preconditions
December 16, 2010: Nadia Urbinati (Columbia University) Opinion Formation and Democratic Legitimacy
April 28, 2011: Paul Crowther (National University of Ireland, Galway) Analytic Phenomenology and the Scope of Imagination

Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, opened the seventeenth edition of the Lectures for the XXIst Century. Full 2010-2011 programme:
November 22, 2010: Herman Van Rompuy, De toekomst van de E. U. De E. U. en de toekomst
November 29, 2010: Paul De Grauwe, De toekomst van de euro
December 6, 2010: Ides Nicaise, Europa en de armoedebestrijding: tussen het Berlaymontgebouw en de kartonndozenlapers van het Centraal Station
December 13, 2010: Jos Delbeke, De klimaatpolitiek in Europa
December 20, 2010: Erik Smolders, Het groene Europa? Feiten en percepties van milieuproblemen
February 14, 2011: Roel Merckx, Geen groene revolutie voor Afrika

Other lectures, congresses and events:
The 2010-2011 academic year was festively opened on October 6, 2010, with Jerrold Levinson’s inaugural lecture “The Value of Music: How Is Music Valuable?” Professor Levinson spent a year at the HIW as holder of the International Francqui Chair, a prestigious inter-university and worldwide renowned research position. During the Fall semester, he taught another 9 lectures on the Philosophy of Music. The Chair was officially closed with a symposium on “Theories of Beauty”, jointly organised by the HIW and the University of Antwerp on May 9 and 10, 2011.

Nicolas de Warren delivered the Husserl Memorial Lecture on “From Nowhere its Light and Genius: Husserl, Foucault and the Dreaming Mind Explored” on October 20, 2010. On the next day, he led a seminar on Sartre, which was followed attentively, not only because of its theme and the expertise of the guest speaker, but also because the seminar served as a test class for the selection of a new lecturer or professor in phenomenology.

On October 27, 2010, a workshop in Environmental Philosophy was held under
the title “The Meaning of Conservation, the Conservation of Meaning”. Presentations were given by S. P. James and M. Drenthen.

At the occasion of Paul Cruysberghs becoming emeritus professor, on October 30, 2010, the Centre for Culture and Philosophy, the Centre for German Idealism and the International Hegel-Gesellschaft organised the international conference “The Marriage of Aesthetics and Ethics – and Beyond?” (October 28-29). One month later, another fruitful career was honoured, when, on November 27, Carlos Steel gave his valedictory lecture on “Fate and choice of life: a Platonic story”. At this occasion, guests from everywhere in Belgium and abroad came to Leuven to attend the international conference “Fate, Providence and Moral Responsibility: a Conference in Honour of Carlos Steel”.

The De Wulf-Mansion Centre in Leuven and in Louvain-la-Neuve jointly organised a workshop “What is up to us?” on Aristotle’s theory of responsibility. The workshop took place on February 24-25, 2011.

On March 10, 2011, Moshe Halbertal delivered the annual Saint Thomas Lecture. His talk on “Law, Narrative and Compassion: On giving and dependency in the Talmud” was well received.

The Husserl Memorial Lecture 2011 took place on March 30. Verena Mayer spoke about “Making Sense of Science. Husserl’s Antinaturalism revisited”. On the next day, she conducted the seminar “What Emotions really are: scientific vs. phenomenological explorations”.

With great enthusiasm, students of the International Programme organised a “Graduate Student Conference”. On April 1, 39 students from the MA, MPhil and doctoral programmes presented, in parallel conference sessions, their papers. At the end of the day, the event was closed with B. Nanay’s plenary lecture on “Aesthetics as Philosophy of Perception”.

The Feast of Philosophy reached its second edition on April 9, 2011. This year’s theme, “Real Life”, attracted more than 250 participants, who overran the auditoria and seminar rooms of Leuven’s Centre for the Performing Arts ‘STUK’ and enjoyed lectures from S. Neiman and P. van Tongeren, poetry from B. Dewulf and G. De Vleeschouwer, interviews with J. Dohmen and F. Westerman, and even a Tai Chi initiation.

Christoph Schmidt was the holder of the Cardinal Mercier Chair 2010-2011. On May 4, he held a public lecture on “Eros and Time in the Constitution of Modern Subjectivity”, followed by two seminars on “Towards a Trinitarian Subversion – Between Freud and St. Paul” and “Genius, Demon, Angel – Erik Peterson’s Concept of Theopolitics as Liturgy”. In the same week (May 5-6, 2011), the Centre for Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy, the Centre for Economy and Ethics and the Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law organised the international conference “Justice, Luck and Responsibility in Health Care”.

Onora O’Neill came to Leuven on May 9-10, 2011 for an expert seminar, a debate and a lecture, organised as part of the Louis Meerts Chair.

The Wijsgerig Gezelschap te Leuven (WGL) held its annual conference on May 14, 2011. B. Baert, S. Symons and P. Cortois discussed, departing each from their own expertise, different aspects of “The understanding of the image in art and culture”. A few weeks earlier, on March
26, the WGL organised its 10th “Open Class”, allowing alumni to rediscover the atmosphere of the HIW class rooms, attend a class from one of the professors or emeriti professors of the Institute, and take part in the discussion afterwards. This time, Herman De Dijn taught a very interesting class on Ethics, science and technological evolution.

“Reasons of Love” was the title of an international conference, on May 30 and June 1, 2011. Keynote speakers were D. Jeske, M. Smith and R.J. Wallace. One week later, at the occasion of the conference “Desire for Knowledge or Desire for God? Dante Alighieri in his Philosophical Context”, the Institute’s courtyard seemed to be transformed into an Italian cortile, with Italian conference guests lively discussing their favourite writer all over the place.

The Summer ended with the third Summer School in Philosophy. For four days, from August 22 to 25, 2011, forty enthusiastic participants came to the HIW for an immersion in the philosophy of Plato, Kant, Nietzsche, Freud, Aristotle and other important thinkers. They came to Leuven for some solid intellectual refreshment and were offered an intensive and all-round programme by professors and doctoral students from the Institute of Philosophy.

On September 22-23, 2011, the Human Behavior and Evolution Network (HEBeN) organised its yearly workshop at the Institute of Philosophy. This year’s workshop focused on cultural evolution and the evolution of cooperation.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AT THE INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY

Institute of Philosophy Doctoral Scholarships
Every year, the Institute of Philosophy offers two to six one-year scholarships (FLOF scholarships):

1) two to four one-year doctoral scholarships

Description: The first aim of these positions is to start a doctoral research project, under the guidance of a professor of the Institute of Philosophy. During this year, candidates must apply for an FWO or BOF grant to obtain funding for the remaining years of the doctoral project. Qualifications: MPhil or MA Philosophy degree (and another MA degree), or dossier that can be evaluated as equivalent.

Application: Candidates need to apply electronically. With their application they should attach a research project for which they use the form for application to the doctoral programme. Candidates who have already been accepted into the doctoral programme may submit their application to the doctoral programme. See http://www.hiw.kuleuven.be/eng/jobsscholarships.html for deadlines and more information.

2) one or two one-year doctoral scholarships for doctoral students who are at an advanced stage of their research

Description: This scholarship is aimed at students who have almost finished their research project and who will be accepted for
defense of their dissertation within 10 months.

**Qualifications:** Candidates must have fulfilled all doctoral programme requirements (progress reports, etc.)

**Application:** Candidates should apply electronically, attaching a letter from their promoter confirming that the doctoral project is in advanced stage (a table of contents and overview of the parts that have already been written should be included) and guaranteeing that the defense will take place during the academic year.


**Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Doctoral Scholarships**

**Description:** The University awards special doctoral student grants for advanced KU Leuven doctoral students (BOF-BDM).

**Qualifications:** Applicants must have graduated at least four years prior to the formal submission date and may not have received research funding enabling them to prepare a doctorate. The candidates should however have done some research at the KU Leuven Association on short-term applied or policy-oriented projects allowing them to get a doctoral degree within a period of one to two years as from the official granting date of the scholarship.

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

**Stipend:** The doctoral student receives a doctoral scholarship at the level of a scientific assistant, with adjusted seniority. **Tenure:** One year, not renewable. **Application:** Applications include the candidate’s curriculum vitae, a scientific bibliography, a description of the research project, of the work plan and of previous research activities and a letter from the academic supervisor covering comments on the project and the candidate, an explanation of why no alternative financing is available, clarification regarding the feasibility of the completion of the doctorate within two years and confirmation that the doctorate will indeed be completed in time. The deadline is in January each year.

**Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Post-Doctoral Scholarships**

**Short postdoctoral positions for KU Leuven doctoral students (bof-pdm-short term).**

**Description:** These full-time research mandates are explicitly aimed at providing young researchers with the opportunity to expand their research activities at KU Leuven. High quality scientific research will be stimulated. When granted a PDM mandate, candidates are expected to submit an application for an FWO post-doctoral grant prior to the next deadline.

**Stipend:** Salary is at the level of doctor-assistant with adjusted seniority. **Tenure:** one year. **Application deadline:** Each year in March.

**Long postdoctoral positions for non-KU Leuven postdoctoral researchers (bof-pdm-long term).**

**Description:** These full-time research mandates are explicitly intended to attract young and excellent, non-KU Leuven postdoctoral researchers. They may not have been related to KU Leuven as a researcher in a period of at least 3 years before the date of submission of the pre-application. The profile must be of that kind that the candidate is able to acquire a research professorship (BOFZAP) or another appointment as tenure track.

**Stipend:** Salary is at the level of doctor-assistant with adjusted seniority. **Tenure:** maximum 2 years. **Application:** There is no specific submission date. A continuous submission is possible.
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Post-Doctoral Fellowships

Description: The University awards post-doctoral fellowships for senior researchers who obtained their doctoral degree at a non-KU Leuven university (BOF-SF).

Qualifications: Candidates must have publicly defended their doctoral thesis at least 8 years before the official submission date, must be invited by a University faculty and be nominated by a professor of the University. As a general rule, the fellows should bring in a new contribution, in the shape of knowledge and expertise that is lacking or insufficiently developed and possibly strengthened in the applicant’s research group.

Number: Depends on availability of funds for a particular year. Stipend: A grant, a salary or a reimbursement of expenses is determined in accordance with the level of the fellow and the percentage of stipend in the fellow’s own institution. Tenure: Up to one academic year depending on the length of the research project. Exceptionally renewable. Application: Online Application Forms are available on the website: http://www.kuleuven.be/iro/. Applications must be received no later than January 1st.

KU Leuven Development Cooperation Scholarships

Description: These scholarships are available to students from developing countries (former Soviet Union countries and Eastern European countries are not included). They are available for candidates wishing to study in the Doctoral Programme. Qualifications: The applicant must be a citizen of a developing country, holder of a master’s degree with excellent academic qualifications, and 35 years of age or younger. Women are encouraged to apply. Further information on qualifications is available on the website http://www.kuleuven.be/iro/ or at the International Office of the university. Number: around 15 scholarships per academic year. Stipend: The stipend includes full tuition, health insurance coverage, plus an additional stipend of 1300 Euros per month. Tenure: Up to 4 years. Application: Online Application Forms are available on the website: http://www.kuleuven.be/iro/. Applications must be received no later than January 1st.

FWO PhD Scholarships

Description: Scholarship for preparing a PhD (FWO-aspirant). Qualifications: Applicants need to be a European citizen or need to have a Master’s degree from a European university. They also need to have been admitted to the doctoral programme. The Master’s degree must have been obtained no more than 5 years before the start date of the fellowship. Stipend: Grant equal to 100% of the net amount of an assistant’s salary. Tenure: The scholarship initially starts for 2 years and can be extended for another 2 years. Application: Applications are accepted until February 1st. FWO website: http://www.fwo.be.

FWO Post-Doctoral Scholarships

Description: research scholarship at postdoctoral level. Qualifications: All nationalities can apply. Candidates must have defended their Ph.D. not more than 3 years ago (this time limit is postponed by one year in case of pregnancy or parental leave and does not apply to candidates who have not yet reached the age of 36). Tenure: 3 years, renewable. Application: Applications are accepted until February 1st. FWO website: http://www.fwo.be.
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. See http://www.fullbrightalumni.org/olc/pub/FBA/cpages/gfn/grants.jsp for more information.

The Belgian-American Educational Foundation Fellowships
Descriptions: The Belgian American Educational Foundation (BAEF) encourages applications for fellowships for advanced study or research. Fellowships are offered to American students, who wish to study in Belgium, and to Belgian students, who wish to study in the US. Please see http://www.baef.be for more information.

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. 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.

United States Veterans Training Benefits
Description: The Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral Programmes at the Institute of Philosophy have all been approved by the Veterans Administration for awards for qualified US veterans and their dependents. Qualification, Stipend and 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, KU Leuven is an approved school within the US and Canadian Government Student Loans Programmes. US and Canadian students may apply for a student loan through the KU 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, International Admissions and Mobility Unit, Naamsestraat 63 - bus 5410, 3000 Leuven. 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: http://www.soros.hu/

Aid to the Church in Need scholarships for priests and religious
Description: Scholarships for priests and religious. Prospective key personnel and teach-
ing staff, such as seminary professors, novice mistresses and masters, canon lawyers, etc., are the primary receivers of these scholarships. Support of the local bishop is needed. Studies considered: MA and doctoral studies. **Application:** Write to Aid to the Church in Need – International, Postfach 1209, D-61452 Königstein (Germany). **Deadline:** each year in February.

**ERASMUS Programme**

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 Institute of Philosophy currently has exchange agreements with the philosophy departments of the following universities: Bulgaria: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Institute for Philosophical Research; Germany: Universität Bayreuth (Philosophy & Economics), Albert Ludwigs Universität Freiburg (Philosophische Fakultät) Universität zu Köln (Philosophische Fakultät - Thomas-Institut), Bergische Universität Wuppertal (Philosophische Seminar), Bayerische Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (Institut für Philosophie); Finland: University of Helsinki (Dept of Philosophy, Fac. of Social Sciences); France: Université Lille III - Charles De Gaulle (Département de Philosophie), Université Paris X - Nanterre (Département de philosophie); Hungary: Károli Gáspar University of the Reformed Church (Budapest), Eötvös-Lorand University Budapest (Dept of Philosophy); Ireland: University College Dublin (Dept of Philosophy), National University of Ireland (Maynooth Dept of Philosophy); Italy: Università degli Studi di Milano (Facoltà di Lettere e filosofia), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Milano (Facoltà di Lettere e filosofia), Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele (Milano - Facoltà di Filosofia), Università degli Studi di Napoli Frederico II (Dipartimento di Filosofia), Università degli Studi di Padova (Dipartimento di filosofia), Università degli Studi di Pavia (Facoltà di Lettere e filosofia), Università di Pisa (Dipartimento di filosofia), Università Ca’ Foscari di Venezia (Dipartimento di filosofia), Università di Siena (Dipartimento di filosofia); The Netherlands: Universiteit Leiden (Faculteit Wijsbegeerte), Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen (Faculteit der Filosofie); Poland: Catholic University of Lublin (Faculty of Philosophy), Maria Curie-Sklodowska University (Lublin - Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology), University of Warszaw Institute of Philosophy; Portugal: Universidade da Beira Interior (Coimbra); University of Lisbon (Departamento de Filosofia); Spain: Universidad autonoma de Madrid (Departamento de Filosofia); Czech Republic: Charles University Prague (Univerzita Karlova v Praze - Faculty of Philosophy and Arts); Turkey: Ankara Universitesi; United Kingdom: The Queen’s University of Belfast (School of Philosophical Studies); University of London (Heythrop College); Sweden: University of Linköping (Fac. of Arts and Sciences); Switzerland: Universität Basel, Universität Bern, Université de Fribourg (Département de Philosophie), Université de Lausanne (Département de Philosophie) The Erasmus coordinator of the HIW is Prof. André Cloots.
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The *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* is open to all trends of thinking and to the various fields of philosophy. It contains thematic, historical and critical contributions, as well as reviews and descriptive bibliographies, written by philosophers from different countries. It publishes articles in Dutch, English, French, German and South African Dutch, all with an English abstract. Each contribution is double-blind peer reviewed by at least two experts from different universities.

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Belgium and the Netherlands: € 60 (students € 30).
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