# Contents

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION FROM DEAN BART RAYMAEKERS 2

INTRODUCTION BY RUSSELL FRIEDMAN, DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME 5

A NEW FACULTY MEMBER AT THE INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY: AN INTERVIEW WITH HENNING TEGTMeyer 8

THREE FACES OF THE USA 11

GRATITUDE LONG OVERDUE 11

ONE YEAR IN LEUVEN: AN AMERICAN ABROAD 13

INTERVIEW WITH HELDER DE SCHUTTER 15

THE USA AND THE HIW 20

THE SAINT DAMIEN COMMUNITY AT THE AMERICAN COLLEGE 22

ARCHBISHOP FULTON SHEEN IN LEUVEN 23

FOURTH ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE 25

THE WRITING LAB AT THE INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY 35

SAINT THOMAS FEAST 2013: AN INTERVIEW WITH PASQUALE PORRO 40

CARDINAL MERCIER CHAIR 2013: AN INTERVIEW WITH JAY BERNSTEIN 44

DEMOCRACY, SOLIDARITY AND THE EUROPEAN CRISIS: EXCERPTS FROM A LECTURE DELIVERED BY J. HABERMAS ON 26 APRIL 2013 IN LEUVEN 52

DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS 2012-2013 60

HIW NEWS 2012-2013 69

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AT THE INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY 72
A WORD OF INTRODUCTION
FROM DEAN BART RAYMAEKERS

This is already the 21st edition of the Alumni Newsletter. If we take a quick look at its previous editions, we find that many things have changed over the course of the years. At the same time, however, one can see that some things have gone unchanged, namely, the inspiration and the atmosphere at the HIW. This inspiration arises from a goal that we have all shared through the generations; that is, to study philosophy in all its richness and diversity. This goal reflects upon this Newsletter as well, which is not only a journal for the alumni and alumnae of our Institute but also a kind of archive for the Institute itself. Each edition of the Newsletter offers a survey of the previous year’s events; who came, who spoke, who deserves to be remembered. This might be a reason why there’s not only a word of introduction from the Director of the International Programme, but also from the Dean.

The Institute of Philosophy, first and foremost, consists of its staff and its students. In five, six years, an entire generation of staff members has left the Institute. This year, the departure hall was quiet but we welcomed a new colleague, Henning Tegtmeyer, who moved from Leipzig to Leuven to teach and do research in the important field of metaphysics and the philosophy of religion.

More striking was the change of the Faculty Board. After seven years of hard work and dedication to the Institute of Philosophy, Toon Vandeveldt reached the end of his second term as the Dean. Prof. Vandeveldt was the head of
the faculty in an inimitable way, standing as the face of the Institute, both inside and outside KU Leuven. Stefaan Cuypers, Vice Dean for Research, also completed his term, leaving his mark upon this position during the recent research audit and on many other occasions. A new Board has now left the starting blocks and they are discovering the everyday tasks of what it takes for a philosophy institute to flourish.

We said goodbye to Dries Simons, our student secretary for many years and, for many students, the ‘face’ of the HIW. Evelyn Dehertoghe has now taken over his tasks. We have also welcomed Zografia Fameliari as a new member of the administrative staff.

Another of last year’s important events was the external education audit. Every eight years, a committee of experts comes to Leuven to assess the quality of our philosophy programmes. There are a number of reports and figures that have to be shuffled along with a great deal of educational jargon but more importantly, such an audit allows us to critically evaluate our programmes from within. We are happy to announce that the committee declared our education to be of good, or even excellent, quality both in the Dutch and in the International Programmes. The transition to a new bachelor-master structure did not leave any scars. There are, however, a few things to worry about. It becomes clearer each day that we have reached the limit of our so-called ‘flexibilization’. Also, it has turned out to be very difficult to find an audience for our idea to have a two-year research master. In spite of all this, however, we can rejoice in the steady increase of students from Belgium and even more from abroad. It strengthens our conviction that Leuven has its place on the philosophical map of the world.

Another thing became patently obvious last year. The academic year 2012-2013 was a year of exile because part of the HIW main building was being restored. Classrooms, the Mercier Room and the Council Rooms were all out of use and right away, all ‘public’ life at the Institute seemed to fall silent. The daily stream of students, talking and chatting, discussing their classes and running from one room to the next — all of this marks the life of the Institute, more than we sometimes realize. One year ago, we were having courses in other classrooms, meetings and seminars in places that were unfamiliar. It made us realize how much we are connected to that special location in Leuven. Walking under the gate, inscribed with ‘Institut Supérieur de Philosophie/Hooger Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte’ recalls the days of the past, the cobblestones and the wisteria, the Dean’s office, the encouraging example of Meunier’s labourers, the weeping beech and the bronze firmness of Mercier, the red rue on the main building in fall; we discovered that philosophy in Leuven is one with the buildings in which it is studied. During the visit of the education audit committee, one of the committee members presented us with a thought experiment: suppose the university were to build a brand new building for philosophy at the green city border in Heverlee. Imagine a state-of-the-art building with enough office space for everybody, modern classrooms and seminar rooms, a new and comfortable building with all modern facilities. Would you want that? All of the respondents were unanimous: philosophy in Leuven takes place behind the wooden façade and the iron gate, on our own little green campus in the heart of the city center! The result of the renovation work is worth seeing: a newly renovated hall, a coffee room, new toilets, a renovated staircase, a new elevator and a full-fledged entrance for wheelchairs. Now we can start dreaming of further renovations to the main building and an extension to our library.

It is now 2014 and, coincidentally, a year of anniversaries and commemorations. The *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* celebrated its 75th anni-
versary. For this occasion, an original jubilee volume was published and a new management team, full of enthusiasm and conviction, set out to make the *Tijdschrift* the primary reference within the Dutch philosophical community. Rudi Visker and Paul van Tongeren left the editorial staff and Roland Breeur, together with his new team, has taken over their tasks. But above all, 2014 is the year of the 125th anniversary of the Institute of Philosophy. As you’re reading this, preparations are taking place, at full speed, to turn 2014-2015 into a great celebration. It will be a time for festivities as well as an excellent opportunity to reflect on the role and significance of the HIW. More now than in the past, we feel the burden of the many tasks we have to fulfil: performing high-level, international research, offering courses in philosophy to students from all KU Leuven programmes, grasping our times in thought, in dialogue with our own cultural community … There is a real tension between all of these duties, forcing us to make decisions constantly. Philosophers feel the need to be heard in public debates but, at the same time, long for academia’s peace and quiet that guarantee its depth and rigor. But even within academia, they feel, in many ways, the pressure from the outside. One of the Institute’s tasks, both during and after the jubilee year, will be to invent, consider and fulfil its role as a philosophical institute.
Dear Alumni:

I write to you from deep hiding ... I've gone underground, thanks to a research leave for the spring semester of 2014, and thanks to Prof. William Desmond who agreed to oversee during my absence the day-to-day workings of the Institute of Philosophy's International Programme. Over the last three months, I've been deepening my acquaintance with the mysteries and wonders of medieval philosophy, both refreshing my memory of things that I have not thought about for some time and learning things that I have never really encountered before. I'm a firm believer that this sort of concentrated time with reading, writing, and research is not only a great privilege of academic life, but also an integral part of it, to the benefit of the university's research mission and of teaching and student supervision at all levels. This is just to say that I'm only just resurfacing to share with you some thoughts about the year that has passed, to bring you a bit up to date on the International Programme and the life of the Institute, and to tell you a bit about the contents of this issue of the Newsletter. Then I will return to hiding!

As the Dean writes in his Introduction to the Newsletter, probably the most visible and tangible occurrence during the 2013-14 academic year has been our getting our campus back. As I wrote last year, it was a bit of an awakening during the 2012-13 academic year to see just how much the renovations of the Institute's main building changed the character of the Institute itself: classes and lectures spread all over campus, no one central meeting place for discussion and debate, no cozy courtyard area to bring the Institute together. It was thus a real relief when this past September we were able to return to our philosophical haunts in Mercierplein 2. While construction was not entirely completed at the beginning of this academic year, nevertheless the main building was open for use again, and, I think everyone would agree, highly improved. The building retains its old character, while nevertheless being updated — better lighting, better elevator, better bathrooms! There is still some room for improvement — it would be fine for the infrastructure of the Institute's library to match its worldclass collection of philosophical publications — but all-in-all it was worth the wait and the inconvenience of a year without a campus. But it is sure nice to have our old Institute back again!
The other major event of the past year was the official audit of our bachelor and masters teaching programmes. I wrote in earlier issues of this Newsletter about some of the extensive preparations we made for this once-in-eight-year accreditation process. And then the committee was here and gone. As the Dean wrote in his Introduction we have been highly gratified by the results the evaluating committee gave us. All of the hard work, not just in terms of preparation for the accreditation itself but also in terms of designing and executing the best philosophical education that we possibly can, was recognized by the committee, which had very few points of criticism.

In the aftermath of the audit, we’ve done some thinking about some of the things we put in place in preparation for the audit itself. Thus, we had several rounds of “hearings” with groups of students from all academic levels, in our attempt to identify what the students liked about the programme and what they thought needed improvement. This past autumn, we took steps to institutionalize this type of meeting by setting up “student councils” where we can meet with the students on a regular basis to discuss issues that they have with the education that they are receiving at the Institute of Philosophy. Two other initiatives taken over the past years, the HIW Writing Lab and the Graduate Student Conference, were praised by the audit committee and we are continuing and expanding them. Both the Writing Lab and the Graduate Student Conference are described in the present issue of the Newsletter.

One of the results of the teaching audit that surprised me a bit: we heard that the evaluation committee was extremely impressed with the way that the administrators among the academic staff at the HIW worked closely with the genuine administrative staff here. Upon consideration, it’s true. Leuven has a tradition for using academic personnel at all levels of administration, from the rector and vice-rectors, down through the deans and vice-deans, and further to chairs of and membership in various committees. This includes of course even your friendly neighborhood International Programme Director. One of the things that ensures the smooth working of the Institute of Philosophy is the way that the “academic administrators” can count on the genuine administrative staff. I know that the International Programme would simply cease functioning without the efforts of Emilia Brodencova, and I’m certain that Andreas De Block, Vice Dean for Teaching (having taken over from Bart Raymaekers, when the latter became Dean), and Gerd Van Riel, Vice Dean for Research (the successor of Stefaan Cuypers), feel the same about the members of the administrative with whom they work most closely. And we’re all grateful to the Institute’s administrative director (and editor of this Newsletter), Ines Van Houtte. The close and smooth collaboration between academic administrators and the administrative staff here was something that I at least didn’t really reflect on — it was just part of the furniture —, but the evaluation committee brought home to me just how special and how important it is.

This past year saw, as always, a good number of conferences and lectures bringing international and national philosophers to the Institute of Philosophy and the University as a whole. In addition to our regular Thursday lectures, one can mention the Thomas Lecture, held every March, which in 2013 was given by Sorbonne Professor Pasquale Porro, as well as the Mercier Chair Lecture, which was delivered by New School for Social Research Professor Jay Bernstein. The present issue of the Newsletter contains interviews with both. But it would be wrong not to mention the year’s most renowned guest to Leuven, an invitee of the Institute of Philosophy: on April
26. Jürgen Habermas spoke to a capacity crowd in the Peter De Somer Auditorium and to a large gathering in the Leuven City Park where his lecture was broadcast on large television screens. Habermas spoke on “Democracy, Solidarity, and the European Crisis”, a topical issue certainly in the European Union but with ramifications worldwide. It’s no exaggeration to say that the lecture was the talk of the town. In fact, the then 83-year-old Habermas’s lecture was mentioned throughout Europe: I found myself in Copenhagen, Denmark later that same week, and read about Habermas’s lecture (and the University of Leuven) in several Danish newspapers. You can find a video and the text of the lecture on the KU Leuven website, and two large excerpts from the lecture in the present issue of the Newsletter.

This issue of the Newsletter has a special focus on the Institute of Philosophy’s relation to the United States of America. I am American by birth and still a US citizen, but I’ve been living in Europe precisely half of my life now, so it was doubly interesting for me to see some reactions by Americans to their Leuven experience, and reactions by a Leuven professor to an American experience. Below, besides some interesting facts and figures about Americans at the HIW, you can find a reflection by Danielle Layne, a Leuven PhD graduate who is now teaching and researching in the US. To echo what my American colleague, Nicolas de Warren, said when introducing Jeffrey Bloechl, another Leuven PhD graduate who now teaches in the US: Danny proves that there is indeed life after Leuven. (But you all knew that already!) Helder De Schutter, a professor here at the Institute, describes his experiences at Princeton, where he has been working during this academic year on his research dealing with linguistic justice (issues like: language authority, language standardization). Finally, a current American MA student here at the Institute, Erin Islo, gives some of her impressions of life in Leuven and at the Institute of Philosophy.

For the first time in quite a few years, this year was rather quiet on the hiring and retiring front, but do see the interview with our new Professor of metaphysics and philosophy of religion, Henning Tegtmeier.

Now, I duck back into my underground hiding place, where medieval philosophy awaits me! We hope that you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter, and we’ll be looking forward to sending you next year’s news of the Institute.
A NEW FACULTY MEMBER AT THE INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY

An interview with Henning Tegtmeyer

Let’s start off by getting to know a little bit about where you came from. You studied philosophy at Leipzig — what is it like there?

It’s still quite an interesting place, but maybe it was more so when I arrived there in the early 90s. Everything was undergoing a rather dramatic change right after the wall came down. The philosophy department was nearly emptied of professors and teachers who had held office during the GDR. When I started there, there was a whole new generation of people whose careers were just getting started. The department was not at all comparable to the Institute of Philosophy in Leuven. The department was quite small and it became even smaller afterwards. The dominant research fields of the philosophy department, Marxism and Leninism, did not survive the end of the Cold War.

Nevertheless, I greatly enjoyed my time there. When I first arrived, I would even say that the whole atmosphere was rather amusing in all its chaos. It seemed to inspire the new teachers and professors a great deal. Over the course of the 90s, though, things settled down and the Department went back to business as usual. I definitely learned a lot there and I am very grateful to most of my teachers.

You wrote two dissertations: one on art entitled Formbezug und Weltbezug: Die Deutungsoffenheit der Kunst and another on religion entitled Gott, Geist, Vernunft: Prinzipien und Probleme der Natürlichen Theologie. Could you explain what the difference and relationship is between these, especially for those of us not familiar with the German system?

The German system requires you to write a second dissertation, a Habilitationschrift. The first dissertation only allows you to do postdoctoral research but the second qualifies you to become a professor.

What inclined you to shift your attention from art to religion?

To those not familiar with my work, this may seem like a very radical shift of focus. However, when you take a closer look at what I have written about art, even my earliest work, you will see the close connection I make with religion. I argue that you cannot have a comprehensive understanding of art without also taking the relationship between art and religion very seriously. This insight, along with the encouragement of my teacher and supervisor, Prof. Stekeler-Weithofer, led me to focus my attention more on religion. This opened up a whole new domain of research for me. I strongly believe that there are vital connections between art, religion and philosophy that have to be taken seriously.

I read in an interview that you gave with Eigensinn.de in 2004 that Arthur Schopenhauer almost kept you from doing philosophy. Surely, this cannot be true!
I am almost afraid to say it, but this is true. I read Schopenhauer when I was quite young, just a pupil, and I found his philosophy to be rather horrible. I found it presumptuous for any human being to claim to know all these things about the world — things that I a fortiori strongly believed to be wrong. In fact, I found his *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* to be quite appalling.

**Did you ever change your mind about Schopenhauer?**

Not so much (laughs).

Let's take a little bit closer look at your philosophical interests. You were hired here at Leuven primarily to teach and do research on metaphysics and the philosophy of religion. Let's start with the latter. Philosophy of religion is a very diverse field with a wide array of debates: between evolutionists and creationists, between Deconstructive phenomenologists (John Caputo) and philosophers of history (Charles Taylor), between Analytic philosophers of religion (Wolterstorff) and more Thomistic approaches (Milbank), and so on. Which area of the philosophy of religion interests you specifically?

First and foremost, I am interested in finding a way to systematically order the field of the philosophy of religion. We need to develop some kind of point from which we can locate and assess all of these debates; maybe not an Archimedean point, but at least some way of relating them to one another. I believe that only metaphysics can serve as the ordering principle that could provide and support such a standpoint. This principle would then order the field by providing insight into which debates are properly metaphysical, theological and religious.

One easy way of starting this debate would be through the on-going debate on the existence of God. Don't get me wrong, this is not the whole story here. Philosophy of religion is a domain of its own that is sometimes quite separate from metaphysical questions like these, focusing instead on issues in epistemology or even in phenomenology. In terms of authors, I have always been attracted to the way that thinkers like Martin Buber and Jean-Luc Marion engaged in these debates. They have always offered very stimulating and thought-provoking approaches to these questions in ways that continue to influence contemporary philosophy of religion.

I think that specialization in philosophy, the strict separation between different domains — especially in the philosophy of religion — is very counterproductive. Specialization is not a problem if the overall program is clear, but specialization just for the sake of specialization is very suspect. The Institute of Philosophy in Leuven was founded on Neo-Thomist principles and continues to engage in debates on religion without limiting itself to any singular approach. Religion gives meaning to human life and experience and so philosophy cannot afford to bypass it as a serious topic.

Let's turn to the topic of metaphysics. Some time ago, you gave your first talk at the Centre for Metaphysics and Philosophy of Culture, entitled ‘Phenomenology as a guide to Metaphysics’. I remember that many of those who attended were a bit surprised that you would turn to Husserl to do metaphysics. Didn’t Husserl show us that all metaphysics, understood as a kind of objective ‘view from nowhere’, is impossible?

This is a research idea of mine that is still in its test phase and so, perhaps I am mistaken. If you have a close look at *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*, but even most of Husserl’s earlier works, he is not as negative towards metaphysics as many people think he is. In the *Krisis*, for instance, Husserl stresses that giving up metaphysics was catastrophic for the European sciences. Metaphysics was the head of the sciences and by giving it up, the sciences were “decapitated” or “beheaded”. As a thinker who took the sciences very seriously, Husserl strongly felt
the loss of metaphysics himself.

Of course, whether or not he considered it possible to return to metaphysics is a tricky issue. Husserl emphasizes that we have to ‘postpone’ our metaphysical ambitions, but that does not mean giving them up. Husserl’s criticism of metaphysics is directed toward a special kind of metaphysics, much how Heidegger leaves the door open for a different kind of metaphysics. Husserl was not opposed to metaphysics as such, but to the Cartesian/Leibnizian sense of metaphysics that emphasized the a priori nature of metaphysical thought. A Husserl-approved metaphysics cannot be a priori, since philosophy as such needs to be presupposition-less. Thus, we have to leave the question, ‘What is a Husserlian metaphysics’, open. For Husserl, it makes no sense to ask what it would yield in advance. There is nevertheless a metaphysics that might appear at the end, as a kind of surprise. In any case, I find such a Husserlian project to be closer to the Aristotelian metaphysics of experience than many people realize these days.

One possible objection that looms over producing such a metaphysics is the charge of psychologism or, more broadly, relativism. Do we risk relegating metaphysics to some pure contingency if we merely wait for it to pop up at the end of the investigation? I subscribe to Husserl’s powerful refutation of relativism/psychologism through his concept of evidence — something he takes from Brentano, but further perfects. The arguments that Husserl provides to show the absurdity of relativism cannot, in my view, be cogently refuted. They are worth of being remembered and repeated time and time again.

Enough talk about your past, let’s turn towards the future. Do you have any immediate academic prospects such as organizing conferences, writing books, etc.?

I have several ideas that I will follow in the years to come. The first, as I already detailed, is to follow Husserl’s train of thought with regard to its metaphysical potential. This lines up neatly with a different project of mine that is somewhat more systematic, namely, to find an epistemological foundation for ontology. Obviously, I need to have accomplished my work on Husserl before I can take off on this second project, so that will have to wait for now. Beyond that, I want to follow my theological ambitions, especially with respect to religious discourse. As I discussed earlier, I will be investigating the link between special metaphysics and the philosophy of religion in trying to provide for a metaphysics of religious discourse. It is that topic in particular that I would like to organize a conference on, somewhere in the Spring of 2015.

Perhaps I should ask a more personal question now. What is the greatest, non-academic goal that you would like to set for yourself in the coming 10 years? Are you going to run a marathon or anything like that?

(laughs) I don’t have great aspirations in that area. My private life is not as ambitious as that of many of other people.

Final question: if a student would want to get on your good side and buy you a present, what kind of present would be right on the money? Do you enjoy a nice bottle of wine, a good book, a CD of Mozart?

Students shouldn’t try this, but anyone else who wants to be my friend is certainly welcome to get me any of these (laughs).

By Dennis Vanden Auweele
THREE FACES OF THE USA

Like last year, we bring in this issue of the Newsletter three articles that have to do with the Institute of Philosophy and one specific country. This year, the focus is on the USA, viewed from three different perspectives: an American HIW alumna teaching in the USA, an American MA student here in Leuven, and Prof. De Schutter's experiences as a guest professor at Princeton University.

Gratitude Long Overdue

It has been almost twelve years since I attended my first class as a new graduate student at KU Leuven and nearly five years since I defended my dissertation on the concept of double ignorance in the Platonic corpus. Regarding the latter, I remember quite clearly standing before the lectern in the Kardinaal Mercierzaal waiting nervously for the committee to reenter with the definitive word and judgment concerning my defense. Slowly recovering from an intense two-hour questioning from five respected scholars in my field, I looked around the room and caught smiles and glimmers of congratulations from friends and colleagues. Suddenly though and to my unease, I realized, rather Platonically, what I had forgotten. In anticipation of a grueling defense in conjunction with the excitement of actually obtaining my PhD, I had failed to prepare a speech of gratitude and so when Prof. Vandeveld announced my success I was utterly speechless and merely rambled a series of spontaneous mutterings of appreciation. Consequently, when I was asked to write this piece recounting my time at Leuven and to compare it to my experience working in the United States, I eagerly accepted, hoping that it would be a chance not only to reflect upon the value of my formal studies at the Hoger Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte (HIW) but that it would be also a unique opportunity to once again express my sincere gratitude to the Institution that prepared me to excel in the international academic philosophical community.

As I have already alluded, I began my studies at the HIW in the Fall of 2002. At the time my only desire was to spend a couple of years enjoying life on the continent while earning a Masters degree. Indeed, being in the heart of Europe and living in Belgium afforded me the luxury of international travel on a regular basis, with Paris only a short train ride away and low-cost airline carriers feeding my desire to abscond to the Mediterranean. Overall, though, at the beginning of my academic career my ambitions were simple: travel and read. Ironically, and perhaps counter to these meager and modest hopes, the intensity with which the HIW would educate me would spark a flame that ignited my love of research and lead me to the place that I am now as well as the places at which I have since been: previously a Visiting Assistant Professor at Loyola University New Orleans, currently an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Georgia Southern University and in the Fall I will begin an appointment as Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the prestigious Jesuit institution, Gonzaga University, in Spokane, Washington. These accomplishments I owe to the HIW.

The atmosphere at Leuven was always one that fostered dialogue and an exchange of ideas among both students and professors. Philosophy was all one did, in class, at dinner, out on the town or walking in the park. Many an evening was spent at the local intellectual café, the Amedee, playing chess and discussing
Prof. Moors’ lectures on Kant. It is this pervasiveness of philosophical discourse even in the most common happenings of everyday life that I miss the most as sometimes I find that here in the States philosophical dialogue is not nearly as ubiquitous and too often confined to merely formal settings, e.g. conferences or class lectures. Perhaps, it is the nature of graduate school itself that makes one believe that life as an academic is a life of constant discussion and debate between peers, a life in pursuit of a better understanding of various ideas and texts but, indeed, I also strongly believe that the community that is the HIW inspired its inhabitants to live philosophically, to think about the perennial issues and to never confine one’s questions to simply classroom lectures but to constantly endeavor to pursue these issues at all times.

As a graduate student in Leuven, however, deep intensity would penetrate many discussions, but never more so than during the months of January and June when the exam seasons would commence. The oral examination process, at the time, was, to put it politely, intimidating as an entire semester’s worth of reading and learning was weighed precariously in the balance of the merit of one 20-minute conversation with the respective professor. Nevertheless, I cannot express enough the value of this system as it provided me with the rare gift of being able to effectively defend my interpretations of texts with clarity, confidence and that all too important dash of rhetorical flare that leads one’s audience to nod with assent. The courses themselves focused on close readings of texts, equipping me with invaluable analytical and exegetical skills while also demanding that I become self-didactic as none of Leuven’s professors succumbed to the temptation to fall prey to a problem all too prevalent here in the States, i.e. spoon-feeding students facts as a means of teaching them already with an eye toward their exam and not merely because something simply deserves our comprehension. At Leuven each two-hour weekly course with professors like Prof. Martin Moors and Prof. Rudolf Bernet and every meeting with my promoters, Prof. Carlos Steel and Prof. Van Riel, left me with more questions than answers, leaving me with deep-seated concerns that would goad me toward further research, research that, in turn, always forced me to reevaluate and reformulate my opinions and arguments. Each of my professors at the HIW demanded that I work to understand them, rise to their level and participate in dialogue and debate, i.e. the manner of questioning that constitutes the history of philosophy. Accordingly, the library became my second home. Indeed, it was this vast library with a comprehensive catalogue of almost every text a lover of wisdom could ask for along with a series of archives and rare editions that would finally cement my desire to become a professional academic. I wanted to spend my life in the stacks of a library engrossed in the history of dialogue that spread row after row and rose floor after floor. The expectation that I would study the books on each of these stacks and not just relegate myself to my own corner of specialization, the expectation that I would strive to become well-versed in the entire tradition was always an unspoken, but clearly understood, imperative.

The HIW’s rich Continental tradition is one of the greatest strengths of the department, the one for which it is most well known, and deservedly so, but I would be remiss if I did not emphasize the stature and forte of De Wulf-Mansion Centre for Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy in the international academic community. It is this program that prepared me most of all, demanding that I write with an historical breadth that takes into consideration the entire history of antiquity from Thales’ first musings on the arché of all
things to the intricate metaphysical systems of the Neoplatonists. Strikingly, it is this scope of coverage with its robust philological and historical grounds that emphasized a mature and careful study of the reception of Plato and Aristotle in philosophers like Proclus and Simplicius that has helped me become both competitive on the market but also, and surely more importantly, a true scholar, i.e. a more authentic questioner instead of a mere collector of answers and solutions.

I, indeed, could go on, praising the merit of an international program where most of its inhabitants spoke three to four languages, which constantly inspired multicultural dialogue, or I could also wax eloquent concerning the beautiful setting that is Leuven. A city where one need neither television to distract you nor a car to move around, as one could simply walk the cobblestones of the Tiensestraat down to the city center or simply lay in the grass at Stadspark, where thought seemed to flourish as freely as the beer flows in the Oude Markt, but one always eventually found oneself standing again and again before the gates of the HIW. Those gates continually invited me in and much like the mythical figures of Ovid’s Metamorphoses, they changed me. In the cadence of my own American southern parlance, I am much obliged.

By Danielle A. Layne

One Year in Leuven: An American Abroad

Studying philosophy at Leuven has been and continues to be a challenging and invigorating experience. As a student in the one-year Master of Arts program at the Hoger Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte at KU Leuven, I have the opportunity to experience all the benefits of both the university and life in Belgium. As I reflect on my time at Leuven, and on my experiences studying philosophy in different parts of the world, there are three things that stand out and set the HIW apart as an institute for higher learning in philosophy: the dynamic faculty, with an enormous range of interests and areas of research; the incredibly diverse student body, which boasts students from all inhabited continents; and the strong support system provided by professors and administrators in the department of philosophy.

The atmosphere of Leuven, as a university and a city, is particularly conducive to the kind of interactions and experiences that make studying philosophy fruitful. Namely, the institute has a feeling of collaboration, and not cutthroat competitiveness. Students can take advantage of the quaint ‘university-town’. It is possible to continue discussions that began in classes at any of the myriad of cafes that decorate the city. The general atmosphere of studiousness, combined with a supportive and engaged student body, means that it is always possible to grab a coffee or a beer of the infamous Belgian variety with a friend in order to continue discussing anything from Kant’s categorical imperative to Davidson’s theories of causation and mind.

Indeed, some of my most rewarding philosophical experiences have occurred in Leuven. One of my favorite classes at KU Leuven, and one of the best philosophy classes I’ve ever taken, was a lecture on Aquinas’ commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics, taught by distinguished Professor Henning Tegtmeier. Professor Tegtmeier’s excellent command of both Aquinas and Aristotle was in itself deserving of awe, but in addition to this, he managed to parse out the problems confronted in these historical texts such that woven into his lectures were ingenious ties to contemporary work on
related issues. The lectures were captivating and the material covered in the course was both stimulating and challenging. That Leuven is continuing to grow as a center for advanced philosophy is clear with the recent addition of several new and gifted faculty members such as Professor Tegtmeier.

Though European philosophy programs have a reputation for being especially focused on ‘continental philosophy’, and in particular, Leuven’s global renown as a center of phenomenological research, my time here has offered me the opportunity to study ‘analytic’ philosophy, such as contemporary epistemology and philosophy of mind, with promising young faculty. The powerhouse strengths of Leuven — phenomenology in particular — are evident, but perhaps one of the undersold benefits of the department is the diversity of areas of philosophy that are covered by the range of expertise of the faculty. Everything from formal logic to social and political philosophy to history of philosophy to phenomenology is covered; and with such a broad range of concentrations represented, I have benefited not only in the availability of a variety of courses but even from the mere proximity to so many brilliant minds working on such different philosophical topics.

Part of the reason I decided to pursue further philosophical studies in Leuven is because of the range of philosophy that I had not been exposed to as an undergraduate in philosophy in the United States. When I graduated with my Bachelor’s, I had done extensive work in early modern philosophy, but there were some areas in which I had little to no training. Leuven’s department has philosophers working in almost all of the areas that were gaps in my own education, and I’ve been able to take many classes to fortify the breadth of my knowledge of philosophy. I’ve studied medieval philosophy and modern social philosophy, as well as several courses in contemporary analytic philosophy. All of these advanced courses were comprehensive enough to provide me with the information I need to be well versed in a particular area of philosophy while being intensive enough to be rigorous, graduate-level courses.

Another advantage to studying at Leuven is the opportunity to study many different languages. I have taken the opportunity to study German through the Institute of Philosophy, though there are other programs and schools that offer language classes as well. The Institute course is especially useful for aspiring philosophers, as the course focuses on reading comprehension and the jovial professor frequently leads the class through translations of philosophical texts. The gift of language, however, does not end in the classroom. With professors and students from all over the world, Leuven hosts a large array of student groups with meetings and informal gatherings to practice new languages or brush up on old ones.

When I engage in philosophical debates, both inside and outside my classes at Leuven, I have the privilege to be entering a discourse where perspectives from all over the world will be voiced. My peers in the program at Leuven include students from Nigeria, China, Canada, Chile, and even Transnistria! I have never before had the opportunity to study philosophy in such diverse and cosmopolitan company. It might seem obvious that especially in social and political philosophy classes, this varied range of perspectives is a boon to the general value of the class, but I had no idea how many different ideas and cultures I would be exposed to when I participated in classes that worked through both historical and contemporary issues in these areas. I was even more surprised to realize how much I was learning from my classmates when, for example, the discourse in the class on philosophy of mind turned to Chinese thinkers’ conceptions of mind and mechanisms.
There is no way to quantify how advantageous the diversity and cultural dynamism of the HIW is for maturing students of philosophy.

Besides my classmates at Leuven, as a student here I am able to collaborate with scholars all around Europe. One advantage to studying in Leuven that I did not fully realize until coming here is the proximity to so many other great departments. Within Belgium, there is the Université libre de Bruxelles and Universiteit Gent, the latter in particular hosting a wide range of philosophical seminars and colloquia that Leuven students are welcome to attend. Moreover, as a student in Leuven, because of the supportive network between professors at these universities, I have been able to seek out the advice of professors who do research in areas that I am interested in, even if they do not work directly at Leuven. In particular, I have benefited greatly from the collaboration between Leuven and ULB as a renowned scholar of Leibniz, Prof. Arnauld Pelletier, at ULB, has made himself available to me as I work on my Master's thesis on this philosopher's work.

Beyond Belgium, Leuven is in easy distance of many great departments in Germany, France, and England. I know several classmates who have attended conferences in nearby countries, and I myself have done research at universities in Germany in the past year. With the help and support of the department, I was even able to attend a conference in Texas during the fall term, during which I presented a paper and commented on others. In May I will have the chance to attend a vibrant conference on the history of philosophy at the University of Aberdeen. Besides being somewhat unique to Leuven as compared to American programs because of the geographical location, it is also the case the many Master's programs in the US do not offer a similar amount of support for non-doctoral students, nor do they make conference attendance and other such opportunities as accessible as they are to students at the HIW. It is a true benefit of living in Leuven that the resources available to students here extend far beyond the university itself.

My time at Leuven has been an excellent way to prepare for further studies in philosophy, and it has helped show me the diverse and dynamic ways that philosophy is being studied in faculties outside of this United States. When I complete my year at Leuven in June, I will have studied many new areas of philosophy, made connections to professors at the HIW and beyond, and matured as a student of philosophical issues. I will carry and cherish my education from Leuven with me in all my future endeavors.

By Erin Islo

Interview with Helder De Schutter

Helder De Schutter is Assistant Professor of Social and Political Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy as well as a guest professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain. During the academic year 2013-14 he is in residence at Princeton University as a Fung Global Fellow, continuing his work on questions of linguistic justice.

Helder, thank you for agreeing to speak about your research and experiences of life in the US. You are currently appointed as one of six ‘Fung global fellows’ working on a project entitled “Languages and Authority”, can you tell me a little bit more about what the project hopes to achieve, and about how your own work fits into and contributes towards that objective?

The Fung Global Fellows program is a new initiative that seeks to annually bring six international early-career professors to Princeton in
order to spend one year of research and writing on a common research theme. Princeton finances the program such that these professors can be temporarily replaced at their home institutions.

The inaugural theme is ‘Languages and Authority’. The idea is to understand how languages can be authoritative and how authorities treat languages. I am part of an interdisciplinary group of six fellows from around the world that have been brought together to write new work within this topic. The group of fellows consists of: a South African historian based in Australia working on the linguistic dimensions of Dutch colonial sovereignty claims; a German literary theorist based in Austria working on original translations (novels that are assumed to be translations but aren’t); an Indian historian based in Britain working on the formation of monolingual territories in India; a British political scientist focusing on Rwanda’s swift from French to English as a vehicular language; a Singaporean linguist focusing on Singapore’s language policy; and I am the philosopher of the group. The six fellows are well surrounded by several colleagues from Princeton. They include people like Alan Patten, Michael Laffan, David Bellos, and Michael Gordin. We meet twice a week: on Mondays informally between just the six of us and Michael Gordin, the convenor, to discuss new work or themes of interest to all of us, and on Thursday evening, in a more formal setting where a guest speaker is brought in, to discuss their work on languages and authority in front of a larger audience. Guest speakers for the Thursday seminar include Ulrich Ammon, David Latin, Geoffrey Harpham and Philippe Van Parijs, as well as the six fellows. In addition, Princeton is an impressive place for my own disciplinary specialty — political philosophy; professors here include Peter Singer, Charles Beitz, Philip Pettit and this year also Quentin Skinner.

My own research this year focuses on linguistic justice for dialects and on the normative importance of language standardization. In political philosophy, language policy is typically taken to refer to the political management of the presence of different language groups within a political community: the paradigmatic cases in these analyses of linguistic diversity are political communities with two or more distinct language groups, such as Canada, Belgium, or the European Union. But there is another dimension of language policy, to which no explicit normative attention has been paid so far: the political management of linguistic diversity occurring within one and the same language group. Most languages are internally marked by significant regional, class-based and/or ethnic diversity. Yet, when we talk about or learn a language, we usually refer to and learn only the ‘standard’ version of the language. The standard version of the language is granted higher status than all other versions. It forms the basis for the (often official) grammar, dictionary and spelling, and it is the version used for the codification of law, in public debate and in the educational system. It is my goal here to understand these dimensions of ‘intralinguistic’ justice. Is language standardization desirable? And should dialects also be ‘protected’ alongside (standard) languages? If some form of recognitional equality between languages in a multilingual state is seen as the norm as it often is, is it then inconsistent to support inequality between languages and dialects? Along with this theme of intralinguistic justice, I am this year also writing a monograph on linguistic justice that brings together my ideas on language policy of the past years.

The motivation for Princeton to undertake the program is to build ties with individuals and institutions from around the world. Christopher Eisgruber, Princeton’s president,
explained to the six of us that Princeton wants to chart a new course to foster such transnational ties different from other leading universities that are now setting up campuses abroad to reach the same goal. Yale, Cornell and New York University have for example erected campuses in Asia and the Middle East. The phenomenon of setting up international campuses is a recent global trend that includes several British universities, Paris-Sorbonne, as well as even Ghent University in Belgium, which has opened a campus in South Korea. It is seen as one of the strategies of what is here in the US called the ‘internationalization of the university’: it gives the university direct access to international contacts. Princeton has chosen not to follow their lead. Like Harvard, which has publicly announced it is not “in the McDonald’s franchising business”, Princeton has opted to build these ties in other ways, and one such way is the Fung Global Fellow program. Princeton’s idea is that bringing international people to Princeton for a while may be a way to foster contacts that may later be useful for Princeton.

The details of such future collaboration are to be spelled out, but it would be good if, by establishing a bridge between Princeton and Leuven, I could contribute to establishing more contacts between Leuven and Princeton, to a better understanding of the Leuven/Belgian academic landscape by people here in Princeton, and perhaps also to a growing internationalization of Belgian students. To elaborate on the last point, many Belgians and Europeans embarking on university studies — and I was no exception — are not accustomed to look beyond national horizons except perhaps for a European Erasmus year, but that is generally perceived by students as a year of pleasure and cultural enrichment rather than as a specifically academic endeavor. This Belgian habit has some advantages because it goes along with a comparatively dense civil society and high levels of local cohesion, but has as a downside the lack of cosmopolitanism in ambitions and mindsets. Programs like the one I am now part of might perhaps provide a bridge between Princeton and Leuven for students, through awareness, contacts and actual application assistance on both sides.

Linguistic Justice is not a topic that one identifies as readily with the US as with, for instance, a multinational and multilingual state such as Belgium. What relevance do you think that your work has for the US context, and how much awareness of questions of linguistic justice is there amongst 1) the philosophical community, and 2) the public at large?

The US definitely also has an internal language question, because Spanish is very widespread and growing. There is an ‘English-only’ movement which attracts mainly conservatives who for example want the constitution to mention that English is the official language of the US, which it currently is not. The Spanish existence on US soil is the result of recent immigration from Mexico, but also of the fact that the US annexed Mexican territory in the nineteenth century.

More generally, I think of linguistic justice as embracing three domains: domestic interlinguistic justice (justice with regard to a diversity of languages), domestic intralinguistic justice (justice with regard to intralinguistic diversity, such as dialects) and global linguistic justice (justice with regard to the global spread of English). Spanish is an important issue for interlinguistic justice today in the US. But the US also has interesting issues of intralinguistic justice, such as for example with regard to African-American Vernacular English: should schools seek to replace children’s proficiency in AAVE with proficiency in General American English or should speakers of AAVE be seen as a minority with language rights?
In addition, the dominant language in the US is English, the language that is becoming the vehicular language of the world, with many repercussions. Since the US is 'lucky' in having English as a native language for most of its population, the global linguistic debate is less of an issue for the general population (although many Americans I meet are apologetic about their lack of knowledge of other languages), but it is important for many academics, who are often very aware of and sometimes troubled by their linguistic focus. To give just one small example: if I write in a Dutch article 'we' in a way that is meant to include the reader, it is relatively clear that I refer to the Dutch-speaking academic community or a Dutch-speaking general public most probably from The Netherlands or Belgium. But when Americans write 'we', the 'we' could be an American-specific or Anglophone-specific 'we' but it could also be a universal one including many people whose native tongue is not English. This leads to interesting clashes in the self-awareness of researchers; it is a lot less easy to hide in English than it is in Dutch.

This universalization of English is an extremely important academic and societal issue, involving relationships of power and inequality. It also comes with unexpected twists. For example, while it is surely less easy in general to hide in English because of the global reach of English, for non-native speakers of English it sometimes is easier to 'hide in plain sight' in English compared to hiding in one's native tongue such as Dutch. This has to do with the fact that the networks for Dutch speakers generally involve people who will more quickly read Dutch than English, such that one's English work may go more unnoticed. The situation for non-English languages now is comparable to that of the vernaculars in a world when Latin was the norm for scientific communication. When Joachim du Bellay in the sixteenth century wanted to encourage his fellow Frenchmen to write in French rather than Latin, one of his arguments was that writing good things in Latin will make you an insignificant figure in the vast literature in Latin, whereas the great benefit of writing in French is that it may make you an Achilles within the French scene. The situation of French in his examples is generally comparable that of Dutch today: to reach the world one needs to communicate in English, but to be heard it often makes sense to write in Dutch.

But I am digressing. To answer your question: linguistic justice in my view is an issue for the US, and the public at large is mostly aware here of the Spanish problem as well as to some extent of the spread of English. It is interesting that many believe here that there are no issues of intralinguistic justice, and this belief is not ungrounded; standardization and dialects are more an issue in European countries. It appears that colonizing another territory also speeds up the process of standardization among the colonizers in the colony. As for the philosophical community: the topic is not popular here. Alan Patten and Annie Stilz, authorities on linguistic justice, work here, but for example none of the graduate students in political philosophy or political theory write their dissertation on the topic, whereas this is different in Leuven or Belgium: you are one of several people addressing issues like language rights in your dissertation. Many people here are interested in what a people is, though, which leads them to consider issues of nationalism and global justice, which have bearings on the topic of the linguistic unification of the nation too. Interestingly, I often see more interest in the topic of linguistic justice in academic circles beyond philosophy: political scientists, legal scholars, sociolinguists of course, and also historians are often very aware of linguistic struggles, and address them. Political philosophy is often a very traditional
discipline, and also a state-centred one.

You’ve been in the US for over six months. How do you think that the intellectual and academic environment differs from what you are accustomed to in Belgium/Europe? What might we learn from the US system and what can they learn from us?

I live in Princeton, in the state New Jersey. I lived here once before eight years ago, in the last year of my dissertation research. It is difficult for me to speak about other places and other universities in the US. I appreciate the way in which people here at Princeton do research: in a fearless way, testing all possible avenues and venturing into different directions, not feeling hindered by disciplinary cohesion, and with an enthusiasm that is fortunately contagious. It appears to help that the spotlights always seem to be on Ivy League institutions such as this one: people speak from an awareness that they stand at the forefront of an academic community. They determine the direction of the field.

The way people here speak appears to be wide and global: it sometimes feels as if people here speak from a view of everywhere, potentially mixing in the same sentence examples like the Jesuit community in Kerala and Dutch colonialism in Japan to illustrate a point, a bit like I imagine philosophers in the second half of the eighteenth century, aware of the diversity of conditions and cultures, must have talked to each other. As an aside, the Asian world seems to be much more present here: I hear many more Asian examples than I do when in Europe. Another aside: as a Belgian it is disorienting and telling to hear the horrible treatments in Congo mentioned as a default example of absolute evil, second to Nazism but often mentioned as an simple alternative to it whenever one needs another example; in Belgium people invoke Nazism, never Congo.

I personally admire this global focus and the idea of fearlessly seeing yourself at the forefront of academic research. But clearly the US system also has downsides. Your question is one about the academic system, but allow me to raise the non-academic fact that living here with my family — we have two young children — makes me see other dimensions of the US about which I knew before but had never been confronted with, such as the outrageous cost of schools for toddlers (until the age of 6) for whom no public schools exist (we are paying 10,000 dollar per child for the year whereas in Belgium ‘kleuterschool’ is free), for example, or things like train tickets, going to the pool or signing up for sports classes.

The system also has academic downsides. A crucial one is the tremendous inequality between the quality of universities and the frustration that many academics feel when they are not in a top institution. In Belgium the institutions are all good and more or less equally good. Here many people who didn’t make it into a top university try to do what they can to get into one throughout their career. Perhaps more problematic is the fact that all universities select students, with two results: the children getting in come from privileged backgrounds, and childhoods are very much affected by parents having to ensure that they make the right decisions for their children. To land a top job, academic or otherwise, one needs a top university. To get into a top university, one needs to already have a super CV by the age of 18: one needs to score well on SAT tests for which a top private secondary school helps substantially, but one also needs to have become a sort of all-round prodigy doing special things like being a leader at school, having had some special success in sports or commerce or music, or anything that makes you stand out. In the last years of secondary education, pupils need to think hard about how to fill their summer time in a way that will make a serious impression on how university selection com-
missions read their CV, rather than thinking about how they will spend the summer in way that they would find interesting themselves. And it starts earlier: from the birth of the child, parents start saving for the huge costs of private university (tuition often costs between forty and fifty five thousand dollars per year). I should mention though that while the effects of this system seem bigger here than elsewhere, it is rather some European countries including Belgium where universities are not really selective prior to admission (and where selection occurs it is based on results after the first year, with problems of its own) that appear to be the outliers. So I think the Belgian/ Dutch/French/German system is superior: a publicly better-financed education system, low tuition costs, little or no selection before entering university education, and a more equal relationship between universities.

Thank you very much for your time, and for giving us your perspective on academic life in the US. Good luck for the rest of your stay!

By Michael Jewkes

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**THE USA AND THE HIW**

Did you know that:

A large number of our students are of American nationality and that this number has been growing steadily in the past three years:

- 2013-2014: 54 (5 in BA, 12 in MA, 14 in MPhil, 21 in PhD, 2 other)
- 2012-2013: 50 (3 in BA, 15 in MA, 8 in MPhil, 23 in PhD, 1 other)
- 2011-2012: 45 (15 in MA, 8 in MPhil, 20 in PhD, 2 other)

Our students have obtained their degree at a number of very good colleges and universities from across the USA, such as:

- Columbia University, State of New York
- New York University, State of New York
- Villanova University, Pennsylvania
- Haverford College, Pennsylvania
- Wheaton College, Illinois
- Loyola University Chicago, Illinois
- Loyola University Maryland, Maryland
- Loyola University New Orleans, Louisiana
- Boston College, Massachusetts

Our alumni have been teaching at a number of very good colleges and universities across the USA, such as:

- California State University, California
- Trinity Academy Portland, Oregon
- St. John University, State of New York
- Seattle University, Washington
- Loyola University Chicago, Illinois
- Georgia Southern University, Georgia
- Arizona State University, Arizona
- Emory University, Georgia
- University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania

Our Director of the International Programme, Prof. Russ Friedman, is not the only American staff member at the HIW. We have four pre-docs from the US (Daniel De Haan is a FLOF scholarship holder, James Di Frisco has an FWO scholarship and David Dusenbury and Marshall Staton are working on a HIW research project). Moreover, one of our free researchers (Darian Meacham) and three of our associated professors (James Thompson, Richard Taylor and Gordon Wilson) are also Americans.
As part of our advanced Master programme (MPhil), we offer the “Thomas Aquinas in Context” seminar, a collaborative international seminar organized jointly by KU Leuven and Marquette University in Milwaukee. The seminar is taught by Prof. Andrea Robiglio (KU Leuven) and Prof. Richard Taylor (Marquette University). In 2013-2014, the seminar focuses on the metaphysical thought of Thomas Aquinas with some consideration to his epistemology, psychology as well as his other philosophical teachings. Students from both universities follow the seminar through a live video connection using D2L, Microsoft Lync with live video applications with a Polycom CX5000 Unified Conference Station, as well as Dropbox, recorded video lectures, Google+Hangouts, and other collaborative tools.

In the area of philosophy, KU Leuven was ranked in the top 30 according to the 2014 QS World University Rankings by Subject. This puts it right after such famous American universities as Princeton University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of California, Berkeley (UCB), Stanford University and Harvard University, and just ahead of such well-known universities as Boston University and Cornell University. Since 2013, KU Leuven has moved up from 27th to 24th. The QS World University Rankings by Subject edition highlights the 200 top universities in the world for 30 individual subjects and ranks as many as 689 institutions. The QS World University Rankings are one of the three most important university rankings in the world and the most widely read university comparison of their kind.

The American College, the first US seminary in Europe, had to close in June 2011 but will reopen its doors under a new name, “the Saint Damien Community”, and a new format in the 2014 — 2015 academic year. An alumnus of the HIW, Archbishop Fulton Sheen, who was also associated with the American College during his stay in Leuven, has an open case for beatification and canonization. For more information please read further in this Newsletter.

The Graduate Student Conference, which the HIW has now hosted with success for four academic years, as well as the HIW Writing Lab are both based on the US model and the HIW decided to organize these as per suggestions from American students. Graduate student conferences are common and popular at American universities but they are quite unique in Europe. For more information on both please read further in this Newsletter.
The Saint Damien Community at the American College is an intentional community for North American students wishing to come together in faith, worship, and the pursuit of knowledge. The community is located at the historic, newly renovated building of the American College at Naamsestraat 100 in Leuven. It was established as part of the Saint Damien Project.

Leuven’s American College of the Immaculate Conception was a seminary established to train priests for missions in North America. It was founded in 1857 under the auspices of the American bishops both to properly educate and train clergy as well as to provide American seminarians with sufficient clerical training. From its inception in 1857 until its closure in 2011, the American College of the Immaculate Conception formed thousands of young men, its current alumni base being approximately 1700 men. Students of the college studied theology, philosophy, and canon law at Leuven and, after the split between the Flemish and French universities in 1968, at both the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (now KU Leuven) and the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL). The American College of the Immaculate Conception and all of its programmes ceased operations at the end of June 2011.

The Saint Damien Project is not a revival of the former American College of the Immaculate Conception. The aim of the project is to foster the relationship as well as the exchange between the Church in Belgium, the Church in the United States and the Catholic University of Leuven, but no longer in the format of seminary training and related programmes.

The Saint Damien Project is a joint collaboration between the KU Leuven (Faculties of Theology and Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Canon Law), the UCL (Faculté de Théologie), the Conference of Belgian Bishops, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The President of the Saint Damien Project Board is Prof. Lieven Boeve, Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven. The Coordinator of the Saint Damien Community is Timothy Derrick Witherington.

For more information on the Saint Damien Community, please visit the website at www.damiencommunity.com or contact damiencommunity@kuleuven.be.

Source: www.damiencommunity.com
ARCHBISHOP FULTON SHEEN IN LEUVEN

While serving Mass for the Bishop of Peoria, Illinois, a young boy dropped the wine cruets, shattering it into tiny pieces on the marble floor of the Cathedral of St Mary of the Immaculate Conception. Back in the sacristy after Mass, the Bishop—then-Bishop John Spalding—called the frightened boy to his side and asked him, “Young man, where are you going to school when you get big?” The eight-year-old boy responded, “The Spalding Institute,” the local high school named after the venerable Bishop. His Excellency tried again, “I said ‘when you get big.’ Did you ever hear of Leuven?” The boy responded, “No, Your Grace.” “Very well,” the Bishop replied, “you go home and tell your mother that I said when you get big you are to go to Leuven, and someday you will be just as I am.”

Sure enough, this eight-year-old boy grew up, was ordained to the holy Priesthood in 1920, and, after two years of post-graduate studies at the Catholic University of America, he was advised to continue his research at the Institute of Philosophy at the Catholic University of Leuven. With a dissertation entitled “God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy: A Critical Study in the Light of the Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas” (the introduction of which was written by G. K. Chesterton), he earned his PhD in 1923, at which time he also became the first American to receive the Cardinal Mercier Prize for International Philosophy. He was invited to continue with the agrégé degree, which he completed in 1925. Fulton John Sheen would go on from Leuven to teach extensively in various universities and to travel the world as the National Director of the mission outreach of the Catholic Church, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (1950). He would also go on to host a weekly national radio broadcast called “The Catholic Hour” (1930-1952), and then a weekly primetime television show, “Life Is Worth Living” (1951-1957), which earned him an Emmy Award in 1953 for Most Outstanding Television Personality (other nominees included Lucille Ball and Jimmy Durante). Sheen was also ordained as an auxiliary bishop of New York (1951), fulfilling the second part of Bishop Spalding’s prophecy. He attended every session of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) where he also spoke. Later, he was appointed Bishop of Rochester, New York.
(1966-1969) and then elevated to the dignity of Archbishop of the Titular See of Newport (Wales) (1969). Pope John Paul II, his close friend, once famously said to him, “You have written and spoken well of the Lord Jesus. You are a loyal son of the Church!” (1979). He was visited in the hospital by another dear friend, Blessed (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta, after open heart surgery and soon passed on to eternity in his private chapel, in front of the Eucharist, on 9 December 1979. As a priest, Karol Wojtyla (now Pope St. John Paul II) learned to speak English in part through watching “Life Is Worth Living”, and both he and (then-)Fr. Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) became friends and collaborators with Fulton Sheen during the Second Vatican Council.

While in Leuven, Fulton Sheen lived on the Grote Markt, in the upper apartment of the brick building with the old Stella Artois sign (now the restaurant ‘t Zwart Schaap). On occasion, he would celebrate Mass at the chapel of the American College of the Immaculate Conception, the now-closed American Seminary. He cherished his formation at the Institute of Philosophy, writing in his autobiography Treasure in Clay, “Regardless of how long I live, I will never be able to express the depth of my gratitude to this great university for the brilliance of its teaching, the inspiration of its leadership and the development it gave to the human mind.” And somewhere else he said, in the midst of a marvelous description of Leuven, that “Next to God, on this earth, I owe all that I am to the University of Leuven.”

In 2002, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome officially opened a cause for the beatification and canonization of Fulton Sheen, conferring on him the title “Servant of God”. The Catholic Diocese of Peoria began working to promote the cause, and Dr Andrea Ambrosi (postulator) and Fr Andrew Apostoli (vice-postulator) began working on the Positio. Pope Benedict XVI happily received the completed positio from Bishop Daniel Jenky, CSC, in May 2011, and a year later, in June 2012, Benedict XVI approved the positio, naming Fulton Sheen “Venerable”.

In September 2010, a baby boy was stillborn at home. For over an hour, the child showed no signs of life as medical professionals attempted every possible life saving procedure. The child’s parents and loved ones then began immediately to seek the intercession of Fulton Sheen. After 61 minutes, the baby was restored to life and made a full recovery. The child, now three years old, was baptized “James Fulton” and he continues to be in good health. The Archbishop Fulton J Sheen Foundation began investigating the miraculous nature of this event and in December 2011, they sent the findings of the diocesan tribunal to Rome. In early March 2014, the seven-member board of medical experts who advise the Congregation for the Causes of Saints unanimously approved this event as miraculous, meaning that no possible natural, medical, or scientific means could explain what had happened. The official press release states, “Pending further review by the theologians and the cardinals who advise the Pope through the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, should Pope Francis validate this proposed miracle, Sheen could then be declared ‘Blessed’ in a ceremony that could be celebrated in Peoria, Sheen’s hometown. Upon the Holy Father signing the decree for the beatification, an additional miracle would lead to the Canonization of Archbishop Sheen, in which he would be declared a ‘Saint.’”

For more information about Fulton Sheen and his cause for beatification and canonization, visit the Archbishop Fulton J Sheen Foundation official website, www.archbishop-sheencause.org.

By Tyler Dickinson
FOURTH ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

On 28 March 2014, the Institute of Philosophy hosted its Fourth Graduate Student Conference. For the fourth year in a row, it was a popular and well-attended event. The graduate student conference is an opportunity for the teaching staff and the graduate students of the HIW, across programmes and research centres, to come together and for the students to present and discuss their research or thesis work on various themes and topics in philosophy. One of the main principles behind this conference is that there is not one theme or topic. Each student can present a paper on a topic of her/his choice. Presentations in the same or similar fields of philosophy are grouped into sessions where the teaching staff of the HIW act as the chairs. In many cases, the supervisors get to act as chairs for the sessions where their own thesis students give a presentation. When making the programme, the student organisers take this element very much into account. In this way, the students presenting can receive feedback not only from their fellow students but also from their thesis supervisors and other professors at the HIW who are interested in their research.

The graduate student conference has 2 primary aims: 1) Curricular: to allow graduate students to receive feedback on their thesis/dissertation work both from their peers as well as their supervisors at a time when they can still incorporate this feedback into their text. It is also for this reason that the graduate student conference is organised each year before the Easter break, which is when most graduate students spend time completing their thesis. At the same time, the students can learn to practice their presentation skills, a necessity for any philosopher, particularly young researchers. More advanced doctoral students also tend to use the graduate student conference as a way of trying-out of their new ideas or with such beautiful weather gracing the skies of Leuven, many students and professors took their lunches and conversations outside.
research interests. 2) Extracurricular: to allow students from the initial Master programme, the advanced Master programme (MPhil), and the Doctoral programme (PhD), as well as Bachelors students who also like to attend the conference, to learn about each other’s research and fields of interest. Since students from both the Dutch- and the English-speaking programmes participate in the conference, this is also an excellent opportunity to bring both programmes closer together. The conference also allows for an informal interaction between the students and the teaching staff of the HIW or even other faculties (please read on for the student organisers’ report). As such, the graduate student conference is both a fine academic event as well as a social event which shows that philosophy is not done as a monologue in solitude, within four walls but rather in interaction and discussion with fellow researchers across various fields of philosophy.

For more information on the four editions of the HIW Graduate Student Conference (including the programmes, booklets with abstracts and the photo gallery), please visit the conference website at http://hiw.kuleuven.be/eng/events/graduatesstudentconference.

Since diversity and plurality are the words that best characterize the graduate student conference at the HIW, rather than bringing one report, the Newsletter has asked various participants to share their experience at the conference.

What was it like to organise the graduate student conference?

On Friday, 28 March 2014, students and professors alike gathered to attend the Fourth Annual Graduate Student Conference of the Institute of Philosophy. As Professor Russell Friedman
aptly remarked in his foreword to the booklet of the conference, “this is a conference by Institute of Philosophy graduate students for Institute of Philosophy graduate students.” The aim of the event is simple: to allow graduate students of the Institute to discover the true meaning of being a researcher. From learning how to present their work to an audience, to discovering the usefulness of audience feedback, the Philosophy graduate students of the KU Leuven benefitted from this opportunity to vocalise their ideas.

This year’s Conference was held back home at the Institute after being hosted at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences last year. After a breakfast for both participants and audience members in the Raadzaal, the day began with a few opening remarks made by Professor Bart Raymaekers, the Dean of the Institute, and by members of the Graduate Student Conference Organising Team. The Conference then proceeded in the form of successive thematic sessions of approximately 90 minutes each, punctuated by welcomed coffee breaks and a lunch provided by Alma.

The great diversity of the topics covered by the talks reflected the popularity of the Conference: no fewer than 56 students—demonstrating the steady increase of participants since the first Conference in 2011—presented to 130 audience members across 16 sessions. The Conference also attracted speakers from the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies. We had the additional pleasure of welcoming international students from Poland and Italy. From talks on ‘The Phenomenology of the Cyborg’, to ‘Schopenhauer’s Optimism’, and ‘Agamben’s Cinema of Gesture’, the attendees were provided with an unparalleled choice of topics to sample. Both major and lesser-well-known areas of philosophy were covered throughout the Conference: sessions on Philosophical Anthropology, Metaphysics, and Political
Philosophy found themselves side by side with those on Phenomenology of Relationship, Epistemology and Metalogical Theories, and Conditions for the Possibility of Moral Agency. Each session, chaired by a member of the faculty of the Institute and moderated by a member of the Organising Team, consisted of 3 or 4 presentations followed by time for questions and discussion. Many debates carried on seamlessly into the coffee breaks—a sure sign of a fruitful session!

Professor Henning Tegtmeier’s address honoured the closure of the Conference. Professor Tegtmeier was welcomed this year as an associate professor of the Centre for Metaphysics and Philosophy of Culture. Despite his expertise in aesthetics and philosophy of religion, he is equally well-versed in continental philosophy, phenomenology, analytical philosophy, philosophy of science and ethics; his interests lie in the balance between theoretical and practical philosophy. It was no surprise, therefore, that the audience for this keynote speech amply filled the Mercierzaal. Entitled ‘Metaphysics and the Crisis of Science’, Professor Tegtmeier’s paper argued alongside Husserl that “the crisis of modern science is, at least to a large extent, caused by the crisis of metaphysics, from the late middle ages to the present day.” His comprehensive presentation provided a great deal of food for thought amongst the audience members, as evidenced by the numerous questions posed after the talk. The discussion was brought to a close by some final remarks from Professor William Desmond. A reception in the Salons provided a fitting end to a highly successful day, and gave both attendees and speakers the chance to meet in a more informal setting.

The logistical foundations of the event had been laid several months earlier by the Organising Team. The Team first met in late 2013 to learn about the practicalities of running our conference, and was divided up into committees in charge of composing the programme, editing the abstracts, and designing the booklet. Composed of 12 students from the Institute, and under the directive guidance of Emilia Brodencova, the Team pooled resources and ideas to bring this Fourth Graduate Student Conference to life. After several months of dedicated hard work, the Team was proud to see the Conference come to fruition without a hitch. The Team was grateful to the Institute for their provision of 2 laptops, which supplemented our own computers used for PowerPoint presentations during the sessions. Name tags for all participants and Chairs, as well as personalised folders for Chairs, added a professional touch to this Graduate Student Conference. As one participant commented, “[the Conference] had an overall more professional feel, with the inclusion of name tags and good-looking programmes.”

Personally, being both members of the Organising Team and speakers at the conference gave us insight into the inner workings of an academic conference, and the experience of presenting our research to an audience of our peers provided us with a deeper appreciation for philosophy not as a static discipline, but as a living organism of thought which must be communicated to be accomplished. It was especially fulfilling to see the Conference develop into a milieu for friendly, collegiate dialogue between students and professors.

The Organising Team for 2014 consisted of Tyler Dickinson (MPhil), Martin Dražan (MA), Patrick Everitt (MA), Jeremy Hovda (MPhil), Alin Eileen Ibrahim (MA), Brian Lapsa (MA), Emma Lowe (MA), Valerian Mendonca (MPhil), Olga Nicolaeva (MA), Nathaniel Tarnoviski (BA Abridged), Vera Tylzanowski (MPhil) and Branislav Vujanov (MPhil). We would like to thank Prof Tegtmeier for his keynote address, Prof Raymaekers for his opening
What was it like to give a presentation at the graduate student conference?

Back in 2011, the first graduate student conference was organised at the Institute of Philosophy. I was in the second year of my PhD studies at that time, and decided to give a presentation on some of my preliminary results. This turned out to be such an interesting experience that I came back to give talks at the subsequent conferences of 2012, 2013 and 2014. Let me explain why.

First of all, the graduate student conferences provide me with an excellent opportunity to present my research to a broad philosophical audience. I deeply care about this, especially because my field of research (logic) tends to be quite technical and interdisciplinary. This implies that many of my presentations are targeted at highly specialised audiences, consisting mainly of logicians with backgrounds in computer science, linguistics, psychology, etc. These kinds of presentations can be very fruitful from a technical perspective but they rarely allow me to fully address the broader philosophical implications of my mathematical results. I view the graduate student conference as a place where I can focus exactly on the more philosophical aspects of my research. This difference in focus also leads to an entirely different type of interaction with the audience during the Q&A after the talk: rather than focusing on some minute mathematical detail, people at the graduate student conference have drawn analogies with lines of work that I had previously not thought of, have suggested new examples to illustrate more vividly a key claim I wanted to make, etc. All in all, the graduate student conferences have been really helpful for me, and it has been a particularly satisfactory experience to see how well they complement some of the more technically oriented conferences I attend.

Secondly, throughout the years, I have used the graduate student conference to learn in more detail about other people’s research interests. For example, I have had the opportunity to attend presentations in areas such as epistemology, philosophy of science, ancient philosophy and social philosophy. Time and time again, I am surprised by the wide variety of topics that are being studied by students at the Institute but perhaps even more so by the consistent professionalism and philosophical depth of their talks. I think that this abundance of philosophical talent in all of our graduate programmes (Dutch MA, international MA, MPhil, and PhD) is something that we at the Institute can rightfully be proud of.

A final consideration I would like to mention concerns the conference organisers and their level of dedication. The graduate student conferences are organised by a team that
mainly consists of MA and MPhil students at the Institute. Since these are all one-year programmes, it should not be surprising that the organising team substantially changes from year to year. Despite this Heraclitean flux, however, there is also a definite sense of Parmenidian unity to it: after four editions, the graduate student conference has become a veritable tradition at the Institute. One of the key aspects of this tradition is the quality of organisation: as one of the presenters at the 2014 edition said (and based on my own experiences at each of the four editions so far, I wholeheartedly agree with him), the graduate student conference is “organised with a level of professionalism that far exceeds some of the ‘real’ conferences I have attended”.

Like I already stated at the beginning, my own career in philosophical research has so far been tightly intertwined with the graduate student conference. At the first two editions, I presented some of the early results of my PhD, on neighbourhood semantics for public announcement logic (2011) and the philosophical interpretation of reduction axioms in dynamic epistemic logic (2012). At the third edition in 2013, I presented a broad philosophical and historical account of the development of dynamic epistemic logic, which also forms the background of my PhD research project as a whole. As I had defended my PhD in 2014, one month prior to the fourth edition, the organisers kindly offered me the honour of chairing a session. However, given the history of entanglement between my own career and the graduate student conference, I felt it was more appropriate to give one final talk, now no longer focusing on the topic of my past PhD research (dynamic epistemic logic), but rather on the topic that I intend to elaborate on in the future as a postdoctoral researcher (logical geometry).

If all goes well (and I’m sure it will), 2015 will see the fifth edition of the graduate student conference. Although I will not be giving a presentation anymore myself, I hope to remain actively involved in this wonderful event!

By Lorenz Demey, PhD programme
The graduate student conference was a good opportunity both to articulate the essence of my MA thesis as well as to gain some experience in public speaking. I presented the core idea of my thesis, which deals with various interpretations and responses to the Humean problem of induction, in the hope of gaining valuable feedback from the audience. The title of my paper was “Solving the Insoluble: Reichenbach, Howson and the Problem of Induction”. The act of presenting my work helped me to make certain ideas more concrete, while questions and comments from the audience suggested new avenues for me to explore.

With regards to the actual experience of presenting, I found it a very useful introduction to the skills and techniques required for giving a paper at a conference. The importance of good diction, a clear presentation structure and engaging the audience all made a big impression on me. I now feel better able to prepare for future talks.

By Emma Lowe, MA programme

This year was the second Graduate Student Conference in which I presented my thesis. The topic of my paper was “Toward a Phenomenology of Friendship”. I was privileged to have participated in the First Annual Graduate Student Conference in 2011 when I was writing my MA thesis. Now, as an MPhil student, I was able once again to take advantage of this great opportunity. (And this year, I had the additional benefit of assisting with the organisation of the conference.)

This year’s conference granted me an unparalleled experience in which I was able to present my research to my peers and receive from them valuable insights, ideas, and corrections. Some of my audience members even approached me during the break and during lunch time to continue the discussion that we had during the session. To be able to stimulate thought and interest in such a variety of people—people from different countries, cultures, religions, philosophical backgrounds, and the like—is, dare I say, a powerful and satisfying endeavour. I also took advantage of the opportunity to listen to other students present their papers—both in my own session, and in others. How interesting it is to hear all the different ideas milling about in our Institute!

As a presenter, I am grateful to all those who participated in the conference and to all those who made the conference happen (especially to its financial benefactors). Because of the conference, I have grown as an academic and a scholar and I have gained valuable experience that will help me as I continue to advance in my career.

By Tyler Dickinson, MPhil programme

For the 2014 Graduate Student Conference, I was in an interesting position — I played both the roles of an organiser and as a presenter. My experience as a presenter was pleasant and enjoyable. I am currently working in the field of critical theory and social/political philosophy and the conference was an excellent opportunity to share my work as well as receive some feedback on it.

What I presented was a small section that will be worked into part of my MA thesis. As I was already working on my thesis, it was a good opportunity to be able to present my findings and arguments and to hear my work out loud. Being able to share my work — even if it was a work in progress — afforded me a different perspective on my research. The audience and the session chair also provided interesting remarks to help foster my future investigations.

In addition to being able to share my work, I benefitted from presenting and being a part of the conference because it was an avenue to practice my presentation and explanation skills. I enjoy sharing my work with others in small
circles but during the conference, that circle was much larger. With my goals of being a researcher and a presenter in the future, this was an optimal chance to be exposed to an environment akin to professional conferences, surrounded by peers who may or may not be immersed in similar interests as my own. Overall, the experience was useful and pleasant.

By Alin Ibrahim, MA programme

I have participated at the HIW’s Graduate Student Conference for two years now. In 2013, I helped to organise the conference and also presented a paper at it. This year, I presented a paper on the phenomenology of the cyborg in the “Applications of the Idea of Life” session. Overall, I thought that the conference was put together very professionally this year. It had a more professional feel, particularly with the inclusion of name tags and nice-looking programmes. The sessions were wide-ranging and broken up quite logically (with only a few questions about some of the selections — but that is to be expected with an open call for papers).

This year, I decided to participate at the conference once again, as the first year was a great opportunity to distil my research into a short and coherent presentation. The second year provided me the same opportunity but I also took the opportunity to speculate a bit more and engage more in the Q&A time. This time proved valuable during both years and, in the future, I might even have shorter, more poignant papers, so as to be able to have a longer Q&A time. It would also be interesting to have a digital journal published with selected papers from the conference, because there were some that I would like to have heard but was not able to attend. Perhaps that would be possible in the future.

By Jeremy Heuslein, MPhil programme

This was the third time that I participated at the HIW Graduate Conference. The title of my paper was “Schopenhauer’s Optimism; or, Schopenhauer as a Negative Theologian”. Throughout the years, I have noticed an incredible increase in professionalism and skill in the organisation of this conference. Emilia, who spearheaded the project early on, has surrounded herself with an involved and very capable group of people to organize this conference. Year after year, the Graduate Conference allows for, on the one hand, Master students to try-out (part of) their thesis and, on the other hand, doctoral students to present some of their work in development.

Over the years, I have noticed that more and more Master students are being encouraged to present their work. However, there are still a good number of doctoral students who present their work. Doctoral students have everything to gain from forcing themselves to put their thoughts into writing and verbalizing this in a way comprehensible to a large audience. For instance, the paper I defended at last year’s Graduate Conference is now forthcoming in a
pretty decent journal. The time I had put into finding clear ways to express my thoughts and then communicate these to an audience, and obviously receiving feedback from that audience, proved to be well invested. A final note: the moderators did an amazing job in keeping time and making sure that everything was in place. This reduced a great deal of the stress on the speakers.

By Dennis Vanden Auweele, PhD programme

The graduate student conference works like speed dating for me. Every year, I am amazed by how much I come to know about my colleagues and their work in just one day. I think it is one of the most important bridges between the research centres and we certainly cannot have too many of those.

Furthermore, due to the diversity of the audience, the quality of the feedback is exceptional. It’s always nice to test your ideas by subjecting them to the ‘clean’ intuitions of people working in different fields and using different methodologies. Take this year, for instance: I gave a paper on the ‘Tertiary Value Problem’ for knowledge (VP3). Roughly, this position holds that any account of the value of knowledge take knowledge from a value continuum with lesser epistemic standings. Otherwise, our special concern with it seems unjustified. In my paper, I put forth a solution to VP3 based on a Millian, discontinuous value ordering.

During the Q&A, however, a colleague pointed out that it was unclear to him that the VP3 challenge was justified in the first place. This led me to improve my paper rather substantially by adding a section focused on the motivation behind VP3, where, previously, I had always taken it for granted that the VP3 was a legitimate challenge.

By Mona-Ioana Marica, PhD programme

I have always enjoyed and benefited from the opportunity to present at the HIW graduate conferences over the years. They have given me the valuable chance to present my research and
improve my speaking skills. This year, I had the pleasure of presenting the main thesis of my PhD research, “The Rational Content of Patriotism in Hegel’s Concept of the State”, and I received very helpful feedback from the professors and students present at my talk.

When I arrived early in the morning for the conference, there was a friendly and professional group of conference organisers there to welcome me and give me the programme for the day. I have noticed that each year, the conference grows and the organisers continue to perfect the preparation and operation of the conference. This year, as always, the organisers took care of every detail of preparation and worked hard to make sure that everyone could enjoy the various presentations. Personally, I feel that I greatly benefit from the opportunity to participate at the HIW graduate conference each year, and I think this year’s conference was another outstanding success.

By Stephen Hudson, PhD programme

What was it like to chair a session at the graduate student conference?

I decided to act as a chair at the Fourth Graduate Student Conference for two sets of reasons. First, I am convinced that (i) presentation skills are of crucial importance in the academic profession, (ii) they are in addition very important transferable skills that our graduates can make good use of in other professions as well and (iii) practice in presenting makes for mastery in presenting. Second, graduate students have to write a thesis, the submitted version of which they have to orally defend, meaning that it is in their interest to give an oral presentation of (parts) of their research before submitting. For these two sets of reasons, the Graduate Student Conference is an excellent initiative and I am happy to participate in it.

The session for which I acted as a chair was entitled ‘Session II-D Issues in Philosophy of Science’. The presenters were Emma Lowe (MA), Irene van de Beld (MA) and Olivier Lemeire (PhD). Lowe talked about the problem of induction, Okasha’s understanding of this problem and the proposed solutions by Howson and Reichenbach. The next presenter, van de Beld, talked about the modern-day relevance of Kant’s conception of a priori principles and Reichenbach’s and Friedman’s conception of the relativized a priori. Lemeire closed the session with a talk about the folk concept of race and its relevance for the debate about whether races exist or not.

My general impression of the talks was quite favourable. The graduate students each displayed excellent presentation skills exhibited and also provided excellent content for the listeners. This favourable general impression extends to the other sessions that I attended as well: Session III-D Problems in Philosophy of Mind and Epistemology (chair: Dr. Markus Eronen); Session IV-D Epistemology and Metalogical Theories (chair: Prof. Dr. Christoph Kelp), with the occasional exception that proves the rule.

For me, it was a pleasure to chair the session and to participate in the discussions and I am looking forward to future editions.

By Dr. Jan Heylen
What is the Writing Lab?

The HIW Writing Lab offers student-initiated, one-on-one writing consultations to all students at the HIW. It aims to sharpen and deepen English-writing skills within the international community at the HIW. Another impetus for the creation of the HIW Writing Lab specifically — and an ongoing motive for its work — is to support Dutch-speaking students at the HIW who are writing philosophy in English and to be of service to those students in the Dutch-speaking programmes who are already enrolled in English-language courses and seminars at the HIW. Recent sessions at the HIW Writing Lab have included, for instance, students from Mexico and Iran, Venezuela and Poland, Latvia and China — in addition to a number of Belgian students and native English speakers from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

To date, the HIW Writing Lab has been contacted by, and has voluntarily discussed writing issues with, undergraduate and graduate students of the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Theology. This is an unmistakable sign that there is interest outside of the HIW for university writing services that offer tutorial sessions and seminars — and perhaps, eventually, for a university-wide, KU Leuven Writing Centre.

The Writing Lab has gone very well this year. We have helped a number of students with various types of written work including term papers, FWO applications, CVs, personal statements and journal articles. We can help stage of their writing, from initial planning to final review, and at all study levels: Bachelor, initial Master as well as advanced Master (MPhil).

How long have we had the Writing Lab?

Since the HIW was the first Leuven faculty to announce its English-language programme, it is also appropriate that the HIW has been the first at KU Leuven to announce a writing service to help meet the demands of any dual-programme, international faculty. In 2012, the HIW ran an educational project sponsored by KU Leuven called 'Bridging the Gap: Exploring internationalization in a dual programme faculty' which sought to examine the relationship between how international and Dutch-speaking students successfully co-operate within a single educational environment. Once just a small part of 'Bridging the Gap', the HIW Writing Lab
has since developed a life of its own; this academic year in particular due to incentive funding through the so-called ‘Impulsfinanciering Onderwijs 2013’ project which afforded funds for the HIW Writing Lab for one academic year. The project has officially been officially called “Towards a Permanent ‘Writing Lab’: Creating a Framework to Support and Improve Students Written Communication in English” and its main aim has been to let the Writing Lab fully develop and become self-sufficient and serve as a model also for other faculties at KU Leuven. The promoter of the project has been Prof. Russell Friedman.

The HIW Writing Lab was first announced in April 2012 as a writing service, before it had established an institutional apparatus. Towards the end of the 2011-2012 academic year, a HIW Writing Lab poster was placed on the premises of the HIW and an announcement was sent out by email to the entire HIW student body. Any HIW students who were interested in discussing their English-language writing projects were instructed to email the Writing Lab using the website email. Since that time, the Writing Lab has continued to provide services for the HIW students both one-on-one as well as through its website which contains useful information and guidelines on e.g., the use of secondary sources and correct referencing. In the current academic year, and due to the above-mentioned project, the Writing Lab has begun drafting a Writing Lab Kit which will contain all of the required information for all other KU Leuven faculties to begin implementing Writing Labs of their own.

What kind of service does the Writing Lab provide?

The Writing Lab aims to enhance all HIW students’ ability to produce clear and effective English-language prose — ranging from academic philosophy, to cover letters, to professional documents like CVs. The Writing Lab assistants help students with issues such as: formulating a correct research question, organising the research work, time management, using secondary sources, correct referencing and addressing grammatical and especially structural problems in students’ papers. However, the Writing Lab is not a proofreading or copyediting service.

How does the Writing Lab provide this service?

The basic *modus operandi* of the HIW Writing Lab is as follows: a HIW student contacts the HIW writing tutors at the Writing Lab’s email address, stating what writing project or problem he or she would like to discuss; a writing tutor then schedules an appointment with said student; student and writing tutor meet at the agreed-upon time on the HIW premises for a 45-minute discussion of the student’s questions about the writing process as such, a writing assignment-in-progress or a relatively polished draft.
The HIW writing tutors begin every session by again asking the student what it is they would like to discuss and how they would like to work through their document (if a document has already been drafted). Needless to say, each session varies, depending upon the student’s wishes and their reasons for contacting the Writing Lab. A second or third session with the same student can look very different, depending upon which stage of the writing process — or which type of writing project — they wish to discuss from one session to the next.

For example, one of the most common mistakes we encounter is work written in the passive voice. This is when someone writes a sentence in an indirect way, emphasising the wrong part of the sentence and thereby resulting in a lengthy and unclear statement. For example, this sentence is written in the passive voice:

“There is a lot of wisdom that is rich and forgotten in the history of philosophy.”

The point and meaning of this sentence is lost in its clunky and roundabout construction but it can be re-written as follows:

“The history of philosophy is rich with forgotten wisdom.”

This re-written version communicates the original idea in the active voice which is more direct, clearer and shorter. Essays full of passive voice are more difficult to read and follow while essays with little or no passive voice are much easier to understand.

In many cases, writing in the passive voice comes from what we call ‘scaffolding’. When we sit down to write something from scratch, the real crux of our idea is often unclear to us; when we look back at this stage of our writing we see a great deal of extra information that we needed to support our ideas when they were in the building process (aka scaffolding).

However, once a draft is written and we know what we want to say, we need to get rid of the scaffolding. Left over scaffolding can mean that an essay is unclear and seems to wander off in all directions, with certain sentences having no clear point; in many cases this is not a sign of bad writing, only that the essay is still at a development stage. For example, the following short paragraph is written in an unclear manner:

“The philosophy of writing well consists of many interesting things, some less realised than others. What is most interesting about the whole process of writing is that it itself is a process of focus and depending upon what one focuses upon the less they will succeed. When we focus upon what we want to talk about in a direct and clear way, then we will have written something interesting and valuable.”

It is unclear here what the author is trying to say. The ‘scaffolding’ in this paragraph arises from the fact that the author does not know what exactly they wish to write about: the ‘philosophy of writing’ or the ‘writing process’ itself. The extract begins by discussing the philosophy of writing, but then changes into
a discussion about the writing process more generally.

Since it is difficult to separate how one thinks from how one writes, a Writing Lab Tutor has students read their work out loud. This helps us to see the difference between ‘what we are thinking about’ and ‘what we have in fact written down on the page’. When we read our text out loud we can see and hear its lack of clarity. Try to read the above paragraph aloud; you will most likely stumble or have to stop where the problems in the sentence appear. We would then proceed to ask students questions such as:

“What are you trying to say in this short paragraph?”

“How could you change it to make it clearer?”

In most cases, the answer to these questions will provide the writer with a good starting place from which to identify and correct their own mistakes. After a short conversation, let us say that the student decides that they want to write about the ‘writing process’ itself rather than the ‘philosophy of writing well’. Now they can return to the short paragraph and remove the scaffolding:

“The philosophy of writing well consists of many interesting things, some less realised than others. What is most interesting about the whole process of writing is that it itself is a process of focus and depending upon what one focuses upon the less they will succeed. When we focus upon what we want to talk about in a direct and clear way, then we will write well and have written something interesting and valuable.”

By this time, the short paragraph is already clearer. With this improved clarity, however, comes a new problem: what exactly does the student mean by the word ‘focus’? This would be the next question for the tutor to ask the student. With the scaffolding now removed, the student can reconsider what they really mean by ‘focus’ and how it relates to the ‘writing process’. In some cases the student will have already worked out this idea whereas other students will be surprised that they do not, in fact, know what they want to say and need to think about it before they can proceed.

At the end of each Writing Lab session, we try to finish with a plan of action for next time. In this case the tutor might suggest that the student develops their idea of ‘focus’ and how it relates to the writing process, suggesting that another session to take place when the student has written more about that idea. In this way, each session ends having accomplished three things:

1. To help the student identify one or more problems in their writing
2. To help the student see and understand how to correct these problems
3. To give the student an attainable goal or plan of action for the next session

Some students may require a considerable amount of help whereas others might only
need a little. The point of the Writing Lab is to help improve the students’ writing in any way possible.

*The HIW Online Writing Lab*

In order to enhance both the curricular and extracurricular international dimension at the HIW, Bridging the Gap has designed a new on-line writing-support service as part of the Writing Lab: the HIW Online Writing Lab Community. By means of this community web-service on Toledo (electronic blackboard), students at the HIW have access to a variety of language-related documents, links to other language tools, a question forum, and the possibility of online consultations with our writing tutors.

The HIW Online Writing Lab was thought up as a complement to the HIW Writing Lab with the aim of providing language assistance, which can be consulted individually and targeted at students with varying levels of English. The idea was to compose a collection of language guidelines, useful for a varied target group. That is, even native speakers will probably find interesting information about formatting and citation in the writing lab, whereas non-native students can find information about how to edit their own writing and Flemish students can avoid making so-called Dunglish mistakes by consulting the corresponding section in the Online Writing Lab.

For more information, please visit the website of the Writing Lab at http://hiw.kuleuven.be/eng/programmes/hiwwritinglab.

Source: Final report of the KU Leuven educational project “Bridging the Gap: Exploring internationalization in a dual programme faculty 2011-2013”, written by David Dusenbury, Piet Goemans, Marie-Anne Verdeyen and supervised by Prof. Bart Raymaekers and Prof. Russell Friedman.

By Joel Hubick and Brian Garcia, Writing Lab Tutors in 2013-2014
SAINT THOMAS FEAST 2013

An interview with Pasquale Porro

Prof. Porro, you are no stranger here in Leuven, as you have previous relations with the Institute of Philosophy, in particular, the De Wulf-Mansion Research Center. Could you briefly describe your prior experience and on-going research affiliation with Leuven?

I first came here to Leuven in 1986. At that time I was still a student, and I started to work on Henry of Ghent under the direction of Fr. Macken, who at the time was the principal editor of the Henry of Ghent project. Henry of Ghent was actually the topic of my Master's dissertation. Then, when I was a PhD student in Rome, I spent perhaps more than two years here in Leuven, at the end of the 80s and beginning of the 90s. At that time I was always working on Henry of Ghent, and also on my dissertation topic, which focused on the concept of angelic time in the Middle Ages — a rather bizarre topic, perhaps. Afterwards I continued to return to Leuven until around 2003 or 2004. In the last years it has become a bit more difficult to do so, but I still have many interests here at Leuven due to Henry of Ghent, and due to the fact that there are many experts as well as friends working here, and due to the wonderful working conditions.

How exactly did you first become interested in Henry of Ghent? Were your studies always focused on Medieval Philosophy?

Mainly, yes. I came to Henry of Ghent by accident. It was due to my Master's thesis supervisor, Ada Lamacchia, who at the time was interested in a Renaissance Italian philosopher, Tommaso Campanella, who himself made use of Henry of Ghent. She was curious to find something more about this possible source of Campanella. She had the opportunity to meet Fr. Macken, so she put me in contact with him. I must say that I was fascinated from the very beginning with Henry's thought — it was something new, something different. So at that time I decided to focus on Medieval Philosophy and Henry of Ghent was a very interesting approach to the world of Medieval Philosophy. Then, of course, I extended my interests to Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and the rest.

Ideally, how is Medieval Philosophy to be introduced to students? I have in mind, perhaps, certain methodological orientations concerning the relationship between philosophy and the history of philosophy, which might be imparted in introductory courses on Medieval Philosophy.

There is a French historian, Paul Veyne, who was actually a friend of Michel Foucault; according to Veyne, the task of the historian — I mean, people who are interested in intellectual history — is to make a catalogue of differences, a dictionary of difference. Now why am I saying this: because I’m not interested in describing continuities between the past and the present. I would never say that we can find
something in the past which can be used in the present to solve philosophical problems, or political problems or bio-ethical problems, and the like. On the contrary, I do think it is very interesting to make a catalogue of difference. Because after all, what is philosophy? Perhaps this is a very naïve question, but let us put it in a very rough way: I think philosophy has to do with the possibility of thinking otherwise, of thinking in another way. So, the current and practical exercise of philosophy is our attempt to see things under a different light.

Let’s consider this. Foucault and Paul Veyne always say that while we are within a system we cannot perceive the views of our discours, of our way of thinking; it is impossible to be at the same time the players of the game and its spectators or audience. So, it is very difficult to think otherwise if we are subjected to views which we are unable to understand. Where are we to find the possibility to think otherwise — not the answers, only the fact that it is possible to think otherwise? Well, I think in the past. We can really think otherwise only if we are sure that in the past people thought in a different way. So we are not interested in their answers, but we are interested in those facts — the fact of thinking otherwise; so this is what I try to explain to my students, that we can think in a different way only if we are sure that things can be thought of in a different way.

Just a brief example: if I consider ‘being’ to have always the same meaning, to correspond always to the same concept, then it would be impossible to think ‘being’ in a different way. But if I can prove that, in the past, ‘being’ was conceived of in a different way, then it is possible for us to conceive of a different approach to being. This applies to many things, not only to philosophical concepts, but to political concepts, bio-ethical concepts — for example, the concept of life: we can think of the concept of life differently if we find out that life was the object of different elaborations in the past. I wouldn’t use that modus or those replies to solve current problems, but instead to teach my students that they can think in a different way.

I have noticed that some who specialize in Medieval Philosophy tend to take up contemporary idioms of philosophy in order to create a space for dialogue, in order to make Medieval Philosophy relevant and have an impact in contemporary discourse. Do you see anything inherent in Medieval Philosophy, from which people focused on contemporary Philosophy might benefit? Are there certain approaches or orientations of the past that are valuable, beyond the construction of these catalogues of difference?

Good question. Now I will switch from Continental philosophy — since I was just referring to Veyne and Foucault — to the field of Anglo-Saxon, analytical philosophy. Well, for instance, there are some trends or approaches to the philosophy of language, and to the way of making our statements absolutely intelligible to our audience. This is something that you can really find in medieval authors. Every medieval author, but especially the scholastic authors, before making their own statements, always offer the conditions of intelligibility of what they are saying, and define whether this is correct or this can be falsified or not. And I think this is currently very important in many fields of analytic philosophy. That is why, for instance, some historians of Medieval Philosophy, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, but even in Europe, try to show that above all in philosophy of language and logic there is a kind of familiarity between the medieval way of thinking and contemporary philosophy. But, I repeat, I wouldn’t follow a fashion. I’m not interested in adopting and using a contemporary language to express medieval concepts. But I think it’s a kind of attitude: scholastic authors were always very focused on providing the maximum of intelligibility to any topic.

The Institute of Philosophy here at Leuven is of course
an immediate product of the Neo-Scholasticism of the late 19th century, and during the 20th century contributed to what might be called a ‘Thomocentrism’ in the study of Medieval Philosophy. Your research — I hope not to oversimplify grossly — has focused on the 13th century philosophical landscape, on important figures who were more or less contemporaries of Thomas Aquinas. Would you characterize your work as part of a movement away from a kind of ‘Thomocentrism’?

Hmm, I hesitate because I do like Thomas Aquinas very much. I think that what Neo-Scholasticism in general, and Neo-Thomism in particular, allowed for was really a renewal of studies in Medieval Philosophy. So I would never risk any real objection to this aspect. What I think is that we have the opportunity now to rethink some presuppositions, some historiographical presuppositions. But this would have been impossible for us without all the previous work done here in Leuven, or in Paris by Gilson. So I think we have a wonderful opportunity now. A few decades ago, the program was in a certain sense always concerned with confessional or ideological matters, so Medieval Philosophy was, let’s say, Christian — which was true, in a way. But this means that in many lay universities people were not interested at all in Medieval Philosophy; while in the Catholic universities, Medieval Philosophy was philosophia perennis. And there was no dialogue between these two worlds. We now have the opportunity to put these two worlds in dialogue; we can employ Thomas Aquinas and all the scholastic masters. Metaphysics as well — a kind of approach which is not simply against the modern world, as was thought at the beginning of the Neo-Scholastic movements — belongs to our tradition. It is an important part, I would say an essential part of our tradition. We have a wonderful opportunity to study without any kind of ideological or merely confessional boundaries. I would not say anything against a kind of confessional use of Medieval Philosophy: it makes sense, because it is the Catholic tradition. But I think we can also use it outside the borders of our Catholic tradition.

I ask the question in part because you have previous work on Henry of Ghent, of course, as well as on Siger of Brabant and other contemporaneous figures; your most recent monograph, however, is Tommaso d’Aquino: Un profilo storico-filosofico, which treats the life and works of Aquinas. Could you say a word concerning this historical-philosophical approach? Is this then a kind of reassessment of Thomas?

‘Reassessment’ is perhaps too ambitious. What I think is that we can re-read many issues in Aquinas’ thought in a different way with respect to the Neo-Scholastic approach. Then again, I would never say that the Neo-Scholastic approach was wrong; it was, let’s say, a little bit too dogmatic — so they wanted to make room for certain issues about which Thomas Aquinas never changed his mind. On the contrary, I think it’s interesting to show and to prove that sometimes Thomas did change his mind, and had different approaches. So this is the kind of work I am interested in.

Regarding the legacy, or rather the effects, of Neo-Scholasticism: in the Aquinas Lecture you delivered, you challenged a very influential thesis of Étienne Gilson. I see a kind of difference between the legacy of Gilson as he is perceived here in Europe, and the way he is perceived in North America. How would you characterize Gilson? Does the role of philosopher or that of the historian take precedence?

I cannot say for sure, especially concerning his legacy in North America; I guess in Europe he is perceived more as a historian than a philosopher, apart from certain universities. I would say that he is considered to be the father of the history of Medieval Philosophy in Europe. I think there are many topics in Gilson which are still extremely interesting, not only concerning Thomas Aquinas, but also concerning
figures such as Bonaventure and Scotus; and also Dante — Gilson was really one of the best readers of Dante outside of Italy. On the other hand, I think we can introduce some modifications to his historiographical approach — it makes sense, we are living one century after Gilson, many things have changed. We are not obliged to believe in a kind of contraposition between Greek metaphysics and Christian metaphysics. We can rethink these things. We also have different knowledge of, for example, Arabic philosophy. So we have a different picture in mind.

You mentioned Dante: could you say a word about your forthcoming work on Dante?

I am very interested in looking for the Scholastic background in Dante, to see whether there are certain debates which we can read in Dante’s works, especially in the *Convivio*, but also in the *Commedia*. Perhaps we can find traces of the Scholastic debate and not only of Aquinas — of course, Aquinas plays an important role — but other Scholastic theologians as well. Its intent will be to look exactly for the sources. Perhaps the title will be, *The Poet and The Masters (Il poeta e i maestri)*. It will be an attempt to find the specific scholastic sources of Dante’s poetry.

By Brian Garcia
In your lecture, you discussed the way in which Modernism was an attack on the identity philosophies of Kant and Hegel, and as such exposed the rational semblance that identity philosophy provided to what was, in fact, senseless suffering. This shows that art plays a critical role within modern, capitalist society. On the other hand, you also described modern art as being characterized by the ability to refer back to itself. Thus, art is characterized by a development of making itself explicit and exposing the laws that are immanent to its practice. How do these two relate to each other?

So, on the one hand — following Adorno’s claim — the point is that art is a site of resistance to identity thinking and instrumental reason, that is, reason both organizes, in the sense of capital reproduction, and justifies this reproduction in terms of reflective rationality and other forms of modern domination. Art is supposed to resist that. On the other hand, Adorno claims — and this must be true — that this is not what artists are thinking about while making a work of art. Rather, they are just trying to make the best work of art that they know how to; trying to be the best artist that they can be. How, then, can we make sense of the idea that it is possible for art to have this deep political significance while on the other hand, art is an autonomous human activity that develops according to its own internal logic?

For Adorno, solving this puzzle depends on answering the following question: what is the role or function of art within society as a whole? Since the beginning of philosophy, this has been a major issue, because philosophy began by throwing the artists out of the city: the first thing that philosophy did was to get rid of art. So the next question to ask is: what made Plato so angry about art and what does it say about the particular relationship between art and philosophy? Plato initially gives a bad answer but not an irrelevant one. He claims that all that art produces are semblances of semblances of semblances. They provide illusory pictures of the world, and because the world itself is already an appearance, art is an appearance of an appearance. In *The Republic*, however, Plato also provides a much more interesting answer, namely, that works of art, like philosophy, are *synoptic*; they are pictures of the whole. He even says that art holds up a mirror to the whole world. In Plato’s time there were two dominant conceptions of art, both of which were based on drama. Drama was either tragedy or comedy; and what Plato could not tolerate was the idea that human life is essentially tragic or essentially comic. Aristophanes or Sophocles; either way, human life is without an ultimate purpose or meaning and, thus, caught in a form of nihilism.

Nevertheless, that doesn’t quite answer the question concerning the function of art. Adorno thought that throughout most of history, from the Romans until the early modern period, the function of art was to represent the Absolute. In this way, Adorno, in fact, agrees with Hegel. The function of art was to make religious ideas sensible and intelligible to ordi-
nary people so that they could feel the truth that they expressed. For instance, when you walk into a church, right away the architecture overpowers you with the sublime feeling that you’re in a special place. Then, there is the image of Christ on the cross, the statue of Mary; each of these give our religious ideas a concrete and sensible reality. If we look at its historical development, art came about during the period of the absolute state, during which the aristocratic classes celebrated themselves. Think of all of the pictures of noblemen, heroes and early modern subjects. This goes to show that art always had an ideological function of representing society to itself and legitimating a social hierarchy and set of rules. At least, until the modern period, leading us to ask: what happens to art in the modern world? The most obvious thing to say would be that the modern world is fragmented so that each and every form of human activity in modern society becomes relatively autonomous. All the different spheres of society become relatively autonomous. We know it is a fiction they become fully autonomous, but fiction matters when it comes to justifying practices in the modern world. This is why a lot of thinkers, Adorno being one of them, consider Kant’s critical system to represent the reflective self-understanding and vindication of the modern world in which each domain of its activity — science, morals, politics, aesthetics — becomes autonomous from one another. In the modern world, then, art is divorced from politics and loses its social function. So what is art meant to do? Modernity succeeded effortlessly in doing what Plato had tried so hard to do: to just throw out the artist. Of course, this ignores the question of the culture industry, that is, the attempt at making art a part of capitalist reproduction. But this is art simply as entertainment, not serious art.

And so, what about serious art? Unlike art as entertainment, serious art is thought of as lacking a function or a purpose. Surprisingly, this adheres to Kant’s definition of a work of art: purposefulness without purpose. That’s why the Kantian theory is really about the modern world. Purposefulness without purpose could only be spoken in a post-religious, post-hierarchical, de-transcendentalized world. Adorno’s hypothesis is that if art is going to survive, it has one out of two choices: 1) it can either seek out a social purpose for itself, making it the handmaiden of bourgeois power, wealth — which did happen and which can be seen in, say, Nazi art — or 2) art can ask itself about the features of its practices. What is intrinsic to the practice of music, painting, literature, dance, etc? Put differently, what kind of authority can each of these practices have based on elements that are internal to their practices? The story of modern art, then, is the story of the autonomy of art, where each of the arts attempt to produce works that establish and secure the nature of their significance.

Now from this, it doesn’t seem as if art would naturally have a critical relationship with society at all. However, for the precise reason that the structure of modern society is one in which items are only significant in so far they have a functional use, it does. It is their ability to satisfy a function that gives an item meaning and value in modern society. More fundamentally, this is what identity thinking is, namely, that items are useful with respect to their ability to reproduce everyday life, leading us to take interest only in the functional characteristics of things. We are interested in cups so long as we can drink coffee out of them and we can drink coffee out of cups with different sizes and different shapes. Their particular characteristics don’t matter. One is easily substitutable for another. If one cup breaks, the waiter just comes over and brings me exactly the same cup. What distinguishes artistic practice is that the artist
has to produce unique, sensuous particulars that are valuable in themselves and not because of the role that they play in society. Given the society we live in, where functionality dictates our ideology, it turns out that the very idea that an object should be valuable in and of itself, based solely upon its internal characteristics, is what turns art into a form of resistance. Art survives if and only if it produces artworks that are non-exchangeable, nonfunctional, useless, and yet, somehow, valuable within themselves. In this way, art offers a different conception of value and identity to the reigning conception of value and identity at work in the rest of society.

But isn’t it a bit archaic to target identity thinking as the ideological fixture of our functionally differentiated society? Following Habermas, you could also think of the contemporary equivalent of ideology as a fragmentation of consciousness. In that case, you could argue that the sensuous particulars that are aroused in us by art only reinforce the fragmentation already present in modern society. Could it be that attacking the transcendental subject is an outmoded criticism given the already fragmented condition of the modern subject?

There are two issues here. The first is to say that what we now think of as the fragmentation of the social world into these endless bits and pieces is only a recent development. I take the process of fragmentation you are pointing at to have begun as late as the 1980s, with Reagan and Thatcher. Prior to that, you might say that we modern subjects understood the modern, secular world as a bundle or cluster of practices that all referred to one another — as functional wholes. For instance, all forms of significant philosophical reflection — whether affirmative (Hegel), or critical (Nietzsche) — , took for granted that we needed an account of the cluster. It’s not surprising, then, that if you think of the whole as a unified bundle, the fact of radical art practices becomes a point of tension within that whole. Radical practices keep saying that art works are not commodities; that a thing can be something other than a commodity.

From the middle of the 18th century — which is when I think the modern world became radically self-conscious of itself — , until nearly the end of the 20th century, culture played a very important role in social reproduction. But art was also a site of contestation. When people produced new kinds of art, there would be genuine social upheavals. People would go to the salons in Paris by the thousands to see a new work of art, sometimes denouncing it and even crying. These radical moments took place because of the presumption of social integrity on the behalf of the spectators; they assumed that their world was a coherent whole. It turned out that serious art in that constellation was an immanent critique of the perception of their world as a coherent whole. And what Adorno intended to do was determine why art could serve this critical function. Of course, he began writing Aesthetic Theory during the time in which modernism was dying. He knew that he was writing a kind of memorial. You may ask, “Why a memorial?” There is a wonderful movie called Edward Scissorhands, which I always think of as the perfect Adornian movie: a film set in a perfectly harmonious, functional world in which Edward is like the artwork that has to be excluded. This harmony breaks down because something really interesting was discovered: capitalism did not need an expansive ideology to reproduce itself. Economic necessity — people’s practical need to feed their families, to support themselves and live their own lives — kept the whole system going all by itself. Thatcher’s dictum that “there is no such thing as society” is really manifesting this fragmentation. It takes a certain view of the unregulated markets that enhance fragmentation in which art’s critical function
begins to disappear. I think that this is where we are. Art no longer matters in the way that it did as a critical institution within society. As a consequence, the significance of a reflective self-understanding like Adorno's loses much of its political significance. It still has, what I want to call, 'reflective significance' with regard to the role of sensuous particularity. This is why for me, art is a part of philosophy, insofar as that philosophy is a purposeless activity through which we might come to understand the world. However, I also believe that these are no longer fundamental sites of resistance.

Could this also be the point where the autonomy and disinterestedness of art turns against itself? Nowadays, the experience of sensuous particulars, including its forms of critique, are often non-committal, precisely because they take place within autonomous spheres within society. So the question would then be: what would political art be? Would it be a form of art that is explicitly engaging itself with the world?

In this regard, I am deeply sympathetic with Jacques Rancière, who of all contemporary philosophers has probably thought hardest about the relationship between politics and art. Generally speaking, our conclusions differ considerably, but one thesis on which I feel that he is absolutely right is that the notion of politically or socially engaged arts is based on a logical or empirical error. Of course I can produce art from an engaged perspective — environmentalism, feminism, anti-capitalism, etc. But the fact that works have a political content has no direct bearing on whether or not they will have any political effect. There is no reason as to why the content of a work of art should be politically significant, because politics is about the actual way in which people gather themselves together to take up and forward collective purposes. No content, no matter how radical, no matter how moving, no matter how deep, guarantees political significance. There is a logical gap between political content and political practice.

Underlying this hypothesis is an Adornian thought. Adorno also said that the idea of engaged art is simply a category mistake. This is one of the ways in which he differed from Benjamin, who was always looking for the place within in a culture in which its own structures could be turned against themselves in a political way. The most obvious example of where he tried to do this was through his analysis of film. In her remarkable book Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno, the late Miriam Hansen rightly traces the development of Benjamin's idea that modern cinema was a new kind of public sphere. Unlike the private work of art or the novel, cinema was a new public sphere that invited everyone in, especially the lower and middle classes, in addition to white collar workers. He was obsessed with early Disney movies and the character of Mickey Mouse. He thought that the image of Mickey Mouse was of a mechanized figure who allowed people to become aware of their own reification, to laugh at its absurdity, and then galvanize themselves for political action. He really thought that early Disney was politically radical, which is a brilliant argument. This is right there in the first draft of The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproducibility, but the part about Mickey Mouse was deleted in later drafts. Benjamin shared the idea with Adorno that early Disney had the same aesthetic structure as jazz. American jazz and American cartoons were the same radical idea of America. Hansen argues, convincingly, that when Adorno is attacking jazz, he is really attacking Benjamin over Mickey Mouse.

But the point that I made about the category mistake is still there. Even if we all laugh at Mickey Mouse and see ourselves as alienated from society and one another because of this crazy cartoon, it doesn't motivate us to take
to the streets and start a political movement. Going back to Adorno, it could be a moment of weak resistance, because it’s a moment of self-consciousness. But resistance is what you have when you don’t have significant politics. Adorno never thought that art could deliver significant politics. He only thought it was a site of resistance, and we can perfectly well ask where these sites of resistance are now. I don’t see any reason to think of why art could be political. For those of us who care about art, its status as a site of resistance does have a backward looking character. This makes the lives of the humanities seem very problematic.

You are also currently working on the topics of torture, rape and trust. After attending the lecture in which you paid a lot of attention to the socio-historical context of suffering, I was a little struck by the fact that in your account of trust you paid no attention to the way in which trust, which you seem to oppose to risk, has a very modern character. For instance, Niklas Luhmann discusses how risk emerges in the modern setting of sea trade, and later manifests as a system’s anticipation of the changes in its environment. In your article, however, you seem to imply that trust is a universal feature of social life.

First, I need to state my fundamental thesis, namely, that trust is the ethical substance of everyday living. What I am interested in, and what I profoundly believe, is that we have many accounts of our moral life that no one actually believes. No one really believes that Kantianism, utilitarianism, Aristotelianism, moral realism or any of these moral theories are, in fact, true. If I’m correct, we don’t have an account of moral life at all. My book on torture tries to provide a different account of the meaning of moral life. The rough and ready idea is that in order to be a person, you must be recognized as a person; that is, you must be recognized as intrinsically valuable. And where the notion of ‘recognition’ has a certain meaning in our society — namely, treating persons as ends in themselves — , other societies have had slightly different meanings. Christian society thought that persons are intrinsically valuable insofar that they possess a soul; beyond that, simply being ‘one of us’ was enough to consider someone intrinsically valuable. Torture and rape are fundamental acts of devaluation; they destroy the individual’s sense of having value in him or herself. In this way, I see morality as fundamentally about devaluation. Rather than thinking about what I ought to do, I see people as values, entailing that moral meaning is best understood through the notion of moral harms: acts that injure and cause suffering. The converse of this is that ordinary social practices are those practices in which we mutually recognize one another as values. The very deep way in which that appears in society, the reality of that recognition, is simply through trust. So trust, I do want to claim, is the ethical substance of everyday living, always and everywhere. Therefore, I do have a universalistic claim. It makes sense to me because it seems obvious that everyday life is a tremendous ethical achievement; here we sit, talking and drinking cups of coffee. But surely this has a normative condition of possibility. What is it? Trust. Trust is that form of the ethical that allows us to forget the ethical. Thus, we are most fully ethical when we aren’t thinking about ethics at all. And this is the achievement that every society wants.

So, my first claim is that trust is the great social good in terms of intersubjective relations amongst persons.

Thesis two. It is wildly transparent that trust is an unequal and unevenly distributed social good. White males have more trust of others than white females, white men and women have more trust in our society than people of color, etc., etc. You can measure the well-being or ill-being of a society by looking at the distribution of trust, namely how risky people consider their own lives to be, or how much
they can take it for granted. For me the fundamental structure of trust operates at two levels: firstly intersubjectively — how much trust we can have simply walking around in our world, — and secondly in the relationship between individuals and the institutions they must depend on, above all the state. So my life is decent, if I can both trust my everyday environment and trust my government to not harm me.

The level of risk that pervades our society certainly affects our participation in various social practices. Look at today: we no longer have jobs for life, we no longer have marriages for life, we no longer have love relationships for more than even a week. Individuals are increasingly exposed to risk; institutions are no exception as they come across their own temporal limitations as well. My problem with the story of ‘risk society’ is that it seems to be a trivial way of considering what is wrong with capital. Capitalists love risk; why wouldn’t they? They think that that’s the nature of the game. From the ethical perspective, however, the problem of risk is better thought of as human superfluousness. According to risk society, lives are not intrinsically valuable in themselves or worthy of protection; hence, they can be regarded as superfluous. So, I think the theory of trust is not *quiesce*. It is actually an effective way of asking who benefits from a social world and who doesn’t, because trust is so unequally distributed.

*If trust is linked to the way in which one is recognized as intrinsically valuable, and you take torture and rape to be essential deviations from these, you seem to consider trust as a relation of one individual vis-a-vis another. Doesn’t the term ‘trust’ and its counterpart ‘risk’, then, boil down to the subjective side of something that is almost trivial, namely, that most of the time people conform to social norms? As such, it might also foster a blind spot, insofar that ‘distrust’ in our contemporary setting does not always arise in cases where other people want to harm us — such as the case of torture or rape —, but in cases where there* is no form of personal accountability or relation between persons at all.

Let me start off by offering a fundamental disagreement with your statement that, ‘People obey social norms.’ I think that that is a terrible description of social life. I think that that is a sociological, external view of the social world because it buys into that idea that these are just dumb rule-following practices, as if we’re all social automatons. I think this is an unintelligible point of view. Individuals have a fundamental — I would even say *transcendental* — need to make sense of their lives. And in order to make sense of your life, you have to have a conception of yourself, in which your value and your worth as an individual are vindicated in relation to the fundamental structures of society. Unless that happens, you are going to feel socially marginalized, excluded, devalued, and the like. The idea of ‘social norms’ seems to me to be a bad sociological description of how the social world works. That’s why I so strongly want to suggest that we should regard everyday life — even just sitting and having a cup of coffee —, as a massive ethical achievement, and not take it for granted. Otherwise, we would be taking for granted what is probably the most important thing about how people live their lives: finding worth in them.

The institutional question is a perfectly good one, and here Onora O’Neill develops a set of, what are basically Kantian criteria for institutional trust. We trust an institution if and only if its procedures are relatively transparent, if it is accountable for what it does to us or to someone else, if it treats all that comes within its reach in equal and fair ways, etc., etc. We actually have a formal account of what we want from institutions, and we have good reasons to see why modern institutions tend to not satisfy these criteria. Here, I will just be reductively Marxist, and say that this is because most institutions are driven by market criteria,
and therefore are not accountable, not even to their shareholders.

It used to be the case that industries saw themselves as having a social function. Take the old story of Henry Ford who thought that it was a good idea to pay his workers a living wage so they could go out and buy his cars. No industry nowadays thinks that it has this same level of civic responsibility, either in regards to its location or even with respect to the future of its own capital. And insofar as politicians have bought into this conception of capital, they are unwilling to regulate the market, meaning that even they are not really answerable to us, because they refuse to use the powers of regulation that are the very purpose of government. So I don’t disagree with the picture of institutional distrust. One way to put this point — and this thought is my friend Akeel Bilgrami’s, not mine: what if a hundred years from now, we were to look back at the history of capitalism, and the period from 1960 to 2000 began to look like the exception to the rule? That the idea of the welfare state and its responsibilities was not the growing norm of capitalism, but rather a certain moment in which capital got reigned in by some special set of circumstances? That this brief moment began to unravel in the 1980s will turn out to prove that it was just the exception to the terrible path of reckless, irrational capitalist expansion.

In your discussion on trust, you seem to praise the forgetfulness that is part of everyday life. On the one hand, you emphasized the ‘deadening’ character of daily life, from which we can only be revived in the confrontation with death, of which art is an example. How does the revaluation of everyday life that you propose in your writings about trust relate to your lecture in which you equate the humdrum of daily life to ‘deadness’?

There are two ways in which we can think about the question of ‘aliveness’: both as a recurrent feature of ordinary life and as a particular feature of particular forms of life. In ordinary life, we don’t need too much intensity to function; but there are several places in a social world where we can come to discover our aliveness. The most obvious times when people awaken to their aliveness are, first of all, in love and sex, but also in forms of play, religious practice, forms of art, or going out into the wilderness. It makes perfect sense to me that people seek these things out; people still do want to experience the natural sublime. We know ourselves to be mortal, but we’re also mostly not aware of it, don’t truly feel it; this dynamic is part of our everyday living. Elderly people in former times and elderly peoples today have different ways of negotiating their relationships between themselves and their community. In most traditional societies, the thought of being finite occurs via a deep conscious awareness of oneself as generationally located: most societies have a deep sense of the fact of that they are a society of the living and the dead. It is only within modern society that we do not have the sense of the dead as currently living with us. Our individualism gives us a kind of forgetfulness of generationality. Therefore, the ordinary mechanisms for registering being alive or acknowledging the claim of the dead have evaporated from modern life. Our obsession with sexuality can also be understood in this way, functioning in much the same way as the natural sublime did in the 18th century. These are places where people go in order to feel alive.

There is a second level however; let’s call it mortification. Throughout the greater part of the last hundred years, the model of mortification was understood via conformism. From Kierkegaard talking about Christendom to Heidegger talking about das Man, to Edward Scissorhands, there is an absolute continuity of people forgetting their own lives by being
caught up in what they thought of as social conformism, as the mechanism of self-forgetfulness. In our contemporary world, it is harder to think about this mechanism, because it is more fragmented. The idea of superfluousness affects everyone, because everyone knows that every bit of their lives is temporary. Our lives are structured in a way that we have to keep remaking them. My deep hunch is that this is actually another form of self-forgetfulness, that the very way in which we have to keep scrambling to make our lives, by having to make it and remake it, and by the fact that every relationship that we have is contingent. It’s very hard to have a conception of a meaningful life under these conditions. So we may have a new form of deadness and mortification. All that is, is not having requisite conditions in which you can say your life is your own. To be aware of your life and your death is to be aware of your life as your own. We might say that superfluousness means that no one is their own individual, that every life is a plaything of forces that seem invisible and beyond their control. It’s terrifying, right? But, we take this as natural. The left has been consistently unimaginative, un inventive, and inept both in diagnosing and responding to this attitude. All of the political energy is on the right. I don’t understand it, but it seems to be true. The world is falling apart, and all the right can do is to demand more libertarianism. We’re really not dealing with the fact that contemporary capitalist practices are not labor intensive anymore, and they never will be. The amount of youth unemployment, especially in Southern Europe, is shocking. People keep thinking that the economy will turn out for the better, but it will never come back as good as it was. There simply has to be a far deeper political reckoning.

Anyone who has ever been involved in radical politics knows that it is addictive. It is addictive precisely in the sense that when you are in the midst of it there is a feeling of aliveness; that you’re doing something meaningful, that there is a risk but with a real purpose, accompanied by an awareness of your own finitude and the finitude of those around you. This notion of having a political stake where this needs to happen is, in part, what parliamentary democracy does not allow. It turns the deepest political issues into a routine; politics as usual. Of course, every once in a while politicians will say: this is a really important election. But you need extra-parliamentary political activities; I’m a great defender of civil disobedience, particularly Arendtian versions of it. We need a kind of real political activity to bring about real shifts in the political terrain, because expecting party politics to take care of it, at this point, is simply naive. And I agree, why are the very people who are suffering most also the most politically quiescent? There is, I believe, a political explanation: it’s because their lives are so insecure that insecurity itself has become normal for them and to such a degree that they can’t quite muster the political anger to mobilize. What is more, however, is that there are no ideas as to what it would look like if they did.

By Liesbeth Schoonheim
DEMOCRACY, SOLIDARITY
AND THE EUROPEAN CRISIS

Two large excerpts from a lecture delivered by Professor Jürgen Habermas on 26 April 2013 in Leuven

The European Union owes its existence to the efforts of political elites who could count on the passive consent of their more or less indifferent populations as long as the peoples could regard the Union as also being in their economic interests all things considered. The Union legitimized itself in the eyes of the citizens primarily through its outcomes and not so much from the fact that it fulfilled the citizens’ political will. This state of affairs is explained not only by the history of its origins but also by the legal constitution of this unique formation. The European Central Bank, the Commission, and the European Court of Justice have intervened most profoundly in the everyday lives of European citizens over the decades, even though these institutions are the least subject to democratic controls. Moreover, the European Council, which has energetically taken the initiative during the current crisis, is made up of heads of government whose role in the eyes of their citizens is to represent their respective national interests in distant Brussels. Finally, at least the European Parliament was supposed to construct a bridge between the political conflict of opinions in the national arenas and the momentous decisions taken in Brussels - but this bridge is almost devoid of traffic.

Thus, to the present day there remains a gulf at the European level between the citizens’ opinion- and will-formation, on the one hand, and the policies actually adopted to solve the pressing problems, on the other. This also explains why conceptions of the European Union and ideas of its future development have remained diffuse among the general population. Informed opinions and articulated positions are for the most part the monopoly of professional politicians, economic elites, and scholars with relevant interests; not even public intellectuals who generally participate in debates on burning issues have made this issue their own.¹ What unite the European citizens today are the Eurosceptical mindsets that have become more pronounced in all of the member countries during the crisis, albeit in each country for different and rather polarizing reasons. This trend may be an important fact for the political elites to take into account; but the growing resistance is not really decisive for the actual course of European policy-making which is largely uncoupled from the national arenas. The actual course of the crisis management is pushed and implemented in the first place by the large camp of pragmatic politicians who pursue an incrementalist agenda but lack a comprehensive perspective. They are oriented towards “More Europe” because they want to avoid the far more dramatic and presumably costly alternative of abandoning the euro.

Starting with the roadmap that the European institutions have designed for developing a Genuine Economic and Monetary Union, I will first explain the probable technocratic dilemma in which this project becomes entangled (1). In the second part of my lecture

I would like to expose alternative steps towards a supranational democracy in the core of Europe and the obstacles we would have to remove on that road (II). The major hindrance, the lack of solidarity, leads me in the last and philosophical part to a clarification of this difficult, yet genuinely political concept (III).

The Commission, the Presidency of the Council, and the European Central Bank — known in Brussels parlance as “the institutions” - are least subject to legitimation pressures because of their relative distance from the national public spheres. So it was up them to present in December 2012 the first more detailed document in which the European Union develops a perspective for reforms in the medium and long term that go beyond the present, more or less dilatory reactions to critical symptoms.\(^2\) Within this expanded timescale the attention is no longer focussed on the cluster of the recent causes that since 2010 have connected the global banking crisis with the vicious circle of overindebted European states and undercapitalized banks refinancing each other. The important and since long overdue Blueprint, as it is called, directs attention to long-term structural causes inherent in the Monetary Union itself.

The Economic and Monetary Union took shape during the 1990s in accordance with the ordoliberal ideas of the Stability and Growth Pact. The Monetary Union was conceived as a supporting pillar of an economic constitution that stimulates free competition among market players across national borders, and it is organized in accordance with general rules

\(^2\) COM/2012/777/FINAL/2: “A Blueprint for a Deep and Genuine Economic and Monetary Union: Launching a European Debate” (cited in what follows as “Blueprint”).
binding on all member states. Even without the instrument of devaluing national currencies that is not available in a monetary union, the differences in levels of competitiveness among the national economies were supposed to even out of their own accord. But the assumption that permitting unrestrained competition in accordance with fair rules would lead to similar unit labor costs and equal levels of prosperity, thereby obviating the need for joint decision-making on financial, economic and social policies, has proved to be false. Because the optimal conditions for a single currency in the euro zone are not satisfied, the structural imbalances between the national economies that existed from the start have become more acute; and they will become even more acute as long as the European policy pattern does not break with the principle that each member state makes sovereign decisions within the relevant policy fields without taking other member states into consideration, in other words, exclusively from its own national perspective.

In spite of some concessions, however, until now the German Federal Government has clung steadfastly to this dogma.

It is to the credit of the Commission and the Presidency of the Council that they have addressed the actual cause of the crisis — namely, the faulty design of a monetary union that nevertheless holds fast to the political self-understanding of an alliance of sovereign states (as the “Herren der Verträge”). According to the aforementioned reform proposal, the so-called Blueprint, three essential, though vaguely defined, objectives are to be realized at the end of a path projected to last five years: First, joint political decision-making at the EU level on “integrated guidelines” for coordinating the fiscal, budget, and economic policies of the individual states. This would call for an agreement that prevents the economic policy of one member state from having negative external effects on the economy of another member state. Furthermore, an EU budget based on the right to levy taxes with a European financial administration is envisaged for the purpose of country-specific stimulus programs. This would generate scope for selectively focused public investments through which the structural imbalances within the Monetary Union can be combated. Finally, euro bonds and a debt repayment fund are supposed to make possible a partial collectivization of state debts. This would relieve the European Central Bank of the task of preventing speculation against individual states in the euro zone that it has currently assumed on an informal basis.

These objectives could be realized only if cross-border transfer payments with the corresponding transnational redistribution effects were to be accepted. From the perspective of the constitutionally required legitimation, therefore, the Monetary Union would have to be expanded into a real Political Union. The report of the Commission naturally proposes the European Parliament for this purpose and correctly states that closer “inter-parliamentary cooperation as such does not … ensure democratic legitimacy for EU decisions.” On the other hand, the Commission takes into consideration the reservations of the heads of state and adheres so radically to the principle of exhausting the present legal basis of the Lisbon

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3 This state of affairs is expressed politely in the “Blueprint” (p. 2): “EMU is unique among modern monetary unions in that it combines a centralised monetary policy with decentralised responsibility for most economic policies.”

4 This was already noted at an early stage by Henrik Enderlein, Nationale Wirtschaftspolitik in der europäischen Wäh rungunion (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2004).

5 To this corresponds the authority of the Commission “to require a revision of national budgets in line with European commitments” (“Blueprint,” p. 26); this competence is clearly intended to go beyond the already existing obligations to exercise budgetary discipline.

6 “Blueprint,” p. 35.
The Treaty that it conceives of the transfer of competences from the national to the European level occurring only in a rather gradual and inconspicuous way.\textsuperscript{7}

The obvious aim is to postpone a revision of the treaties to the very end. The Commission accords the expansion of steering capacities priority in the short and the medium term over a corresponding enlargement of the basis of legitimation. Thus the ultimate democratization is presented as a promise like a light at the end of the tunnel. Supranational democracy remains the declared long term goal on paper. But postponing democracy is a rather dangerous move. If the economic constraints by the markets happily meet the flexibility of a free-floating European technocracy, there arise the immediate risk that the gradual unification process which is planned for, but not by the people will grind to a halt before the proclaimed goal of rebalancing the executive and the parliamentary branches is reached. Uncoupled from democratically enacted law and without feedback from the pressing dynamics of a mobilized political public sphere and civil society, political management lacks the impulse and the strength to contain and redirect the profit-oriented imperatives of investment capital into socially compatible channels. As we can observe already today, the authorities would more and more yield to the neoliberal pattern of politics. A technocracy without democratic roots would not have the motivation to accord sufficient weight to the demands of the electorate for a just distribution of income and property, for status security, public services, and collective goods when these conflicted with the systemic demands for competitiveness and economic growth.\textsuperscript{8}

Summarizing the analysis, we are trapped in the dilemma between, on the one side, the economic policies required to preserve the euro and, on the other, the political steps to closer integration. The steps that are necessary to achieve this objective are unpopular and meet with spontaneous popular resistance. The Commission’s plans reflect the temptation to bridge, in a technocratic manner, this gulf between what is economically required and what seems to be politically achievable only apart from the people. This approach harbors the danger of a growing gap between consolidating regulatory competences, on the one hand, and the need to legitimize these increased powers in a democratic fashion, on the other. Under the pull of this technocratic dynamic, the European Union would approach the dubious ideal of a market-conforming democracy that would be even more helplessly exposed to the imperatives of the markets because it lacked an anchor in a politically irritable and excitable civil society. Instead, the steering capacities which are lacking at present, though they are functionally necessary for any monetary union, could and should be centralized only within the framework of an equally supranational and democratic political community.

\textbf{II}

But what is the alternative to a further integration on the present model of executive federalism? Let us first consider those path breaking decisions that would have to be taken at the very beginning of the route leading to a supranational democracy in Europe. What is necessary

\textsuperscript{7} The “Let me have my cake and eat it too” strategy adopted by the proposal of the Commission avoids the overdue decision (“Blueprint,” p. 13): “Its deepening should be done within the Treaties, so as to avoid any fragmentation of the legal framework, which would weaken the Union and question the paramount importance of EU law for the dynamics of integration.”

\textsuperscript{8} See the relevant works of Wolfgang Streeck, most recently: Gekaufte Zeit. Die vertagte Krise des demokratischen Kapitalismus (Suhrkamp), Berlin 2013 and my review in: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik Heft 5, 2013.
in the first place is a consistent decision to expand the European Monetary Union into a Political Union (that would remain open, of course, to the accession of other EU member states, in particular Poland). This step would for the first time signify a serious differentiation of the Union into a core and a periphery. The feasibility of necessary changes in the European treaties would depend essentially on the consent of countries preferring to stay out. In the worst case a principled resistance had to be overcome only by a re-foundation of the Union (based on the existing institutions).

The decision for such a core Europe would amount to more than merely a further evolutionary step in the transfer of particular sovereign rights. With the establishment of a common economic government the red line of the classical understanding of sovereignty would be crossed. The idea that the nation states are “the sovereign subjects of the treaties” would have to be abandoned. On the other hand, the step to supranational democracy need not be conceived as a transition to a “United States of Europe.” “Confederation” versus “Federal state” is a false alternative (and a specific legacy of the constitutional discussion in 19th century Germany). The nation states can well preserve their integrity as states within a supranational democracy by retaining both their roles of the implementing administration and the final custodian of civil liberties.

At the procedural level the dethronement of the European Council would mean switching over from intergovernmentalism to the community method. As long as the ordinary legislative procedure in which the Parliament and the Council par-

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9 Stefan Oeter, “Föderalismus und Demokratie,” in Armin von Bogdandy and Jürgen Bast (eds), Europäisches Verfassungsrecht (Heidelberg: Springer, 2009), 73-120.

ticipate on an equal footing has not become the general rule, the European Union shares a deficiency in legitimation with all international organizations that are founded on treaties between states. This deficiency is explained by the asymmetry between the scope of the democratic mandate of each single member state and the encompassing reach of competences of the organization exercised by all of member states in concert. As national citizens see it, their political fate is determined by foreign governments who represent the interests of other nations, rather than by a government that is bound only by their own democratic vote. This deficit in accountability is intensified further by the fact that the negotiations of the European Council are conducted out of the public eye.

The community method is preferable not only for this normative reason, but for reason of enhancing efficiency, too. It helps to overcome national particularisms. In the Council, but also in inter-parliamentary committees, representatives who are obligated to defend national interests must just bargain compromises between obstinate positions. By contrast, the deputies in the European Parliament, which is divided up into parliamentary groups, are elected from the perspective of party affiliation. This is why, to the extent that a European party system is taking shape, political decision-making in the European Parliament can already be conducted on the basis of interests that were generalized across national borders.

These are the fundamental decisions necessary for transforming the Monetary Union into a Political Union that will not fall into the trap of technocracy. That would require, however, to overcome the high, almost insurmountable institutional hurdle of a change in primary law. The first step, namely calling for a convention which is authorized to revise the treaties, must be expected from the European Council, hence from the very institution that is least suited to making smooth cooperative resolutions. That would not be an easy decision for the members of the European Council who are at the same time heads of national governments. On the one hand, the thought of their re-election already leads them to recoil before this unpopular step; moreover, they do not have any interest in disempowering themselves either. On the other hand, they will not be able to ignore indefinitely the economic constraints that will sooner or later require further integration or at least a manifest choice between painful alternatives. (…)

III

This leads me to the final and philosophical question: What does it mean to show solidarity, and when are we entitled to appeal to solidarity? With a little exercise in conceptual analysis I intend to exonerate appeals to solidarity of accusations of moral stuffiness or misplaced good intentions that the “realists” are wont to level against them. Moreover, showing solidarity is a political act and by no means a form of moral selflessness that were misplaced in political contexts. Solidarity looses the false appearance of being unpolitical, once we learn how to distinguish obligations to show solidarity from both moral and legal obligations. “Solidarity” is not synonymous with “justice”, be it in the moral or the legal sense of the term.

We call moral and legal norms “just” when they regulate practices that are in the equal interest of all those affected. Just norms secure equal freedoms for all and equal respect for everyone. Of course, there are also special duties. Relatives, neighbors, or colleagues can in certain situations expect more, or a different
kind of help from each other than from strangers. Such special duties also hold in general for certain social relations. For example, parents violate their duty of care when they neglect the health of their children. The extent of these positive duties is often indeterminate, of course; it varies according to the kind, frequency, and importance of the corresponding social relations. When a distant relative contacts his surprised cousin once again after decades and confronts her with a request for a large financial contribution because he is facing an emergency situation, he can hardly appeal to a moral obligation but at most to a tie of an “ethical” kind founded on family relations (in Hegel’s terminology one, rooted in “Sittlichkeit” or “ethical life”). Belonging to an extended family will justify prima facie a duty to help, but only in cases when the actual relation gives rise to the expectation that e.g. the cousin can count on the support of her relative in turn in a similar situation.

Thus it is the trust-founding Sittlichkeit of informal social relations that, under the condition of predictable reciprocity, requires that the one individual “vouches” for the others. Such “ethical” obligations rooted in ties of an antecedently existing community, typically family ties, exhibit three features. They ground exacting or supererogatory claims that go beyond moral or legal obligations. On the other hand, when it comes to the required motivation the claim to solidarity is less exacting than the categorical force of a moral duty; nor does it coincide with the coercive character of law either. Moral commands should be obeyed out of respect for the underlying norm itself without regard to the compliance of other persons, whereas the citizen’s obedience to the law is conditional on the fact that the sanctioning power of the state ensures general compliance. Fulfilling an ethical obligation, by contrast, can neither be enforced nor is it categorically required. It depends instead on the expectations of reciprocal favors — and on the confidence in this reciprocity over time.

In this respect, unenforceable ethical behavior also coincides with one’s own medium- or long-term interest. And it is precisely this aspect that Sittlichkeit shares with solidarity. However, the latter can not rely on pre-political communities such as the family but only on political associations or shared political interests. Conduct based on solidarity presupposes political contexts of life, hence contexts that are legally organized and in this sense artificial ones. This explains why the credit of trust presupposed by solidarity is less robust than in the case of ethical conduct because this credit is not secured through the mere existence of a quasi-natural community. What is missing in the case of solidarity, is the moment of conventionality in antecedently existing ethical relations.

What lends solidarity moreover a special character is, second, the offensive character of pressing or even struggling for discharging the promise which is invested in the legitimacy claim of any political order. This forward-looking character becomes particularly clear when solidarity is required in the course of social and economic modernization, in order to adjust the overstretched capacities of an existing political framework, that is to adjust eroding political institutions to the indirect force of encompassing systemic, mainly economic interdependencies that are felt as constraints on what should be in the reach of the political control of democratic citizens. This offensive semantic feature of ‘solidarity’, over and above the reference to politics, can be elucidated by turning from an unhistorical conceptual clarification to the history of that concept.

By the way, nationalism obscures this difference between political solidarity and pre-political bonds. It appeals without justification to this kind of communitarian bond when it assimilates the civic solidarity of Staatsbürger to the “national solidarity” of Volksgenossen (tying people of the same descent).
The concept of solidarity first appeared in a situation in which revolutionaries were suing for solidarity in the sense of a redemptive reconstruction of relations of reciprocal support that were familiar but had become hollowed out by the surpassing processes of modernization. Whereas “justice” and “injustice” where already the focus of controversies in the first literate civilizations, the concept of solidarity is an astonishingly recent one. Although the term can be traced back to the Roman law of debts, only since the French Revolution of 1789 did it slowly acquire a political meaning, albeit initially in connection with the slogan of “fraternity.”

The battle cry of “fraternité” is a product of the humanist generalization of a specific pattern of thought engendered by all of the major world religions — namely, of the intuition that one’s own local community is part of a universal community of all faithful believers. This is the background of ‘fraternity’ as the key concept of the secularized religion of humanity that was radicalized and fused with the concept of solidarity during the first half of the nineteenth century by early socialism and Catholic social teachings. Even Heinrich Heine had still used the concepts “fraternity” and “solidarity” more or less synonymously. The two concepts became separated in the course of the social upheavals of approaching industrial capitalism and the nascent workers movement. The legacy of the Judeo-Christian ethics of fraternity was fused, in the concept of solidarity, with the republicanism of Roman origin. The orientation toward salvation or emancipation became amalgamated with that toward legal and political freedom. By the midst of the 19th century, an accelerated functional differentiation of society gave rise to extensive interdependencies behind the back of a paternalistic, still largely corporative and occupationally stratified every-day-world. Under the pressure of these reciprocal functional dependencies the older forms of social integration broke down and led to the rise of class antagonisms which were finally contained only within the extended forms of political integration of the nation state. The appeals to “solidarity” had their historical origin in the dynamic of the new class struggles. The organizations of the workers movement with their well-founded appeals to solidarity reacted to the occasion provided by the fact that the systemic, mainly economic constraints had outstripped the old relations of solidarity. The socially uprooted journeymen, workers, employees, and day laborers were supposed to form an alliance beyond the systemically generated competitive relations on the labor market. The opposition between the social classes of industrial capitalism was finally institutionalized within the framework of the democratically constituted nation states.

These European states assumed their present-day form of welfare states only after the catastrophes of the two world wars. In the course of economic globalization, these states find themselves in turn exposed to the explosive pressure of economic interdependencies that now tacitly permeate national borders. Systemic constraints again shatter the established relations of solidarity and compel us to reconstruct the challenged forms of political integration of the nation state. This time, the uncontrolled systemic contingencies of a form of capitalism driven by unrestrained fi-

14 See the entries in the subject index of the edition of Heine’s works by Klaus Briegelb (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1976), vol. 6, II, 818.

15 Hauke Brunkhorst, Solidarität: Von der Bürgerfreundschaft zur globalen Rechtsgenossenschaft (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002).
Financial markets are transformed into tensions between the member states of the European Monetary Union. If one wants to preserve the Monetary Union, it is no longer enough, given the structural imbalances between the national economies, to provide loans to over-indebted states so that each should improve its competitiveness by its own efforts. What is required is solidarity instead, a cooperative effort from a shared political perspective to promote growth and competitiveness in the euro zone as a whole.

Such an effort would require Germany and several other countries to accept short- and medium-term negative redistribution effects in its own longer-term self-interest — a classic example of solidarity, at least on the conceptual analysis I have presented.

Doctoral dissertations 2012-2013

Min Ou Yang, Anomalous Monism and the Messy World. PhD supervisor: Prof. Jaap van Brakel
This dissertation consists of four parts. Part I delves into the apparently contradictory notion of non-reductive nomological links as proposed by Lombardi and Labarca regarding the relation between physical and chemical theories and argues that it is a form of non-viable non-reductive physicalism. The major drawback of their project is that they do not notice that serious forms of non-reductionism tend to be aligned with prioritising manifest worldviews instead of the scientific image and are, thus, incompatible with physicalism. Part II tries to put forward a viable form of non-reductive physicalism by arguing for an empiricist metaphysics of prioritising the manifest over the scientific image. The intent is to dethrone the imperialism of physicalism by depriving it of its ontological force and bestowing it with a merely instrumental or pragmatic sense.

Part III investigates the so-called representative of non-reductive physicalism, viz., (Davidson’s) anomalous monism, and defends its tenability. This part argues that anomalous monism is not genuine physicalism but an event monism. A tailored physicalism with a merely instrumentalist sense and which is committed to merely epistemologized ontologies may still be integrated into this Davidsonian event monism. Hence, anomalous monism may suffice to provide the conditions of possibility for non-reductive nomological links and be a proper model for explicating the relationship between chemistry and physics. The anomalous monist framework is primarily based upon manifest worldviews rather than scientific theorisation. It is pluralistic in the sense that the only available ontologies are epistemologized ones, and is a form of metaphysical monism since we are all living and interacting in the same world.

In conclusion, Part IV provides a practical application of this model to an inter-cultural issue: the (non-)existence of Chinese philosophy (or sinosophy). The anomalous monist model shows that both philosophy and Chinese thought are historical entities and cannot be reduced to one another.

Jelle Zeedijk, Levensstijl als levensvorm. Een wijsgerige verkenning van het begrip ‘habitus’ in het werk van Pierre Bourdieu (Lifestyle as a form of life. A philosophical ex-
When people are asked why they organize their lives the way they do, their answers presuppose a lot more than one might at first expect. Our justifications of our life patterns, however, usually contain an implicit concept of man. Subjectivists claim that the subject is the source of our (spontaneous and intentional) actions, whereas objectivists search for underlying (economic, anthropological, linguistic etc.) structures, that determine our actions. Bourdieu, as a sociologist, shows that people’s free and intentional actions nevertheless form a strongly structured whole. The preferences that people have and the ways that they organize their lives are clearly clustered into lifestyles. On the other hand, Bourdieu also shows us that the objective, underlying structure of our actions is actualized only when people ignore it.

Bourdieu searches for a middle path between subjectivist and objectivist theories of our actions and, to that end, readopts the classic philosophical concept of ‘habitus’. Habitus, for Bourdieu, is the most fundamental human quality. It is the embodied point of view from which we manage and structure the world. It is the source from which our reactions and preferences spontaneously arise, as if we ourselves were giving the world its structure. However, this point of view is not only structuring, but also structured. It is something that we acquire in our education. This educational process shows us our place in the social world and teaches us what is suitable or not, interesting or not, what is expected from us and what is not.

Habitus, to conclude, is not direct conditioning, but forms a general and open structure, that — like taste — structures our senses. We have, for instance, a certain sense of humor, rhythm, beauty, language and spatial insight. This means that, in different unpredictable and endlessly varied situations, we can always rely upon the habitus to lead to a certain unity of actions and preferences. Habitus, thus, appears in Bourdieu’s work as both a structuring and a structured structure.

This dissertation explores the philosophical relevance of Bourdieu’s theory, as well as his relation and confrontation with thinkers such as Wittgenstein, Panofsky, Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Sartre and Elster, all of which helped Bourdieu to elaborate his concept of habitus.

Fatina Hamdi, Art and the Good. PhD supervisor: Prof. William Desmond

This dissertation investigates the relation between art and the good according to three prominent philosophers: Plato, Kant, and Nietzsche. These three philosophers wrote profusely on this theme and dealt with the relation between the aesthetic and the ethical each in his own way. Both Plato and Kant stressed the close relation between art and the good with Plato placing strict rules on the nature of art to make sure that it came as close as possible to expressing the good. Plato and Kant clearly give precedence to the ethical good. Kant goes a step further than Plato to show that there is a close similarity between aesthetic and moral feeling and that the two emerge from the same elevated origin. Nietzsche departs from his two predecessors by giving precedence to art, relativizing the good, and giving it a base, pragmatic origin tied all the way back to primitive, primeval times.

Understanding the relation between art and the good requires a study of human nature, which is the seat of this relation. Human nature according to the three philosophers is a mixture of good and evil. When it comes to evil, humans can be sometimes be cruel and violent. Evil can become radical and the human soul a tyrant that thrives on injustice. But Plato and Kant believe that education can save humans from such a fate. For Plato, art
plays a special role in educating the human soul and Kant’s position is quite similar. Nietzsche, however, is more concerned with redeeming himself through illusion. Such illusion can make a tragic life, as the one he suffered, more bearable. Dionysian illusion through the art of tragedy and music and even Nietzsche’s own writings can provide panacea for life’s misery and suffering. This illusion will also delineate the relative good that men imagine lies at the base of their happiness.

Art and the good seem to constantly converge and philosophers have consistently tried to fathom and explicate the relation between them. For Plato, the good has priority and art must follow strict rules to aid in the formation of the good life. For Kant, the beautiful and the good are closely related and follow from the same source. For Nietzsche, art has priority over the good and the good is shaped by art itself.

The reception of Aristotle in Jansenius and Fromondus is presented as multi-layered, and also dependent on numerous other theologians/philosophers such as Luis de Molina, Francisco Suárez or Leonardus Lessius, whom Jansenius and Fromondus criticized for their ‘Aristotelian’ views on grace. It is actually against these Jesuit scholars that both Jansenius and Fromondus often discuss Augustine’s views on grace and the salvation of the soul. The Jesuits are polemically identified both as allegedly Aristotelian and as allegedly Pelagian. Both Jansenius and Fromondus criticise them for ‘corrupting’ Augustine’s views on grace because of their Aristotelian views on virtue, which, they argue, led them to assert pure nature and free will against the necessity and irresistibility of grace.

It seems, thus, that Aristotle’s and Augustine’s reception were tightly interconnected when grace and free will were at issue in seventeenth-century Louvain. Even if Aristotle’s works were often criticized for their discrepancies with Augustine’s views on grace, the fact that both Jansenius and Fromondus quote almost the same works and passages in almost the same contexts may prove that Aristotle was important in this Augustinian context of seventeenth-century Louvain. It may also prove that Fromondus was inspired by Jansenius’ ideas and work. The polemic accents in Jansenius’ *Augustinus* against the ‘Aristotelian’ and ‘Pelagian’ Jesuits are indeed still present in Fromondus’ *Brevis anatomia hominis*. However, Fromondus’ thorough knowledge of Aristotle suggests that it is likely that he intended to offer a synthesis of Augustine’s and Aristotle’s views.

James Slagle, *Plantinga and the Epistemological Skyhook*. PhD supervisor: Prof. Paul Cortois

There is an interesting argument in the margins of contemporary philosophy which suggests

Diana Stanciu, *The Reception of Aristotle in the Augustinian Context of Seventeenth-century Louvain (Cornelius Jansenius and Libertus Fromondus on Grace and Free Will)*. PhD supervisor: Prof. Russell Friedman; co-supervisor: Prof. Mathijs Lamberigts

The basic assumption of this project is that some of Aristotle’s views are present in the work of both Cornelius Jansenius and Libertus Fromondus in spite of the Augustinian context of their work or their rather close and complex relationship to it. Jansenius’ *Augustinus* (1640) and Fromondus’ *Brevis anatomia hominis* (1641) are studied here in detail in order to show that Aristotle’s ideas had a unique bearing on their concepts of habitual grace, contingency and sufficient/efficient grace. Aristotle is also present in these scholars’ works through references to the works of scholastic authors such as Aquinas and Scotus, who both quote him often themselves.
that determinism, naturalism, or both are self-defeating. The most recent expression of this “Epistemological Skyhook” is Alvin Plantinga’s “evolutionary argument against naturalism”.

Plantinga’s first premise is as follows: if naturalism is true, the objective probability that we have reliable cognitive faculties is low. In defense of this premise, he argues that if naturalism is true, beliefs would have both neurological or material properties and content. The problem is that, given naturalism, there is no reason to think that belief content can influence behavior. But evolution would only select properties that influence behavior. If we imagine a hypothetical population of organisms which evolved via naturalistic evolution, the probability that any of their particular beliefs is true is 50/50. The probability that their beliefs would be mostly true in general is, thus, extremely low. We can abbreviate the claim that we have reliable cognitive faculties (i.e. faculties which produce beliefs) as R. Thus, given naturalism, R is very improbable.

Plantinga’s second premise is that the low probability of R gives the individual cognizer a defeater - a reason to withhold belief - for R. The third premise is that anyone who has a defeater for R thereby obtains a defeater for any and every other belief that she has, including evolution and naturalism itself. This is because every other belief is produced by our cognitive faculties, and could only be accepted if we assume the truth of R. Plantinga concludes that since belief in naturalism gives one a defeater for naturalism, naturalism is self-defeating and cannot be rationally believed.

An interesting result of this is that it provides a new way for a belief to be accidentally true and thus fail to qualify as knowledge. Given naturalism, the content of any particular belief would be an accidental - i.e. contingent - aspect of it. One holds the belief not because it is true but because it is a by-product of the struggle for survival, or because it is an epiphenomenon of the brain. We can imagine possible worlds where organisms engage in appropriate behavior in order to survive, but in which belief content has no effect on this behavior. We can even imagine physically identical possible worlds in which there are no beliefs at all. Given naturalism, we have no reason to think that we are not in such a world, despite appearances to the contrary. The only way out of this conundrum, therefore, is to reject naturalism.

April Capili, *Altered Selves: Redefinitions of Subjectivity in Emmanuel Levinas and Jean-Luc Marion*. PhD supervisor: Prof. Luc Anckaert; co-supervisor: Prof. Ignace Verhack

Emmanuel Levinas and Jean-Luc Marion offer redefinitions of subjectivity that are comparable in many ways. Notwithstanding the similarities, however, these thinkers are still set apart by their divergent ways of articulating a new and radical understanding of subjectivity. This dissertation argues that while the alternatives they offer are similar, Levinas’ notion of the responsible subject is able to surmount the critiques and objections that Marion’s gifted self cannot.

After an examination of their earlier texts, the study moves to the more recent work of Levinas and Marion, where more viable alternatives to the discredited conception of the central and sovereign subject in modernity and metaphysics can be located. Marion radicalizes his vision of subjectivity in and through his rehabilitation and rethinking of phenomenology according to the last principle of givenness. L’adonné, or the gifted, is passive, receptive, non-central, and constituted by the call of saturated phenomena that give themselves excessively. There remain noticeable parallels between the self who receives itself from phenomena and the latter Levinas’ idea of the responsible subject who arises thanks
to the other’s pre-original approach. However, only the Levinasian subject redefined as responsibility - with the help of related ideas like passivity, vulnerability, and the sense of time as diachrony - overcomes not only the limitations of the strong subject in *Totality and Infinity* but also the critique of debilitating passivity and of the vagueness of the capacity for agency met by Marion’s given self. Levinas’ radicalization of the conception of the self as a creature brings together the idea of a self always already exposed to, touched and accused by and oriented towards the other on the one hand, and the current understanding of the active subject able to think and act in present and actual societies, on the other.

With the account of the other’s approach in an immemorial time, we can understand ourselves as always already responsible for one other. Levinas’ idea of the Third, meanwhile, allows him to retrace his steps back to being, justice, and society as a whole, thereby enabling us to see our transition from passive selves to active agents related to so many others in societies, all of whom rely on our initiative in the pursuit of philosophical wisdom and the pursuit of justice.


“What is the place of nature in man’s world?” asks the human ecologist and environmental thinker Paul Shepard. It is this question, along with its more popular counterpart concerning our place within nature, which perhaps best encapsulates his thought as well as its relevance to addressing the environmental crisis. As we witness the end of the last remaining areas of wilderness and the mass extinction of wild species due to escalating human demands for living space and resources, perhaps, it is time we ask what place they have in what is, increas-

ingly, solely our world.

The difficulty here is that according to most contemporary theories of value, it is not only difficult to articulate a place or value for the non-human natural world. The very definition of our humanity and its *telos* has come to be seen as consisting of our overcoming and supplanting nature.

Shepard sees this deeply entrenched understanding of our humanity as apart from and above the natural world as the heart of the environmental crisis. Consequently, Shepard argues for a radical revision of traditional philosophical anthropology. We cannot address the ecological crisis at arm’s length without acknowledging that we are part of the very same wild nature that we are trying to preserve. In fact, what we see as distinguishing us from the wild natural world - the human mind - is actually the part of us which is the wildest of all.

Drawing on ethnographic studies of animistic thought from hunting and gathering peoples — whose ways of life most closely approximate those in which our species lived for 95-99 % of existence on this earth —, Shepard argues that the species system and ecological relationships between species formed the original template by which the human animal articulated its social and metaphysical relationships. Humanity’s original wild ecology informed a fundamentally egalitarian cosmology in which human beings understood themselves to be one species among many intertwined in a wider ecological economy of interdependence and reciprocity.

This conception, however, underwent a fundamental shift with the Neolithic revolution and the introduction of domestication. Domestication not only places human aims in an antagonistic relationship to their wild environment but also instantiates notions of domination, control and suzerainty over
the world. Hence Shepard sees the Neolithic revolution as leading to the gradually devaluation of the natural world and giving rise to the notion of anthropocentrism which, he argues, is at the heart of our current environmental crisis.


This dissertation is an examination of the views of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) on the foundations of ethics. It begins by addressing Kant’s motivation for investigating the foundations of ethics. Kant claims that the metaphysical foundations of ethics are not a matter of idle speculative curiosity. Rather, they are of fundamental, practical importance to everyone for whom the metaphysical foundations of ethical life are determined. In moral self-consciousness, we have a sense that our existence has some kind of point or purpose — a role to play in the moral order. Traditional metaphysical ideas about God, human nature, and a purposive universe once provided a context for this sense of purpose, but we can no longer rely on these traditional ideas. Kant asks, then: is there any way to develop a modern metaphysics of morals that could make sense of this idea of purpose and help to sustain it?

Kant’s name for the activity that constitutes our necessary role in the moral order is ‘duty’. He claims that the ground of the necessity of our duty, and thus of the purpose of our existence, lies in the purposive structure, or form, of the moral order of which we are a part. However, this form is not imposed upon us from without by God or Nature, as it was in traditional metaphysics. Rather, the ground of the purposive structure of the moral order lies in the form of the moral order itself. The moral order is therefore intrinsically purposive: it is a purely teleological order. Kant calls the moral order of which we are parts the ‘Realm of Ends’, and the form of this order the ‘Moral Law’. Through our reciprocal relations to each other as members of the Realm of Ends, we collectively impose the Moral Law upon ourselves as individuals. The grounding for the necessity behind this duty is this collective lawgiving activity, which Kant calls ‘autonomy’ or literally, ‘self-law’.

This dissertation argues that Kant’s metaphysics of morals can only be understood if we follow him in determining the causal features of duty and the moral order (for Kant, the Moral Law is a causal law). This makes it possible, for example, to resolve issues regarding whether and how we know that we are members of the Realm of Ends. It also clarifies Kant’s claim that the nature of the moral order is specifically different from the nature of the sensible world. Finally, it makes it possible to understand why the results of Kant’s metaphysics of morals can survive critical reflection in a way that the claims of traditional metaphysics cannot.


This dissertation tries to solve the puzzle of Friedrich Hayek’s (1899-1992) ‘transformation’ and draw some normative conclusions from this episode. Hayek scholars hold that around 1936, the technical economist Hayek ‘transformed’ into a broad philosopher, interested not only in economics but also in the history and methodology of economics and its normative implications. In the standard account, Hayek became a philosopher because he came to realize that there were philosophical reasons why his fellow economists (who, according to Hayek, followed a ‘scientistic’ methodology) disagreed with his economics. This dissertation shows that this standard account is wrong:
Hayek never transformed into a philosopher. On the other hand, something was clearly happening in the 1930s. It was a crucial period in the maturation of economics as a scientific discipline and the philosopher-economist Hayek was a victim of this process.

The idea that scientific disciplines mature comes from Thomas Kuhn. On the basis of a thorough study of the history of the natural sciences, Kuhn showed that a scientific discipline becomes mature when it settles upon one particular ‘paradigm’ that contains the official methodology of that discipline and thus specifies how a scientist should conduct scientific inquiry in that discipline. In an immature discipline, by contrast, there are many different competing schools with their own methods.

The paradigmatic methodology on which economists gradually found an agreement in the 1930s instructed economists, much like physicists, to construct elegant mathematical models of economic phenomena and use statistical analysis to test them against empirical data. For some time, Hayek tried both measuring and modeling, but he ultimately opted for a non-empirical and nonmathematical kind of theorizing, typical of the Austrian school of economics. This became increasingly unacceptable to his colleagues, who were joining the consensual paradigm. Hayek, however, believed he had good methodological reasons for his non-empirical and nonmathematical approach and increasingly gave the economic discussions with his colleagues a methodological twist. Again, this was unacceptable to his colleagues. As is common in the Kuhnian stage of matured science, they felt that the days of great methodological debates were over and that it was time to be practical and just do science. Thus, they ended up rejecting Hayek.

This dissertation states that there are good reasons why a social science should be mathematical and empirical, but it will not argue too much about methodology. It shows that Hayek performed best when accidental circumstances kept him from ‘methodologizing’ and that things went wrong when he increased his methodological efforts.

Trevor Perri, Habit and Life in Bergson and French Philosophy, PhD supervisor: Prof. Rudolf Bernet

In philosophy, habit has generally been conceived in two rather divergent ways. On the one hand, some philosophers have conceived of habit more or less negatively, as an inclination to accomplish a certain behavior in a way that is automatic and impersonal. These philosophers have argued that habits cannot be considered genuinely virtuous, moral, or free. On the other hand, other philosophers have emphasized that habits constitute one’s concrete self, facilitate thought and action, and can be conducive to one’s freedom. In this dissertation, Trevor Perri aims to show that Henri Bergson integrates these two seemingly contradictory ways of conceiving habit in an overarching account that can do justice to habit’s ambiguous nature. Specifically, Perri argues that although Bergson is most often thought to have subscribed to the idea that habit can only lead to automatic, impersonal, and inauthentic behavior, he shows that habits and acquired dispositions tend to be manifested in two ways in our lives. On the one hand, habits can be accomplished blindly, mechanically, and in a way that seems to diminish our freedom. And, on the other hand, habits can also be accomplished intelligently, dynamically, and in a way that is expressive of the totality of one’s self and one’s freedom. More precisely, following suggestions made by Bergson throughout his writings, Perri argues that most, if not all of our habits, should be situated between these two extremes.

Woo-Ram Hong, The Regulative Use of Kant’s Idea of God in the Critique of Pure Reason, PhD supervisor: Prof. Martin Moors

This dissertation investigates the significant
function of the idea of God in relation to the domain of our theoretical cognitions, which Kant elucidated in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, i.e., the regulative function of the idea of God for our theoretical cognitions of experience.

Although Kant’s critical discussions on God appear in the *Critique* as destructive to the traditional dogmatic metaphysics of God, they must not be overemphasized insofar that Kant’s intent behind those discussions is not, in itself, destructive. They are constructively intended to find the possibility for a legitimate theology that can rightfully substitute traditional, dogmatic theology.

All attempts at traditional, speculative theology must be rejected as illegitimate insofar that they pretend to derive determinate cognitions merely on the basis of the idea of God. Nevertheless, it is of great importance to note that even if Kant rejects such a dogmatic attempt, the idea of God is still accepted by him as a valid basis for legitimate theology. Kant claims that the idea of God, although a problematic concept, has an *a priori* origin in the nature of our reason, and hence must be able to function validly as a theoretical basis for any legitimate theology.

Moreover, apart from serving as a basis for theology, the idea of God has a different function which is particularly significant for the very purpose of the *Critique*. That is to say, Kant claims in the *Critique* that the idea of God makes a constructive contribution to the domain of theoretical cognitions by its regulative function of uniting the manifold cognitions of experience into a system. The idea of God, however, is not the sole transcendental idea that can fulfill such a regulative function; the other two transcendental ideas, i.e., the ideas of the I and the World, can do so as well. But, although all those three transcendental ideas unite the manifold cognitions of experience into a system, the purposive unity can only be attained by the idea of God. Only this idea can allow us to think analogically as if all objects of experience were purposively connected to one another in accordance with the intention of the supreme intelligence.


This thesis works towards the conclusion that efforts to preserve nature are about “helping to extend the duration of things”. The preservation of nature should start by developing sensitivity toward and a respect for the different meanings that landscapes gathered throughout their histories.

Deliège first analyzes, what he calls, the ‘nature conservation consensus’. This consensus, which holds sway over preservationist organizations as well as over preservationist policy, maintains that nature preservation should focus on the preservation of biodiversity and that this should be accomplished by designating large and, preferably, contiguous natural reserves and that we should do this because of the crucial role that biodiversity plays in the thriving of an ecosystem. This consensus is the result of the strong influence of conservation biology on present-day preservation. Under the influence of conservation biology, nature preservation has become science-based preservation. This view on preservation runs the risk of reducing nature preservation to a purely technocratic practice, conceptualizing nature as an empty and meaningless container to be filled with as much biodiversity as possible.

The technocratic approach to preservation misses, at least, one important point about preservation: that it is always about respecting ‘nature’ as a transcendent source of orientation, however minimally conceived. ‘Nature’ is still used as a normative concept in order to
evaluate preservationist practices. This usage of ‘nature’ as an evaluative criterion is strongly present in the ‘wilderness tradition’, the strand of environmental philosophy that stresses the central importance of the concept of ‘wilderness’ or ‘wildness’. The problem is, however, that this tradition usually uses an ontological definition of ‘wilderness’ or ‘wildness’: an object is deemed to be ‘wild’ when it is ‘not modified by the human hand’.

Deliège shows how such an ontological conception of ‘wilderness’ has become untenable, and how one should understand the concepts of ‘wilderness’ or ‘nature’, as essentially historical concepts. When using the word ‘nature’ or ‘wildness’ as a transcendent order which should be respected, one often refers to them as ‘constellations of historically developed meanings’. Respect for nature thus becomes respect for the historically developed constellation of meanings that a particular natural area (or a landscape) presents, and preservation a question continuing to allow a landscape to present its meaning.

Brian Robertson, *The uncanny little object: Lacanian speculation on the problem of anxiety*. PhD supervisor: Prof. Paul Moyaert

This dissertation carries out a close reading of the so-called ‘Anxiety’ Seminar of Jacques Lacan and, by doing so, reanimates what psychologists and psychiatrists often refer to as a hermeneutical approach to the study of anxiety. What this means, in a nutshell, is that instead of studying anxiety within the framework of the hard sciences (e.g. physiology or neuroscience), it is taken as a lens, as it were, through which to explore certain questions and problems relating to the human condition. Throughout the course of his work, Robertson articulates the ins and outs of Lacan’s account in relation to the different ways that anxiety has been thought about and understood within the modern philosophical tradition of existentialism (e.g. in the work of Søren Kierkegaard and Jean-Paul Sartre). The questions raised in this dissertation are the following:

1. What is the object/source of anxiety? In contrast to the concrete, or situation-bound, dread that we feel in fear, why is anxiety’s dread always a nameless and lurking dread - a dread, as it were, ‘without any (determinate) object’?

2. Why is our experience of love and desire, as human beings, so rife with anxiety and embarrassed disquiet? What could the sexual perversions of sadism and masochism possibly reveal concerning this link between anxiety, desire and sexual pleasure?

3. Why is our lived experience of anxiety so difficult to express in speech (or language)?

4. Do men and women experience anxiety in different ways or to different degrees (as Søren Kierkegaard claimed)?

5. What role does anxiety play (or where do we find it appearing) in animal life? Were existentialist philosophers (such as Kierkegaard) right, or were they perhaps a little hasty, to deny the presence of anxiety in animal life?
HIW NEWS 2012-2013

Personalia

On October 1, 2013, the HIW welcomed a new professor. Henning Tegtmeier was appointed as a senior lecturer at the Centre for Metaphysics and Philosophy of Culture. He teaches Metaphysics and Philosophy of Religion both to graduate and undergraduate students of the Institute’s International Program.

Russell Friedman was promoted to the rank of full professor, starting October 1, 2013.

Thursday Lectures and Lectures for the 21st Century

In 2012-2013, the Institute of Philosophy had a rich programme of lectures and seminars.

There were five Thursday Lectures:


The Lectures for the 21st Century celebrated their 19th edition. Programme 2012-2013:


Other lectures and conferences

From 4 to 6 October, the Institute of Philosophy and The Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies jointly organised a conference on Democracy and the Market: Shifting Balances, Shifting Perspectives. As part of the conference, the organisers hosted a public debate at STUK on 4 October. The topic of this debate was: Europe in Crisis: Is there A Future for Social Justice?

Martin Moors’ retirement celebration took place on Saturday, 10 November in the University Hall. The academic lecture was given by Louis Dupré (Yale University) on the topic of Religion in Crisis. Martin Moors’ farewell speech had an inspiring title: Religion under Criticism: So What?

Within the framework of the Germany Year at KU Leuven, the Husserl Archives organised its Arbeitstage on Feeling and Value, Willing and Action. This conference was held from 21 to 24 November.
The result of the renovation work in the Institute’s main building is worth seeing: the newly renovated hall is much brighter and has motion sensor light switches.

What used to be the Professors’ Room is now a coffee room for students and visitors. Photos: Rob Stevens
The yearly Saint Thomas Aquinas Feast was held on Wednesday, 6 March. This year’s guest speaker was Pasquale Porro (Università di Bari). The festivities started at 5 PM with a mass in the chapel of the Leo XIII seminary. At 6 PM, Prof. Porro gave a lecture on *Lex necessitatis vel contingentiae: Necessity, Contingency and Providence in Thomas Aquinas’ Universe*.

The Third Graduate Student Conference of the Institute of Philosophy was held on 22 March. This yearly spring conference gives graduate students the opportunity to present their research. Stefan Rummens gave the conference’s closing lecture on *A Picture Holds Us Captive: Towards a Wittgensteinian Account of Free Will*.

The theme of the 2013 edition of the Festival of Philosophy was *Economy and Value*. The keynote speech was given by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. Other participants included Bas Haring, Paul Verhaeghe, Paul De Grauwe, Joris Luyendijk, Toon Vandevelde, Tom Hodgkinson and Timneke Beeckman. There was a theatre performance (*Book Burning*) by Pieter De Buysser in the evening. The festival also offered workshops (philosophy for children), a philosophical tour in Leuven and a movie (accompanied by a lecture).

The Husserl Memorial Lecture 2013 was given by Pierre Kerszberg. His lecture (on 16 April) was entitled: *The First Gestures of Knowledge*. The next day, the Husserl Archives organised a seminar on *From the World of Life to the Life-World (Bergson and Phenomenology)*.

One of the biggest events of the 2012-2013 academic year was undoubtedly the Jürgen Habermas lecture on 26 April at the Pieter De Somer auditorium in Leuven. There was so much interest from the wider public that the university had to organise a live video feed in the city park and a digital recording of the lecture to be made available online. The title of Habermas’ lecture was *Democracy, Solidarity, and the European Crisis*. The lecture was also picked up by the national media and made national news.

In May, there were several conferences at the Institute of Philosophy. The research group RIPPLE (Research in Political Philosophy Leuven) hosted a workshop on *Recognition and Redistribution in Multinational Federations*. The Centre for Metaphysics and Philosophy of Culture organised a conference on *Hegel’s Conception of Contradiction: Logic, Life and History*. They also organised the very first edition of the *Leuven Kant Conference*, which was a great success.

From 17 to 19 June, the Husserl Archives organised a conference on *Lotze to Husserl: Psychology, Mathematics and Philosophy in Göttingen*.

The summer school of the Institute of Philosophy celebrated its fifth edition. Because of the renovation of the Institute, the classes took place at the Hollands College. A group of 60 participants worked on the four questions of Immanuel Kant: “What can I know?”, “What should I do?”, “What may I hope?” and “What is man?” For the first time, the summer school also provided an advanced programme. The theme of this new programme was “The Malaise of Modernity”.

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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. See http://www.hiw.kuleuven.be/eng/jobsscholarships.html for deadlines and more information.

Institute of Philosophy Research Projects
Description: Every year, PhD scholarships are available for particular research projects, for which professors of the Institute of Philosophy acquired competitive funding. Qualifications: MA Philosophy degree and experience in the requested field. Tenure: usually four years.

Application: Project descriptions, application procedures and deadlines are announced at www.hiw.kuleuven.be/eng/jobsscholarships.html when available.

KU 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:** until the next round of appointment of BOFZAP or KU Leuven professors. **Application:** There is no specific submission date. A continuous submission is possible.

**KU Leuven Post-Doctoral Fellowships**

**Description:** The University awards postdoctoral 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:** Application forms must be filled out and submitted by a KU Leuven professor together with the curriculum vitae of the candidate and a brief description of the proposed research. **Submission dates:** March and September.

**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 and holder of a master’s degree with excellent academic qualifications. The time period between the date of completion of their MA degree and the date of submission of their scholarship application can be no more than ten years. 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 1140 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 www.fulbright.be/study-in-belgium/scholarships-for-us-citizens-studying-or-researching-in-belgium/ 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.baeff.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. Information can also be found at www.studyinflanders.be/en/scholarship-programmes/

**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.

Aid to the Church in Need scholarships for priests and religious

**Description:** Scholarships for priests and religious. Prospective key personnel and teaching 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 philosophy departments in the following countries: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The Erasmus coordinator of the HIW is Prof. S. Rummens.
The *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, founded in 1939, is published four times a year. Each volume totals more than 800 pages and is also available online. All universities of the Dutch-speaking regions (including South Africa) are represented in the editorial council. Currently the journal is led by an independent international editorial board, which has its seat at the Institute of Philosophy of the KU Leuven.

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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