The Leuven Philosophy Newsletter is an annual publication dedicated to the men and women, alumni and alumnae, of the Institute of Philosophy. The Newsletter welcomes all reader correspondence. Please write to:

The Leuven Philosophy Newsletter
Kardinaal Mercierplein 2
B-3000 Leuven
Belgium

Managing Editor:
Ines Van Houtte

Production: Typeface

THE LEUVEN PHILOSOPHY NEWSLETTER
A NEWSLETTER FOR THE ALUMNI OF THE INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY
VOLUME 23, 2015-2016

CONTENTS

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION FROM DEAN BART RAYMAEKERS
INTRODUCTION BY RUSSELL FRIEDMAN, DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME
NEW FACULTY MEMBERS AT THE INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY: AN INTERVIEW WITH PIETER ADRIAENS, MATTHIAS LIEVENS AND STEFANO MICALI
SAMUEL IJSELING (1932-2015)
WIM DE PATER (1930-2015)
FOCUS ON THE NETHERLANDS
MY EXPERIENCE AS A DUTCH PHILOSOPHER IN BELGIUM
ON BELGIANs, DANES AND BEING A CONSEQUENTIALIST KANTIAN
HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND EMBRACE THE UNEXPECTED
THE NETHERLANDS
ON BERRIES, CHEESE AND CARS
LEUVEN – NIJMEGEN
PHILOSOPHY IN THE NETHERLANDS: INSTITUTIONAL SHIFTS
ZOOMING IN ON RESEARCH: THE CENTRE FOR LOGIC AND ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY
THE HUSSERL MEMORIAL LECTURE 2015: SARA HEINÄMAA
SAINT THOMAS FEAST 2015: AN INTERVIEW WITH MARYLlN ADAMS
CARDINAL MERCIER CHAIR 2015: AN INTERVIEW WITH DARlAN LEADER
THE HIW’S 125TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
HERITAGE DAY FLANDERS 2015
THE JOSEPH VAN DE WIELE FUND’S 25TH ANNIVERSARY
THE ERASMUS EXCHANGE PROGRAM
COURSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT
OPEN ONLINE COURSES IN PHILOSOPHY
GRADUATION SPEECH, JULY 1, 2015
DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS 2014-2015
HIW NEWS 2014-2015
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AT THE INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY
A WORD OF INTRODUCTION
FROM DEAN BART RAYMAECKERS

As I write this introduction, our media report non-stop on the terrible events at Brussels Airport and in the metro in Brussels. Astonishingly quickly, all kinds of experts have their opinions and explanations ready, though perhaps, at first, only silence is appropriate. At moments like these, we might come to realize that many of our activities, particularly our philosophical thinking and acting, are, in a way, futile. And yet, those daily activities give us something to hold onto at moments like these. One of them is the annual publication of the Alumni Newsletter, with an impressive overview of activities at the Institute of Philosophy. And even if we do not file away every single activity, when you look back at it, every time, there’s more than you would spontaneously expect.

The festivities around the Institute’s 125th anniversary concluded last year with the Heritage Day Flanders, in which the Institute participated by opening its doors, so that a broad public could get acquainted with and admire our buildings. For us, they are often reduced to the daily workplace. But on a day like this, visitors give us a very intense feeling of the special character of the site as a whole. As an appendix to the jubilee year, the 25th anniversary of the Joseph Van de Wiele Fund was commemorated with due splendor. In the presence of members of the family, the audience was reminded of the importance of this Fund for the Institute of Philosophy and its reputation.
Even more characteristic and defining for the Institute’s life than events and anniversaries are its members of staff. Alumni seldom remember colloquia or study days. What they remember are their fellow-students, and of course the professors who were in charge ‘in their day’. This year, three new professors joined the ranks. Pieter Adriaens and Matthias Lievens were brought on to take up teaching duties mainly at the new KU Leuven campuses. The integration into the university of the former college programs brought along an extension of the Institute of Philosophy’s action radius from Hasselt to Bruges and from Antwerp, via Brussels, to Ghent and Kortrijk. In the field of philosophical anthropology, Stefano Micali came from Germany to join the ranks. His broad expertise at the crossroads of psychiatry and phenomenology guarantees the continuance of important traditions in Leuven.

As always, 2015 was not only a year of new faces and new appointments, but also a year of saying good-bye to some familiar names. Sam IJsseling died in May. He fulfilled important tasks, such as director of the Husserl Archives and editor in chief of the *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*. But it was first and foremost as a teacher and as a writer that he left his mark on Leuven. He produced his own philosophical sound, which was heard not only in Leuven, but also far beyond. In September, Wim de Pater passed away. He was an inspiring teacher and, for many years, the face of logic and analytical philosophy in Leuven.

The passing of years and generations can give the impression that philosophy and its place in the academic world are firm and unmovable. Nevertheless, universities are constantly evolving, and so are expectations regarding philosophy. It is striking that in The Netherlands only two independent faculties of philosophy remain. The others have been integrated into larger wholes with names like ‘Faculty of the Humanities’. Philosophy is still there, but it is less visible and less able to define its identity autonomously. Philosophy in The Netherlands gets special attention in this issue of the Alumni Newsletter, as more and more students and staff members from there find their way to Leuven.

Reading this issue of the Newsletter, you will discover the variety that defines philosophy in Leuven. It aspires to high-mindedness and profoundness in order to be taken seriously in those places where decisions are made about the future of academic activities. But, at the same time, it wants to be present and to be heard by students in and outside Belgium, and by a broader audience. More than ever, this broader audience expects philosophy to play a role in our collective reflection and orientation. And even though philosophers prefer the peace and quiet of the ‘philosophical garden’, they cannot ignore the fact that the ‘agora’ needs their insights and critique. In Leuven, this message has not fallen on deaf ears.
Dear Alumni:
As the Dean alludes to in his Introduction to this issue of the Alumni Newsletter, the 2015-16 academic year has to a certain extent been clouded by acts of terrorism. In the aftermath of the Paris attacks of November 13, 2015, Brussels was all but locked down for four days; although as far as I can tell we in Leuven were not directly affected by the events and their consequences, nevertheless as you can imagine they made a strong impression. The attacks at Brussels Airport and Maelbeek metro station on March 22, 2016, struck even closer to home and had a tremendous psychological impact with which we are all still dealing; and yet, again – thankfully – Leuven was extremely quiet in the days following the events. The sorts of incidents we’ve experienced at relatively close-hand over the past months lead almost inevitably to some soul-searching about the importance, in the grand scheme of things, of the teaching and learning, research and administration that we do here at the Institute of Philosophy. But maybe events like these point to a reason why the day-to-day activities that go into a school year – whether a school year in philosophy or in any other discipline – are so very important: what we do here is about the future. It’s not only about here and now, it’s also about tomorrow. Whether it’s teaching the skills of critical thinking, or learning about the trade-offs involved in globalization, or coming up with next semester’s course syllabus, or going through applications from prospective students from near and far, even the most unexceptional activities in our academic lives have an eye towards the future. And you cannot be looking towards a future unless you have an idea of how you’d like that future to be. In this way, even the most routine activities, firmly rooted in the present, are an affirmation of and commitment to the future. For Leuven’s Institute of Philosophy that future is built on such values as the search for understanding, respect for various points of view, and collaboration between countries and peoples. That is as good an antidote that I can come up with to the senselessness of the events that have hung over us this year.

One aspect of the future that we at the Institute are committed to maintaining is contact with you, our alumni all over the world. And one way we do that is through this Alumni Newsletter, where we take stock of the year that’s passing by and look forward to the year to come. When I look back on the academic year 2015-16 and its ramifications for our International Programme, what comes first to mind is the work that we did in preparing for the implementation of our revamped MA and MPhil programmes. The revamping – which will go into effect in the 2016-17 academic year – was drawn up by then-Vice Dean for Teaching (now Vice-Dean for Research) Andreas De Block together with Educational Specialist Erwin Blendeman. The idea behind the revamp is to sharpen the programmes for both students and faculty by requiring students in both of these one-year, 60 credit programmes to take fewer classes, most
of which weigh more in the curriculum. Thus, whereas students in our current MA course of study take six core philosophical courses, each of four credits (i.e., two contact hours per week for a total of 26 hours during the semester), in the revamped Regular MA students will take four core courses, each worth six credits (i.e., three contact hours per week for a total of 39 hours over the semester). In addition students in the new programme – as they do now – will be taking philosophical and non-philosophical electives as well as writing a master’s thesis. The smaller number of core philosophical courses, each of which is a “heavier” course in terms of credits and amount of work, will enable students to concentrate on areas of philosophy that they are most interested in, while still preserving the Institute’s emphasis on the comprehensiveness of our students’ philosophical education. There’s a similar dynamic involved in the revamp of our current MPhil curriculum. In the new Advanced Research Master’s, the students will choose one of eight majors and take as the defining element in that major a year-long research seminar of 8 credits (i.e., two contact hours per week for a total of 52 hours over the entire academic year). In addition to this highly specialized and intensive research seminar, the students will take several courses related to the chosen major, as well as philosophical and non-philosophical electives, a new and improved common seminar (teaching career-building skills concerning grant proposals, applications to PhD programmes, CV’s, the publication process, attending conferences, delivering talks), and write a thesis in the form of an article meant for publication. The Advanced Research Master’s programme is meant to give the training a budding professional philosopher needs in order to get to the point of being able and ready to move on to the PhD, with a sharp research specialization and fine-tuned written and oral presentation skills. We are convinced that students who were to follow both of our master’s programmes will obtain a foundation in philosophy both broad and deep, as well as preparation for the next stage of their philosophical education: the doctorate. I hope in the coming years to update you, via this Alumni Newsletter, on the implementation of our revamped MA programmes.

Of course, many exciting things have been happening here at the Institute over the past year, and you’ll find accounts of some of them in the pages that follow. As the Dean notes, as the latest installment in the Alumni Newsletter’s series on the relation between various countries and the Institute, in this issue the spotlight turns to our neighbor to the North, the Netherlands. As you’ll be able to see, there has been and still is a tremendous amount of interaction between the Institute and Dutch philosophers and philosophical institutions. Meanwhile, research and teaching continue apace here in Leuven. As a way of giving you some insight into this aspect of our activities, Ines Van Houtte – who again this year has conceived and assembled the Newsletter – has created two new slots “Zooming in on Research” and “Courses in the Spotlight”, and arranged for some of our staff to write about the research and teaching that they have been doing over the year that’s quickly passing. Finally, besides remembrances of those who have left us, interviews with new staff members, and testimonies from some of the major lectures and events that took place here, you will find in the pages below also descriptions of the new Erasmus+ programme as well as the open online courses in philosophy that the Institute has made available on its website. All in all, I think it fair to say that the Newsletter is itself a testimony to an Institute of Philosophy that’s looking and moving forward, with dozens of initiatives and events to the benefit of students and faculty.

It remains to me merely to thank you all for your continued interest and support. Stay in touch! And we look forward to sending you more Institute of Philosophy news next year.
New Faculty Members at the Institute of Philosophy

Interview with Pieter Adriaens

Professor Adriaens, could you please start by telling us about the origin of your interest in philosophy? How and when did it start?

There are two paths that led me to philosophy. The first one was literature. In my senior year at the Sint-Albertuscollege in Haasrode, we had some excellent teachers, like the poet Charles Ducal, who was our teacher of Dutch. Ducal, for example, spoke about the Vijftigers (a literary movement from the 1950s in Belgium and The Netherlands — editor), like Lucebert and Claus, for several weeks. Then, when he wanted to say something about Herman De Coninck — to meet the requirements of the learning plan — the class rose in revolt. Sensitive lyrics were wasted on us. We very much preferred the work of the Vijftigers, full of rowdiness, sex and bombastic metaphors.

Ducal incited me to read a lot, including the somewhat gloomy things you're supposed to read at that age. I particularly remember Fyodor Sologub’s The Little Demon, a novel that contained many of the themes that still attract my interest now: sexuality, perversity, psychopathology. You won't be surprised when I tell you that I was also charmed by the work of Gerard Reve. I still find his sense of humor and obscenity unparalleled.

Literature led me to a second path that explains my interest in philosophy: madness. My interest in madness also goes back to my senior high school year. It was largely gratified at the Institute of Philosophy, by courses on Freud and psychoanalysis. So I wrote my MA thesis on Freud, more specifically, on the interdisciplinary Freud, who presented 'his' science as a hub, where several other sciences — psychology, neurology, anthropology, biology, embryology — met. This Freud interested me more than the Freud we know through Lacan and French post-war philosophy. It was this Freud who later put me on to my PhD.

In your work, you discuss both evolutionary biology and psychiatry, as well as the connection between them. What can evolutionary biology tell us about psychiatry?

Since the beginning of the 19th century, almost every generation of psychiatrists was inspired by some form of evolutionary thinking. Freud's work, for example, strongly leaned on so-called Lamarckism. In a posthumously published text, he tried to solve the problem of the choice of neurosis by referring to man's evolutionary history. The fact that some people become depressed rather than psychotic can be connected to the way in which they fall back on their individual past, when confronted with misfortune in life. This individual past, in turn, is a reflection of our collective past.

Anyway, Freud is often mentioned as a forerunner of contemporary evolutionary psychiatry. Evolutionary psychiatry is a recent field...
of scientific study with great ambitions, which thinks up answers to the question why psychic disturbances escape the iron hand of natural selection. I applied myself to evolutionary explanations for schizophrenia – one of the dinosaur concepts of contemporary psychiatry.

An important part of your work, like your recent book with Andreas De Block, is about homosexuality. As you show in that book, evolutionary biology and psychiatry also have (and had) something to say about homosexuality. Can you tell us more about the content of your book? It is indeed remarkable that two philosophers choose homosexuality as a theme for a book.

I think it is particularly remarkable that two seemingly heterosexual philosophers choose homosexuality as a theme for a book. Our interest in homosexuality is connected, above all, to the contemporary scientific interest in homosexuality. What intrigues us is why scientists from different disciplines have investigated the subject. The structure of the book follows the different sciences we consider. We start with a chapter on the idea that homosexuality is innate. The word ‘innate’ has so many meanings that one could doubt whether it is useful to continue using this word, particularly in scientific explanations. In the next chapter, which is on animal biology, we present the history of scientific research on animal homosexuality. Along the way, we treat some philosophical problems, like the question whether homosexual desires or preferences exist in animals. Next, we turn to evolutionary biology and psychiatry. In the chapter on psychiatry, a historical path leads us to the question of whether homosexuality is a disease. But what is a disease? In general, our intuition tells us whether something is a disease or not. But apparently, there are conditions, like homosexuality, whose status can change over time. Homosexuality was considered a disease for a long time. But the question is: on what grounds was this assertion based, and on what grounds could it later be claimed, from 1974 on, that the opposite was true? So the leitmotiv of our book is that seemingly anecdotal and historical issues lead to underlying philosophical questions. Lots of concepts that are used in scientific literature on homosexuality, are in fact concepts from ordinary speech, like ‘desire’, ‘illness’, ‘love’ and ‘sexuality’. We all know that ordinary speech has its pros and cons. One of the big disadvantages is that it lacks some discipline, and that the development of those concepts was a historical process. That is something science struggles with.

You often worked with Andreas De Block before you wrote this book as well. How did this collaboration start? To be completely honest, our collaboration was, at first, rather opportunistic. We both came to a point where we needed to start to publish. Andreas, in his academic career, experienced the shift from an old to a new publishing culture. The old culture focused on Dutch-language journals, with a local and familiar audience. In the new culture, all eyes are on the English-language ‘top journals’, with anonymous commentators and an unknown target audience. Andreas realized that he had to embrace the new culture in order not to miss the boat. I always loved language(s), and I like to write in English. And he had a lot of ideas, but not always the patience to shape them and put them on paper. So from the start, we complemented each other. During the last ten years, this balance has shifted slightly, but there is still a clear complementarity between us. I may, of course, too easily depict this as a pragmatic connection. Over the years, we have also become friends, and we clearly have a common interest in homosexuality, psychopathology, and evolutionary biology. Beside this, he has his own areas of interest, like cultural evolution, and I have my more historical interests. But there still is a large overlap, where we speak the same language, and
this allowed us to do some good work over the past ten years.

You just said you have historical interests, and your articles also show this. Are you sure that you would not rather have become a historian?

Yes, I am certain I would not have wanted to become a historian. If you’d asked me if I would have preferred to become a psychiatrist, I would have hesitated a little bit longer. The reason why I would not have wanted to become a historian is very simple. What attracts me in philosophy – and this may well be a rather atypical philosophical interest – is particularity. That is, anyway, what attracted me and what I often searched for in philosophy, without finding it. Many philosophers get lost in conceptual spielerei and abstract, loose talk. That is not my kind of philosophy. I always tried to find contact with the individual and the particular. This is, of course, essential in psychiatry, but also in history. I like archive work, I did some of it myself. But it was never an end in itself. The particular always interests me from the point of view of a broader philosophical interest in the underlying conceptual problems. What I said about homosexuality seamlessly fits into this. My interest in the history of scientific research on homosexuality in animals was always connected to the underlying philosophical questions, such as: what does it mean that something is innate, or what is a desire, or a disease? My interest in the particular is related to a field of tension between the particular and the universal. I like to stay in touch with concrete events, but always as a springboard to turn them into something philosophical.

Which philosophers of authors would you say had the most influence on you? Given your historical approach and subjects, I would bet on Foucault. Or rather Darwin, after all?

Darwin can hardly be considered a philosopher, although I would be the first to say he deserves a place in the philosophical pantheon. I admire Darwin very much, as a person, as a writer and as a scientist. I recognize myself in his melancholy, but also in his love for seemingly unimportant facts, and above all in his urge for clarity. I miss that clarity in 20th century French philosophy, and I really hate obscure texts. When I read such a text, I always think the writer hasn’t done his very best to be clear. I once wrote a PhD proposal on Michel Henry. That was, in all respects, the lowest point in my philosophical career.

But you asked which philosopher has had an important influence on me. The first one that comes to my mind is Ian Hacking. I consider him an Anglo-Saxon Foucault, with an even more intense attention for the particular. This is shown, among other things, by his work on culture-bound syndromes, like the hysteric fugue in the early 20th century in France. There was an epidemic of young men, running away from home in trance, who suddenly find themselves on a train to Russia without money or documents. Hacking is also very versatile and studied both the history and philosophy of psychiatry, probability calculus and logics.

What are your philosophical aspirations? What subjects would you like to work on?

At this moment, I am at work on an adapted English version of the book on science and homosexuality, for The University of Chicago Press. Only after that, will I have time for something new. On the one hand, I would like to write down my ideas on culture-bound syndromes – syndromes that are, in one way or another, interwoven with a particular culture. What I want to discuss, in the first place, is the place of such syndromes in Western psychiatry, the tension between the idiosyncratic and the universal, but also what these syndromes tell us about the meaning of madness: what does it mean to be crazy?
On the other hand, I’ve been brooding, for some time, on a book on Cotard’s syndrome. Cotard’s syndrome is a relatively rare psychiatric condition that, in its most extreme form, manifests itself in people who are convinced that they are dead (in spite of medical counter-evidence). They can come to a psychiatrist and urgently ask to be buried, since they died three days ago and are starting to rot. There are also less-intense forms of Cotard’s syndrome, where people think they are missing some vital organs, that they are rotting, etc. Cotard’s disease is a delusional disorder, and both phenomenologists and analytic philosophers have interesting things to say about delusions. What fascinates me is the attitude of patients towards their delusions. Can the belief that you are dead be compared to the belief that the earth is round or rotates around the sun? And what is the difference between delusions and obstinate convictions or obsessions?

You play Fender Rhodes piano in a band that is currently preparing its third CD. What made you choose the Fender Rhodes?

First and foremost, it is an instrument that looks fantastic. It also has an extraordinary mechanism. It works with hammers, like a classic piano, but it has no sound box, so everything has to be amplified electronically. The signals are transmitted by little magnets and coils, and when you open the hood, there’s a jumble of wires, pins, plugs and little blocs, and screws to adjust the sound everywhere. It is really something nobody would make anymore, with such a complex mechanism. But the most important thing, of course, is the acoustic quality of the instrument. It sounds fantastic and fits perfectly for the music we make – post-rock arrangements of classical pieces of music.

In the lower octaves, a Rhodes has a warm, soft sound, with deep and heavy, but at the same time punchy basses. High up, it sounds like a xylophone, with very clear and pure sounds. Compared to a Rhodes, a regular piano is a vulgar instrument. Of course, the subtlety that a classic piano can reach and the nuances it can capture exceed what you can do with a Fender Rhodes. The problem with the lower regions is that they are so woolly, that you can only play in sequences. You cannot play major chords, because they immediately sound like a kind of mush. So you have to learn to master that a little bit – but of course, this is true for every instrument.

To end with: you teach a lot to undergraduate students of other faculties. Which image of philosophy do you hope to give them?

To my surprise, the students in engineering sciences recently awarded me the golden chalk for most funny professor. I thought this was because of the quality of my jokes, but I was told it was rather connected to the fact that I present materials that are difficult for them in an attractive and accessible way. Philosophy is the subject where they would least expect this, since it is stereotypically thought to be about as exciting as watching paint dry. I think they were positively surprised that philosophy can also be very tangible and accessible. So I considered this a beautiful compliment. In my opinion, it is very important to continue popularizing, even if this has become a dangerous word in the last few years. We really must keep trying to make philosophy attractive. You can do that by saying something about things that people are involved with, from a philosophical point of view. Writing a book in Dutch, for example, is time-consuming and not much appreciated in the academic world today, but we thought it was really important to make a large audience acquainted with philosophy in this way.

Thank you for the interview!

By Olivier Lemeire
Interview with Matthias Lievens

Hello Professor. From my research, I learned that you obtained more than one degree (in political sciences, philosophy, anthropology and history). What brought you to your decision to eventually specialize in political philosophy?

When I was 15 or 16, I already knew I wanted to study political sciences later on. But when the time came to make a decision, I started to doubt my choice, because I also wanted to study philosophy. Finally, I opted for a degree in political and social sciences. But the philosophy course in my first year, taught by Bart Raymaekers, made me realize that I’d made the wrong choice. So, from the second year on, I enrolled in more and more philosophy courses, and went for a degree in philosophy in the end. In the years that followed, I combined different programs in the humanities, from a program in cultural anthropology to courses in history. I was constantly driven by a strong theoretic and political interest: the topic of my thesis in political sciences was the concept of ideology in Marx, and my thesis in philosophy was about the philosopher Antonio Gramsci. In this sense, you could say that I already followed a specific track.

Was your choice to study at KU Leuven a deliberate choice?

My choice for Leuven partially originated from a family tradition. But, in the end, there are very good reasons to study philosophy in Leuven, so I’m very happy to have ended up here. Leuven has representatives of a very broad range of philosophical disciplines, and there is a very strong department of political philosophy.

After your MA studies, you decided to do a PhD in political philosophy. Did you decide that immediately?

When I graduated, I considered several topics in social and political theory, so it wasn’t clear from the start that I would choose a topic in political philosophy. But eventually I started as a researcher on the project ‘Sovereignty and democracy in the post-national constellation’. This was a joint project of KU Leuven and KU Brussel. Since I lived in Brussels at that time, it seemed evident that I would join the research group in political philosophy in Brussels (whose coordinator was then Tim Heyse). Eventually, the government decided to suppress KU Brussel, so I moved to KU Leuven (with, among others, Raf Geenens, with whom I shared an office in Brussels) and joined the newly founded RIPPLE (‘Research in Political Philosophy Leuven’).

Once in Leuven, I decided to write my PhD on the work of the political philosopher Carl Schmitt. Before that, I worked on Marx, Gramsci, and critical theory, but that work brought me to a dead end. That framework doesn’t provide enough leads for thinking about democracy. That’s why I started looking for new theoretical sources, and since my research was part of a project on sovereignty, I ended up with Schmitt, probably one of the most influential thinkers on this theme. Schmitt is a controversial author: someone with whom I very often disagree, but at the same time someone from whom one can learn a lot. By reading him in a sympathetic, but also selective and critical way, I ended up finding the topic of my PhD: the phenomenon of de-politicization. I think Schmitt lies at the base of one of the central themes in contemporary political philosophy, namely, the critique of de-politicization and the attempt to interpret the nature of the political. From that perspective, many of the social and political catastro-
PhD of the 20th century are not the result of moral shortcomings, but of an incapacity to think the political and to act politically.

Could you tell us more about this PhD dissertation?
I aimed at presenting a deconstructive reading of Schmitt’s work that would uncover some of the bad aspects of his work, and allow me to re-value some other aspects. In my view, Schmitt’s attention went mainly to the way in which social and political relations towards the other are symbolized; he showed how we give meaning to our relations with our opponents. I was able to extract from his work a critique of ideology, which allowed me to evaluate different forms of symbolization. Noxious forms of symbolization raise conflicts, until the opponent becomes an absolute enemy, while we should aim at forms of symbolization that allow us to recognize the other as a political opponent. In the end, this reading also allowed me to criticize Schmitt himself, who recognized the importance of mutual recognition by political opponents, but preferred to limit this conflict to relations between states. In other words, he wanted all other areas of society to remain de-politicized. Relations between classes or religious groups, for example, could not be politicized. As a consequence, the politicization in the political domain rested on a suppression of the conflict in other social areas. From a democratic point of view, this is very problematic.

Did you carry on the insights from your PhD into your postdoc research? Is there a connecting thread in your research after the completion of your PhD?
In the end, the critique of de-politicization remained a connecting thread in my research, although I extended my references: I’m not only interested in Schmitt, but also in French liberal thinkers like Claude Lefort, and post-Marxist authors like Chantal Mouffe or Jacques Rancière. This combination of think-
sions to take part in the climate debate, where we could defend our point of view. At this point, I was most aware of the tension between my roles as an academic and an activist. As an activist, I took a certain view in the debate, but simultaneously, as an academic, I was often put on a pedestal in these debates. This was what I had the biggest problem with: why am I, as an academic, more entitled to speak than, let’s say, a committed young citizen? Otherwise, this tension is less present: I took a view in my book, but a book like that only works when it has a strong philosophical and scientific basis. Had it been a mere pamphlet, it would not have had the impact which it had in the end. Finally, I also learned a lot from the debates and lectures themselves: they allowed me to speak with groups of people I wouldn’t have been in contact with otherwise – groups from Vormingplus, from the working-class movement, NGO’s etc.

Today you’re mostly teaching. Can you tell us more about the courses you teach and the different groups of students you work with? You recently taught Philosophy of Law to law students in Tilburg. Did you notice a difference? In Tilburg, I taught a very diverse group of students in an international program, which was fun. The philosophy students in Leuven have, in general, a strong intellectual motivation – they are, for example, more inclined to read books at their own initiative. But it is, of course, possible that the enthusiasm of the law students manifests itself in another way.

Today, I am travelling across the country and teaching at KU Leuven campuses in Antwerp, Brussels, Leuven and Diepenbeek. I travel by train, which gives me time to read. I deliberately chose to live in Gent, so I knew that I would have to commute between home and work. My new appointment also involves a serious change with regard to teaching: my students today – students in linguistics, business and engineering – are very young. I teach them introductory courses in philosophy and try to find points of contact with their own areas of study. When you teach courses like these, didactical skills are crucial: you have to guide your students along a way of thinking that is often new to them. I also teach a course in ‘Critical social theory’ in the third BA in sociology and philosophy. There I fulfill my role as a teacher differently.

To conclude: could you imagine yourself doing something else?

I’m surprised, anyway, that I am here! As a student, I had a strong intellectual motive and I knew for sure that I wanted to obtain a PhD, but I didn’t really plan my career. Little by little, I published a lot of articles and books and gained teaching experience. I would not have dared to dream this, but I am very happy with how things turned out.

Thank you for the interview.

By Christiaan Boonen
Interview with Stefano Micali

Thank you for meeting with me Prof. Micali. Perhaps we could begin by asking you a bit about your philosophical background. What was your early training in philosophy like, and what were your early philosophical interests?

My passion for philosophy began during high school thanks to the combined influence of my religion teacher (Roberto Rossi) and my philosophy teacher (Ercole Siciliano). Rossi was indeed a very inspiring teacher: he let young high school students read and comment on philosophical writings (from Kierkegaard to Nietzsche) and literary texts such as Borges’s *Ficciones*.

After high school I studied philosophy at the University “La Sapienza” in Rome, where I could attend classes by prominent Italian philosophers. Among them I would like to recall in particular Emilio Garroni, Gennaro Sasso and Maria Isnardi Parente. Initially, I was specifically interested in Ancient philosophy (particularly Plato and Aristotle) and in Modern philosophy (especially Pascal, Spinoza and Malebranche). Yet, certainly, the person who most influenced me at that time was Marco Maria Olivetti. Under his supervision I wrote a master’s thesis in Philosophy of Religion. Marco Maria Olivetti combined great philosophical skills, impressive erudition, and a very pleasant irony, sometimes even sarcasm, especially where academic rituals were concerned. He taught me how to have an open attitude towards different philosophical traditions of thought. He also prompted me to explore specific philosophical traditions, such as post-Kantian philosophy (not only Fichte or Schelling but also Jacobi, Herder and Schleiermacher) and contemporary German and French philosophy.

You completed your doctorate at the Bergische Universität Wuppertal, one of the great centres of phenomeno-

 logical research with Klaus Held and the dearly departed László Tengelyi. I also understand that you have long collaborated with the Phenomenological Research Group in Bochum led by Bernhard Waldenfels…

My stay in Germany was in fact very important for my philosophical formation. The Italian academic system primarily requires—and therefore creates—highly sophisticated hermeneutic competences with respect to the understanding of classical texts in the traditional canon of philosophy. Students are generally trained in a methodology of critical and historical text-analysis. In Germany, I found that seminars were more problem-oriented. I profited very much from both ways of approaching the philosophical tradition. There is no doubt that I learned a lot during my stay in Wuppertal. The long conversations with Klaus Held and his seminars were especially important for deepening my understanding of Husserl’s phenomenology. I am also very thankful to László Tengelyi, a very generous person with an impressive knowledge of both the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy. He helped me discover innovative, contemporary thinkers who are perhaps not as celebrated as they ought to be in mainstream philosophy, figures such as Castoriadis, Richir or Theunissen. I should mention that the seminars and exchanges I had with Bernhard Waldenfels, who was a member of my PhD-committee, were also very formative for me. The critical confrontation with his responsive phenomenology has certainly been influential on my philosophical development.
During the PhD you were also able to take advantage of several research-stays: twice in France under the supervision of Jacques Derrida and Marc Richir, respectively. After finishing your PhD, you worked almost two years as a post-doctoral researcher at the department of Metaphysics at the University of Nijmegen. How important were these different stays abroad for your scientific development?

Of course these academic exchanges, particularly with such prominent personalities, have influenced my way of thinking and how I approach philosophical problems. Yet, I find it very difficult to clarify how or to what extent this development happened. In 2002/2003 I followed Derrida’s course on “The Beast and the Sovereign”. I have always been impressed by the confident and ironic freedom of his thought. Marc Richir’s philosophical works are in my opinion among the most relevant contributions to phenomenology in the last three decades. But it is not a secret that they are very technical. As such I was surprised to discover that his lessons were clear, if not limpid. My stay in Nijmegen, where there is a very good Department of the History of Philosophy and Continental Philosophy, was also very significant for me. In The Netherlands I also had the opportunity to discover interesting authors like Huizinga or Buitendijk, whom I did not know before.

You came also to the Husserl Archives Leuven for a research stay while writing your dissertation. Have you noticed many changes to the city over the years?

I spent just five months in Leuven during my doctoral research. In my dissertation I examined the notion of the ego in Husserl’s phenomenology, focusing on the dimension of time. This stay in Leuven was very productive. I had the opportunity to read some of Husserl’s research manuscripts, such as the yet unpublished C-manuscripts. The exchanges with Rudolf Bernet and Ullrich Melle on Husserl’s phenomenology were also very enriching. I can’t say I’ve noticed major changes: Leuven still is the vivid and pleasant city I encountered then. It is a perfect place to do research and to live in, especially with young children. It also doesn’t hurt that it is so strategically situated, being close to major European cities.

Before coming to the HIW, you worked at the Klinik für Allgemeine Psychiatrie in Heidelberg. Has your clinical work impacted your philosophical outlook? Or are they two distinct areas that you try to keep separate?

The Institute of Psychiatry in Heidelberg has a long tradition of collaboration between psychiatry and philosophy, which began already with Karl Jaspers. In 2009 I started working at the Institute of Psychiatry as a Humboldt scholar in collaboration with Thomas Fuchs, the current director of the Phenomenological Section in Heidelberg. For a long time now, one of my main research interests has been the analysis of different temporal structures in heterogeneous experiences. The works of Maldiney especially called my attention to the peculiar alterations of temporalization inherent to the phenomena of schizophrenia and depression. As a phenomenologist I wanted to have the opportunity to be in close contact with patients in order to understand both the modality and the intensity of this alteration. For this reason I developed a project on the alteration of time in different psychopathological disturbances.

You gave a talk last year on the interconnection of reason and madness. What is the relevance of madness to philosophy, purportedly the rational enterprise par excellence? Psychopathological disturbances can serve as a magnifying glass, allowing a better comprehension of the self’s basic structure. Specific features increase in visibility in psychopathologies. At the same, however, the magnifying glass produces a distortion, since there is no identity between the pathological cases and the non-pathological cases. Psychopathological disturbances signify an encounter with phenomena that escape our categories. It is important to
acknowledge their alterity and consider these cases as opportunities to critically question our conceptual categories. We have to change our way of thinking in order to approach these phenomena. In this way, the encounter with psychopathological disturbances can be productive for generating new philosophical categories. In various ways, the works of major figures of contemporary thought (such as Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida or Levinas and I could continue with Bataille and many others) testify to the philosophical relevance of a confrontation with the phenomenon of madness.

Let's deepen this aspect. Your work draws not only on psychopathology but also on other disciplines, such as cultural anthropology. Do you think it is important for philosophy to connect with other disciplines, or do you rather approach these other disciplines precisely as a philosopher?

Philosophy has always tended to reconfigure what is so familiar and self-evident into something strange and opaque. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Ludwig Wittgenstein states “the real foundations of human enquiry do not strike a man at all.” The most important phenomena are, in his view, hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. How is it possible to gain any distance from this kind of blindness, which is rooted in the self-evidence of common sense? My interest in psychopathology and in cultural anthropology is primarily of a philosophical nature. Research in psychopathology and in cultural anthropology helps us to gain new insights into this hidden dimension of familiarity. By contrasting implicit common sense with its transformation in pathological disturbances or with its alteration in a radically different life-world, we can retrace hidden dimensions, which would otherwise remain out of reach. At the same time, it is important to critically investigate the notion of common sense itself by addressing different conceptual paradigms. For instance, I think that Blumenberg’s research both on absolute metaphors and on the concept of life-world could be very relevant for investigating the notion of common sense.

What kind of research do you hope to accomplish in the coming years, as a faculty member at the HIW? Are you exploring any new interests?

At the moment I am working on two different themes. On the one hand I am writing a monographic study on the phenomenon of anxiety from phenomenological and psychoanalytical perspectives. At the same time, I am working on a more political subject: the capitalist cult of performance. It combines a philosophical reflection on characteristic dispositifs of our post-disciplinary society (inspired by Deleuze and Foucault) with a phenomenological approach.

By Patrick Eldridge
Many alumni of the international program of the Higher Institute of Philosophy may know professor IJsseling only by name or reputation. Though his English was fluent, he stubbornly declined teaching in Leuven in a language other than his native Dutch. His teaching mainly consisted in reading aloud what he had written at home in his unmistakable small, clear and elegant handwriting. Yet, he was a most enthralling and successful teacher. While most of his philosophical reading, writing and teaching was on German and French texts, IJsseling claimed he could think and write only in his mother tongue. No wonder that the relation between thought and language became a lifelong subject of his philosophical meditations. No wonder too that his listeners and readers admired him as much for the simple elegance and clarity of his writing as for the originality of his philosophical insights. IJsseling was a poetical philosopher and philosophical poet – a sort of Heidegger of the Low Countries without the Master’s provincialism and with a secure feeling for literary style and taste.

As a secluded writer and thinker who was at the same time a most social and open person, Samuel IJsseling embodied what he taught on the nature of Greek logos and the Leibnizian monad: eager to collect, gather and concentrate the most diverse points of view in himself; capable of reconfiguring and expressing them from his own, singular and unique perspective. Outgoing in his reading and transmitting, he was at the same time introverted in his private thinking and letting his thoughts sink into his own language. IJsseling wrote on Heidegger and Nietzsche, Novalis and Schelling, Freud and Lacan, Foucault and Derrida, the gods and muses of the Greeks, yet all his texts render unmistakably an IJsselingian sound or music.

A precise and (as he proudly claimed) “slow” reader and writer, IJsseling was also a man of the spoken word, talented with a great deal of rhetorical persuasion and seduction. Most typical of the way in which his thought remained in close touch with his own life, he investigated, in many of his texts, the relation between philosophy and the written and spoken word. Before Derrida made him think about the nature of the written letter, of texts and contexts, IJsseling was immediately attracted by Foucauldian and Nietzschean perspectives on the power of the spoken word. His 1975 book on *Retoriek en filosofie* (*Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict*) bears the significant (and still quasi-Heideggerian) subtitle: *Wat gebeurt er wanneer er gesproken wordt?* (What is Happening when Speech is Spoken?). (Subtitle omitted – because impossible to translate? – in the 1976 English translation.) A gifted writer IJsseling was also a most inspiring interlocutor in philosophical dialogue. It thus comes as no surprise that several of IJsseling’s last books resulted from recorded interviews. One can hardly feel the difference between these and the texts he painstakingly wrote by hand. Also, those who knew him personally will forever hear his voice when reading one of his texts. A man who spoke like he wrote and wrote like he spoke, IJsseling never ceased to be a teacher. He introduced many generations of Dutch speaking students, listeners and readers to Heidegger and Derrida, to Nietzsche and Foucault. He did it in such a personal and convincing way
that they now often ascribe to these great thinkers what was actually IJsseling’s own personal contribution. However, they couldn’t help but notice that IJsseling’s Greeks looked and sounded notably different from those of his colleagues who taught Classical Philosophy.

As a reader and writer, as a thinker and teacher, as a scholar and influential public figure Samuel IJsseling was less a man of oppositions than of mediation. It is striking how often, already in the title of his texts, he binds together strong opposites with a softening “and”: *Denken en danken, geven en zijn* (Thinking and Thanking, Giving and Being) (1964, 2015*²*); *Het zijn en de zijden* (Being and Beings) (1966); *Nietzsche en de retorica* (Nietzsche and Rhetoric) (1973); *Hermeneutiek en retoriek* (Hermeneutics and Rhetoric) (1977); *Macht, taal en begrepte* (Power, Language and Desire) (1979); *Deconstructie en ethiek* (Deconstruction and Ethics) (1992); *Heidegger en het geschreven woord* (Heidegger and the Written Word) (1992); *Macht en onmacht* (Power and Powerlessness) (1999); *Derrida, Heidegger en de Grieken* (Derrida, Heidegger and the Greeks) (2004); *Dankbaar en aandachtig* (Grateful and Attentive) (2013).

Maybe “mediation” sounds a little too flat, too weak and too harmonious to characterize IJsseling’s entire opus. Settling conflicts by mediation is only how IJsseling’s long philosophical travels began – in a time when the young priest and doctoral student of Alphonse De Waelhens saw little antagonism between philosophy and theology, between thinking and praying, between the early and the later Heidegger. Hermeneutics supposedly could absorb and digest all strong differences and oppositions. IJsseling’s stay in Paris (1967/68) radically changed his outlook on philosophy, and when he came back to Leuven as a professor in 1969 he thought (very) differently and also dressed differently (only a little, still with sandals). Hermeneutics had made room for structuralism. Heidegger needed to be reread through Foucault, Derrida and Lacan. Christian faith was to be confronted with Nietzsche’s death of God. Philosophical thought was to be questioned as to its underlying strategies of power. Tension and disruption of traditional orders of discourse weighed on IJsseling’s mind. In his teaching and writing, however, he remained largely the same. He continued to patiently and prudently search for means to bridge abyssal differences. The “and” was no longer taken for granted, but it remained a legitimate aim of endeavor in the process of an endlessly deferred resolution of conflictual differences. Harmony being out of reach, philosophical thought became a way to slow down the universal Heraclitian war, to rest for a while before one was chased out of life.

It was a long journey from *Thinking and Thanking* (1964) back to *Grateful and Attentive* (2013). On the way, IJsseling had restaged the battle between the power of the word cherished by the Sophists and Heidegger’s concealment of truth. Structuralism and deconstruction had shaken his former belief in humanism. Will and even the will to power had been replaced by a new sensitivity for a passivity older than all subjective passivity. Subjective desire had dissolved in a network of mirroring strategies of power. In his short book *Mimesis. Over schijn en zijn* (Mimesis. On Semblance and Being) (1990) IJsseling made a last effort to bind together the metaphysical oppositions he had patiently deconstructed during his last twenty years. Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Lacan, Foucault, Derrida, Baudrillard, Girard, J.L. Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe were given their last big common show. They soon had to make room for Apollo, Dionysus, Aphrodite (*Apollo, Dionysos, Aphrodite en de anderen. Griekse goden in de hedendaagse filosofie* (1994)), for Mnemosyne, Demeter, Moira (*Drie godinnen. Mnemosyne, Demeter, Moira* (1998)),...
for King Midas and Silenus (Koning Midas en de Sileen (1995)), for Tyche and kairos, etc. The one God was exchanged for the many Greek gods, the Revelation for stories, religion for myths. IJsseling became a seductive storyteller who reached a new and wider audience. He had found a playful and lighter way to tell the desperate story of human finitude.

His former students and the still-growing community of his readers will remember Sam IJsseling as a man of many contrasts – yet one whose contrasted personality truthfully expressed itself in his teaching and writing. Although each was split or divided into many parts, his life and work formed a perfect unity – a differentiated unity in the process of constant displacement. No wonder that “context” became the key-word in IJsseling’s deconstruction of texts, “network” in his analysis of the structure of power and desire, “translation” in his mode of interpretation. No wonder either that he never much cared whether the official title of the course he taught was “Philosophy of Language”, “History of Modern and Contemporary Philosophy” or “Phenomenology”. It was all the same to him and to his enthusiastic students. A time may come when the figure of this almost mythic philosopher-poet will be given its due place in academic philosophy. One will then begin making links and find a coherence and constancy the author himself was unaware of. No doubt that the notes of the “gift” and the “call”, of “gratefulness” and respectful “response” that IJsseling struck in his earliest work will then stand out as the alpha and omega of his long philosophical wandering.

It would be unfair to the memory of professor IJsseling not to mention the institutional context of his powerful presence in Leuven. He was not only the teacher, speaker and writer who introduced several generations to Heidegger and contemporary French philosophy. IJsseling was also devoted with body and soul to the welfare of the Higher Institute of Philosophy where he occupied numerous positions with great responsibility. Most worth mentioning are his serving as Editor in chief of Tijdschrift voor Filosofie (1983-1989) and especially, from 1974 until his retirement in 1997, as Director of the Husserl Archives. Husserl was never IJsseling’s primary philosophical love, but for more than twenty years the publication and administration of Husserl’s legacy became IJsseling’s most constant and time consuming occupation. To the great astonishment of many, IJsseling became a successful manager of a multinational enterprise. Neither the founder of the Archives, Herman Leo Van Breda, nor IJsseling’s successors Rudolf Bernet and Ullrich Melle can pride themselves to have initiated and successfully completed the publication of as many volumes in the series Husserliana and Phaenomenologica.

The secret of Samuel IJsseling’s success as the leader of the Husserl Archives must be sought in his amiable personality and his philosophical prestige. He gave the editors sufficient freedom and encouragement to make working under his direction most profitable and enjoyable for them. The force of his own philosophical thought provided IJsseling with a good judgment in editorial matters and gave him a natural authority in the sometimes difficult negotiations with publishing houses and directors of the Husserl Archives abroad. Under IJsseling’s direction the Husserl Archives in Leuven became what they were officially called only a few years ago: a “Centre for Phenomenology and Continental Philosophy”. It was IJsseling’s strong conviction that the Archives needed not only to be open to the entire philosophical world (which was the case since their foundation by Van Breda), but that the editorial work on Husserl’s texts must go together with a philosophical valorization
and critical evaluation. IJsseling’s approach to Husserl’s phenomenology was so liberal that it became an object of suspicion for the defenders of a Husserlian orthodoxy who resisted all attempts to reread Husserl through Heidegger, Levinas, Derrida and Freud. As often happens, what was exceptional in IJsseling’s time soon became mainstream — with the result that many phenomenologists today turn to pre-Husserlian rather than post-Husserlian thinkers in their attempt to keep Husserl’s thought alive.

After his death on May 14, 2015, official and less official manifestations have shown how present professor IJsseling remains in the minds and hearts of his former students and colleagues. His last, posthumously published book (De tijd, het schrift, het verschil — Time, Writing, Difference (2015)) has won him new readers. For those who have personally known him, it will forever be impossible to discriminate what they owe to his bright philosophical insights and to his genuine human kindness. Just as life and death belong together, as IJsseling constantly emphasized, his philosophy and his person remain inseparable in their memory.

By Rudolf Bernet

WIM DE PATER (1930-2015)

Professor Wim de Pater died on September 3, 2015 in Asten (The Netherlands). He was born in 1930 in Scheveningen. A couple of years after his ordination as a priest, he went to Fribourg to study philosophy and obtained his PhD under supervision of the famous Bochenski. The topic of his dissertation was Aristotle’s Topica. Herman Roelants wrote an important, elaborated and laudatory review on this work in 1966. Logic and its history remained an area of interest for Professor de Pater. This is expressed by the many logic courses he taught and the many works he published in this field (e.g. the article Problemen rond een definitie van logika (1971) and the books Van redenering tot formele structuur: enige hoofdstukken uit de logica (in collaboration with W.R. de Jong) and Logica. Formeel en informeel (in collaboration with R. Vergauwen, 1992)).

In 1963 he started to teach at the Liesbosch Main Seminary, and in 1966 he went to Oxford to study analytical philosophy. There, he was influenced by ordinary language philosophy, represented by, among others, Gilbert Ryle. He also got into Ian Ramsey’s analytical philosophy of religion.

In 1967 he was appointed as professor at the Theological Faculty in Tilburg, and from July to November, he was a guest professor at the University of Manila. Directly after this, he delivered lectures in Taipei and Hong Kong. In 1970 he was appointed as full professor at the University of Leuven.

His publication Taalanalytische perspectieven op godsdienst en kunst (1970) clearly reflects his education in Oxford. He attached great importance to Ian Ramsey’s disclosure theory, in which he found a way to develop a philosophy of religion that went beyond a narrow form of rationalism and was able to do justice to
human experience, without falling into subjectivism. Many of his publications express this aspiration, e.g. *De empirische basis van de godsdienstige taal* (1972), his study on the history of the traditional problem of personal immortality (see his *Immortality. Its History in the West*), and also his fascinating and erudite valedictory lecture at the Institute of Philosophy on the role of analogy in speaking about God. As a priest, he remained faithful to a way of thinking, fed by a personal belief. He was convinced this didn’t harm the unconditional stringency and clarity of the philosophical project.

For Professor de Pater, analytical philosophy was first and foremost philosophy of language, particularly as it was practiced in England. But while this movement often avoided any relation with science, professor de Pater was convinced that philosophy needed a thorough knowledge of linguistics. This great interest is shown by his erudite overview of linguistics in *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* (1967), and by the book he wrote with Pierre Swiggers, *Taal en teken: een historisch-systematische inleiding in de taalfilosofie* (2000).

It was not a secret that Wim de Pater suffered from poor health. When he mentioned this, it never sounded self-pitying: he discussed his problems with irony and in an objectifying style, as if he were talking about someone else.

When he gave oral exams – and he gave a lot of them – Professor de Pater always remained in a good mood and listened to the students with friendly patience. From time to time, he didn’t hide his enthusiasm, when someone turned out to master the analytical style. He prepared his lectures with thoroughness and precision. His students appreciated his teaching style: clear, lighthearted and without any pretentiousness. Many of his students – some of them became professors later on – were deeply influenced by him and would practice analytical philosophy, following the path he laid out for them.

By Arnold Burms
FOCUS ON THE NETHERLANDS

Each year we bring in the Newsletter a series of articles that have to do with the Institute of Philosophy and one specific country. The immediate reason for focusing on The Netherlands this year was a triple departure: with the deaths of Samuel Ijsseling and Wim de Pater, we lost two emeriti professors that had brought some Northern flair and analytic spirit to the Institute of Philosophy. They will be missed by those who took their classes and worked with them. 2015 was also the year in which we said goodbye to Professor Paul van Tongeren, who became emeritus professor after having taught moral philosophy and ethical theory to many generations of students both in Nijmegen and Leuven. On the other hand, the number of students and junior staff members from The Netherlands increases. How do they experience their life and work in Belgium? Harmen Ghijsen, Anne Polkamp and Bas Leijssenaar share with us their reflections on this subject. Filip Buekens, one of our (Flemish) HIW professors, and Ronald Tinnevelt, a (Dutch) alumnus from the HIW and now a professor in Nijmegen, explain what it is like to be an academic in both The Netherlands and Belgium. Toon Van de Velde presents a short history of the Nijmegen-Leuven covenant agreement, and we conclude with an article by Bart Raymaekers on the institutional shifts in the philosophical landscape in The Netherlands.

MY EXPERIENCE AS A DUTCH PHILOSOPHER IN BELGIUM

When I arrived at KU Leuven’s Institute of Philosophy as a doctoral student, I immediately noticed a few differences with Utrecht University, where I did both my bachelor’s and master’s in philosophy. First of all, as a doctoral student in Belgium, you are really regarded as a student with a scholarship rather than as a full-fledged employee with a salary, as is the case in The Netherlands. This gives you some nice tax benefits, making you into a very cheap and thus attractive employee for the university, but it also means that you build up fewer social benefits because you have a lower gross income. However, at that moment I couldn’t care less about this factor, as I was simply excited at being given the opportunity to do the job I loved to do. Another thing I noticed was that the Institute of Philosophy at KU Leuven was far larger than the department of philosophy at Utrecht University. It really was an institute of its own, with a long tradition in philosophy and an impressive historical building in the center of Leuven (it was in that sense unfortunate that my own office was located in a less impressive building on the Dekenstraat and later Vesaliusstraat). What’s more, it had far more staff, students, and varieties of philosophy than was the case at Utrecht University.

Most importantly though, I noticed that education and research at the Institute were more international than I had been accustomed
to. Both bachelor and master had an international programme offering a full education in philosophy in English, and my direct colleagues were from countries all over the continent. This led to a very nice international atmosphere in which I immediately felt at home. This atmosphere is probably also part of the explanation why I didn’t experience too much difficulty fitting in at a Belgian university with a Dutch background – the other part consisting of the fact that I am originally from the south of The Netherlands, namely Limburg, which is already closer to Flanders (both geographically and culturally) than the more northern regions. To give you an idea of what I’m talking about, the stereotype of Limburgers is that they speak funnily, have a small town mentality, and follow a Burgundian lifestyle. On the other hand, Limburgers stereotype northern Dutchmen as being slightly arrogant, overly direct and frugal; I leave it to you to draw the comparison with Flanders.

The focus on the international is also one of the main reasons why I think I’m fortunate to have ended up at KU Leuven rather than Utrecht. When I had just finished my research master in Utrecht, I actually intended to continue my studies there as a PhD student. However, the NWO (the Dutch counterpart of the FWO) proposal I submitted for a PhD scholarship didn’t have a high enough ranking – note that in the NWO system one competes with proposals from all of the humanities rather than only proposals from philosophy, another difference between the systems – and I was forced to look for a PhD position elsewhere. When a part-time position opened up at the Centre for Logic and Analytic Philosophy, I immediately applied. In hindsight, this was a very good move both career- and research-wise: the research carried out at this centre aimed at the highest international level, and one of my supervisors, Prof. Christoph Kelp, really helped me to develop my views to an extent that might not have been possible otherwise. Indeed, my work on the epistemology of perception now encompasses some of the latest developments in the field and has been published in internationally recognized academic journals. I doubt that I would have achieved these results if I had stayed at Utrecht, simply because it didn’t have a similar international network.

Given that I’m so glad to have ended up carrying out my doctoral studies at KU Leuven, one might wonder why I didn’t choose this university for my bachelor’s and master’s studies in the first place. In fact, when I had to choose where I wanted to study philosophy I didn’t even consider KU Leuven as one of the options. This might seem especially surprising given that I lived in Maastricht at the time, which is a lot closer to Leuven than it is to Utrecht (even though it is still located in The Netherlands). However, there is no deep explanation for my neglecting to consider Leuven as one of the options; as a ‘foreign’ university, it simply wasn’t on my radar, nor did anyone point out that it could or should have been.

Fortunately, I’m still happy with the way things turned out. My bachelor’s and master’s at Utrecht focused mostly on analytic philosophy, the type of philosophy that I was, and still am, most interested in. Because of this focus I now have an extensive background in analytic philosophy to a degree that might not have been possible at Leuven, where continental philosophy still takes up a major portion of the curriculum. However, I wouldn’t have achieved the same results had I stayed in The Netherlands, which is why I am glad to have moved to Leuven. Of course, the question now, being a postdoctoral researcher, is where I will end up next. I don’t know yet, but I’m sure that either The Netherlands or Belgium would work out fine.

By Harmen Ghijsen
ON BELGians, DANes AND BEING A CONSEQUentialist KANTIAN

Somehow I never really considered Belgium a foreign country, as if it occupied a category of its own in between The Netherlands and ‘real’ foreign countries like Germany and France. Looking back at my college days in Utrecht, it seems like a belief in this category was not uncommon among the Dutch. I remember the day a friend of mine, who had wanted to study abroad for a long time, finally revealed her decision to go to Ghent University. Her news was often received with a short look of confusion, followed by hesitating remarks about Belgium ‘of course’ being a foreign country too. Clearly, my friends thought an international stay in Belgium didn’t count.

Curiously enough, now that I’m here, Belgium and The Netherlands sometimes seem to be worlds apart. When you share a language, a border and a history, you don’t expect there to be such contrasts in culture. It’s like the similarities make the differences stand out more. The differences range from funny confusions of tongues to more fundamental contrasts. For example, most of my Flemish colleagues have bought houses (and seem to love doing tons of construction work on them), whereas my Dutch friends of the same age are at the cautious stage of moving in together in a rental apartment. University life has its differences as well. I’ve uttered the words ‘Could you speak up please?’ in Belgian classrooms at least as often as I’ve said ‘Please be quiet’ in Dutch ones. After working here for a year and a half, it doesn’t surprise me that the Dutch psychologist Geert Hofstede claims that no two countries with a shared border and a common language are so culturally different as Dutch-speaking Belgium and The Netherlands.

Academically, though, it may seem like there’s not much of a difference: colloquia are colloquia, whether they are in Toronto, London, Utrecht or Leuven. In academia, we really do speak the same language. Yet a closer look reveals that academia, too, has a million different dialects. I experienced that for the first time when I spent a semester at the University of Toronto during my master’s. I took classes I would never have taken in Utrecht and, in those classes, began to question things I had taken for granted for years. A few years later, the same is happening in Leuven. Again, I’m being asked new questions and introduced to novel answers. Sometimes, these new perspectives can be confusing. A few months after arriving in Leuven, a philosopher shook his head upon reading my work and said: ‘It’s clear to me: you’re a consequentialist. All you care about are the consequences of actions’. Not long after that, a philosopher from Copenhagen read my work and shook his head too, saying: ‘It’s clear to me: you’re a Kantian. You don’t care at all about the consequences of actions’. Both looked at me with incomprehension, as if I had clearly chosen the wrong position. Confusing indeed. Luckily, confusion often leads the way to progress. So bring on the different perspectives and bring on the confusion. In the end, I bet it will turn out that a foreign stay in Belgium does count.

By Anne Polkamp
HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND EMBRACE THE UNEXPECTED

Fearful that Belgian professors would be as unforgiving as their legislators, I decided to take a leap of faith and apply for a PhD-position at the KU Leuven. In the early 19th century, Belgian revolutionaries, inexplicably agitated after a minor hiccup between our two countries, enacted a constitutional decree banning members of the Dutch royal family from Belgian government—eternally. Mind you, this was before almost a decade of war. Today, there is still some apprehension between the countries. As the Dutch know, Belgian highways were devised to discourage us from entering their country. This strategy works: the car I borrowed to drive to my job interview in Leuven broke down even before I crossed the border—the mere memory of previous endeavors into oddly-bituminized territory must have scared it to death.

So why did I apply for a job in a country listed as a borderline case in the *Universal Travelling Guide for Difficult Countries* by Dutch author Jelle Brandt Corstius? In part the reason is that my country of origin, The Netherlands, is very hostile to people like me. Our merchant-government considers itself so smart that it has no need for philosophers. Neither does it want to invest in historians that might uncover the darker pages of the nation’s history—that must be bad for trade, right? So what was I to do, having studied history and philosophy before further diminishing my chances at love, respect, and income by starting a book publishing company? In The Netherlands, my life could only go south. Hence, Belgium. Flanders, to be more precise. The promised land for aspiring academics.

What I knew—and thought I knew—about Flanders gave rise to mixed feeling. On the one hand, the Flemish seemed to have taken over everything on which the Dutch once prided themselves. They have great universities (the KU Leuven is perhaps the best place in Europe for someone interested in political philosophy). Flemish contemporary literature is vastly superior to Dutch. Let’s not talk about soccer, please. The Flemish also continuously outscore the Dutch in the bi-national yearly *Great Dictation of the Dutch Language*. And need I mention Flemish beers compared to Heineken? On the other hand, I confess I was prejudiced. I had heard stories of Dutch migrants who were maddened by Flemish bureaucracy, saddened by the closed ranks of Flemish social life, and confused by the Flemish saying ‘yes’ when they meant ‘no’ (and, confusingly, also when they meant ‘yes”).

Luckily, I have some family in Flanders and already knew that the Flemish are welcoming and warm people. I also had just read David Foster Wallace’s beautiful speech *This is Water*, in which he argues how daily experience mistakenly leads us to accept our own perspective as the center of the universe—something the Dutch are particularly good at. A liberal arts education, Foster Wallace explains, helps you to un-slave your mind from daily experience, to get control over your thought, and to think
about how you think about the world. I took Foster Wallace’s lesson to heart and decided to open my mind to new realities. So, let’s not talk about how a Dutch person perceives Flanders. Instead, let’s talk about how a couple of weeks of living in Flanders shattered the many Dutch truths that I held to be self-evident.

Apparently, and this really struck me, it’s a typically Dutch habit to assume that things work out as you expect. You see, in The Netherlands, reality generally conforms to your expectations. The Force is strong there. If you follow the signs, you arrive at your destination. If you order something, it arrives. And when you contact a public service, say your municipality, you expect a swift response and — voila — there it is! This might seem like heaven, but actually it is hell. It means that you are continuously on edge; you plan everything very strictly around how things should be. This causes permanent stress. If something does not work out as expected (which happens incidentally) you feel entitled to be pissed off and to complain. You also have to rearrange everything you had so carefully planned. Living in Leuven and Brussels has made me realize how much better life is when it is a bit less organized. I have learned not expect too much when pressing buttons, ordering things, or contacting public services, for reality will never live up to expectation. And the true lesson is that life is better when you don’t expect so much.

Take this example. Off to a good start at my new job, I ordered books online. Delivery would follow within 3–5 days. I was provided a track-and-trace code to follow my shipment’s progress. One week later: no books. Two weeks later: still no books. But wait, I checked my tracking code, and according to BPost my shipment was already delivered! I searched around in the office and asked people, but no package was found. Then, a weekend later, I received a mysterious and anonymous voicemail stating “Hello! We are the international delivery service. Hello! Your parcel has been delivered. You can now collect it. Thank you.” I admit this left me confused. I had received nothing, BPost said I had received it weeks ago, and now I was to collect it somewhere? But where? No such info! Off I went to the local BPost-office, where the lady behind the desk had no intention whatsoever of helping me out because “the tracking code says it’s delivered”. My argument that descriptive statements must either be verified or falsified by reality, and my example that the statement “you are bald” holds in my case, did not improve matters. Neither did my question why a delivery service would call me, asking me to collect my order somewhere (unspecified) if it had already been delivered. “There is no such service,” she said. Of course, she refused to listen to my voicemail. Computer says no. Customer says yes. And so our conversation went on. About five days later, my books were delivered. Had I not expected anything and just waited patiently, life would have been better. A valuable lesson.

There are more ways in which living in Flanders has made the world a better place for me. I now realize, for example, that it is unnecessary for Dutch people always to be so loud. The logic is this: if one person shouts, everybody has to shout to be heard. Thus, it is better that everybody whispers, as the Belgians have known for ages. I am also way more relaxed when I try to catch a train. In The Netherlands, I kept an eye on the clock at all times. If the .18 train was not in sight at .17, maybe it was time to file a complaint. Delays were an unacceptable evil, a plain assault on my time. In Belgium however, either there are strikes and hence no trains, or there are trains, of which the NMBS provides ‘theoretical times of departure’. Splendid! Perhaps the NMBS saw Immanuel Kant’s wondrous little manuscript On the Common Saying ‘That may be correct in
theory but is of no use in practice’ and judged it by its cover. Kant, as we know, argues that any rational practice can be grasped by theory, and that theory can be used to make irrational practices rational. In theory, at least. In practice, one practice still bravely resists the imperatives of theory – the NMBS schedules.

But all this is irrelevant. Belgians and the Dutch will probably never stop making fun of each other. And that’s fine. I am happy to have acquired some Belgitude. I stopped worrying and learned to embrace the unexpected. And life is better because of it.

By Bas Leijssenaar

THE NETHERLANDS

Every cliché has an element of truth. When I finished my PhD and started looking for a post-doc position, the University of Tilburg (back then it was still named KU Brabant) had a vacancy for an assistant professor in philosophy of language. In Leuven, I studied with three Dutch professors: Flip Droste, a professor of linguistics, the theologian and philosopher of language Wim de Pater, and Sam Ijsseling. In all three, I admired the diligence, which I spontaneously associated with their Dutch nationality. Contrary to the practice in Leuven, an appointment, at that time, implied a real application procedure, a trial lecture for students, who afterwards expressed their opinion in plain terms (“I understand your Belgian very well”) and an extensive interview about my research plans for the next five years. I think that the fact that I spoke Flemish was decisive: it all seemed a little bit more jovial, and even exotic.

At universities in The Netherlands, everything seemed particularly professional. Transparency and clarity caught the eye, but also an extreme bureaucracy, with colleagues writing letters to other colleagues on the same floor – and receiving back letters from the same colleagues. Philosophy of language and linguistics were well-developed areas of study at almost every big university in The Netherlands, with a lot of publications and an international reputation. I didn’t have too many students in my core course, philosophy of language, and I had gained enough experience in Leuven to teach the introductory course I had to teach to students from the Faculty of Arts.

And the cliché of the blunt Dutchman? It isn’t as bad as you might think: behind that façade, there’s a person who prefers it the usual way, straightforward. The Dutch call a spade a spade, they don’t mince matters. It’s either yes or no. On the culinary level, it was harder. I was never able to get used to a lunch with sandwiches, buttermilk, an apple and a banana. Meetings can last for hours, but when something has been decided, everybody sticks to it. The Dutch stick to their guns, as a result of which it can happen that someone gets angry and walks away. (In The Netherlands, an argument is an argument!)

But the main differences are to be observed on the student side. When, in 2009, I started to teach at the Institute of Philosophy in Leuven as well, it struck me how good, I’d almost say
sweet, Flemish students were, compared to young people in The Netherlands. The Dutch grew up with the message to speak up, not to shut up, so I received — and receive — the most crazy requests, preferably by e-mail on a Sunday morning, and not starting with “Esteemed professor”, but with “Hoi Filip”. Quite often they contain a postponement request, since Exam Regulations in The Netherlands have become so student-friendly that every student can now draw up his own exam schedule. Why is this? The government switched over to a system of output financing. So no diploma means no money for the university. That is the simple but only true explanation for the level decrease, which has begun to show itself in Flanders as well. Of course, this eloquence has its advantages too. One of the less well-known of them is that smart and hard-working students are also willing to show this, to engage in discussion with you and to stay and talk after class. They don’t hide, so talent is discovered more quickly. Our Flemish students, I think, are still a little bit too modest sometimes.

By Filip Buekens

ON BERRIES, CHEESE AND CARS

Having had the pleasure of moving from KU Nijmegen to KU Leuven and back again to Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen (as it is now called) I am fairly familiar with the academic and intellectual climate at both universities; first as a student, then during the time I wrote my PhD and finally as a lecturer. Given that both universities are geographically so close to each other it should be quite an easy task to compare them. But as most Dutch who move to Belgium and Belgians who move to The Netherlands will find out, geographical distance can sometimes be inversely related to cultural difference. Sometimes these differences concern little things (what we have for lunch, how we greet colleagues and friends, or the quality of roads), sometimes to more important ones (how easy it is to make friends or become an integral part of the academic community). Let me relate some stories from my past history to describe some of these differences.

Fall 1995, I just finished my Master’s studies at the KU Nijmegen and was invited for a job interview at the Institute of Philosophy. Proud and nervous at the same time, my girlfriend and I drove to Leuven in the car of my future mother in law. It was probably one of the world’s tiniest cars, so tiny that the advertisers had to strain the truth quite a bit. Its luggage space was ‘astonishing’ and the back seat could easily be turned into a ‘king-size bed’. I guess the truck driver behind us and in front of us were sceptics because we didn’t even make it to the Belgian border that day. Instead we ended up in this crammed sardine can that got stuck between two trucks in the middle of nowhere. I called my future PhD supervisor from a wayside restaurant but had the impres-
sion that he wasn't really convinced by my story. We rescheduled my interview, and this time I actually arrived in Leuven, with a fresh haircut and new suit. Just before I entered the main building of the Institute, however, a bird with intestinal complaints and a belly full of berries dropped a huge surprise on my jacket (whether this little Flemish bird was a bit of a nationalist I am not sure). Even with a stained jacket I got the job, but I also knew that entering the academic community wouldn't be quite as easy as it was in Nijmegen. Although I made some very good friends during my time in Belgium, both communities still differ in this regard.

Leuven, at that time, also had a stronger social hierarchy than I was used to from my experience as a student at my own university. After ten years I still remember one of the first conversations I had with a colleague (and good friend) from Political Science with whom I shared an office. I wasn't really familiar with the rules of conduct in Leuven between professor and assistant so my colleague explained what his professor communicated to him during his first day at work: “If you address me in person please use ‘beste professor’, if you write me a note please use ‘geachte hoogleraar’. And remember ‘professor’ is written with one ‘f’ and two ‘s’es” (“één frak en twee schoenen”).” Unless the professor is German, you probably won’t find this in The Netherlands. I also vividly remember the first lecture I attended it was an evening lecture in the Salons of the Institute. I arrived a bit late but was pleasantly surprised to see that the front row was completely empty. Little did I know that these seats were reserved for the professors. Lucky for me, though, professors weren’t allowed to use foul language in those days. Things have changed since the middle of the nineties. Leuven has become less hierarchical, but there is still an important difference with Nijmegen in this respect.

In the spring of 2007 I moved back to The Netherlands to take up a job as assistant professor in Legal Philosophy at the Faculty of Law of Radboud University of Nijmegen, where I still work. This time I had no problem arriving at my destination; perfect quality Dutch roads all the way from the border to Nijmegen and no bird droppings on my jacket. On my first day I really looked forward to having lunch with my colleagues. Having worked in Belgium for more than ten years I expected a long break, a good conversation about politics or philosophy and a nice glass of wine. Things turned out to be quite different. After queuing for a sandwich with cheese and a croquette roll I noticed that my colleagues were almost finished eating. Little did I know that they all brought their own sandwiches; efficient and cheap at the same time! Later that day another disappointment. I had planned to attend a lecture and deliberately showed up late because I was certain that the first row in the room would be relatively empty. Of course I was wrong — again. The first row was completely filled up, and since we are still not allowed to use foul language I went back to my office. Regarding social hierarchy I really enjoy the fact that I call the head of my department by his first name and can make fun of him. Although I have to admit that I secretly miss the fact that my students don’t call me professor anymore. It has such a nice ring to it.

Both universities are dear to me, and I don’t value one more than the other. But going from one to the other and back again can lead to some pleasant surprises.

By Ronald Tinnevelt
Towards the end of the 1990s, the universities of Nijmegen and Leuven signed a covenant agreement to promote mutual collaboration in education and research. Within this framework, together with my colleague Paul van Tongeren, I submitted a project proposal to deepen the collaboration between our faculties in the field of ethics, beyond the personal contacts that existed already. We were successful and received a modest subsidy for joint activities – a subsidy that would be renewed later. A similar project was submitted by the Leuven and Nijmegen research groups in Metaphysics, but this collaboration didn’t last as long as the one between the ethicists. For many years, we organized two colloquiums every year on a certain theme. We met in January and at the end of May-beginning of June, alternately in Nijmegen and in Leuven. The Summer meetings took place in a beautifully located hotel-restaurant in Berg en Dal and in the Franciscan monastery in Vaalbeek. The January meeting was devoted to reading and discussing some fundamental text about the theme of the year, and in May, we discussed some texts of the Leuven and Nijmegen researchers on the same topic. The meetings in May-June were two-day meetings, so there was room for informal contacts between researchers as well. The themes we chose were most often topics in fundamental ethics.

‘Trust and Reciprocity’, ‘Love, Justice and Forgiveness’, ‘Ethics and Transcendence’, ‘Multiculturalism’, ‘Alterity’, ‘Egoism and Altruism’, the environmental problem – these were some of the topics. In Nijmegen, ethics and political philosophy are two different departments, whereas in Leuven, this is not the case. Leuven has insisted on choosing topics in political philosophy as well, so after a while, we began to discuss problems like ‘populism’ and ‘sovereignty’. There have also been a few meetings without a clearly defined topic in which doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers could present their recent work and receive feedback from senior researchers. The covenant meetings have always been very open. To avoid inbreeding, we have invited specialists from other universities, whose work fits into the theme discussed. We have thus talked about the problem of forgiveness with guests from South-Africa, who explained the dynamics of their Truth and Reconciliation Commission. HIW Philosophers from research centers other than the Centre for Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy, such as Paul Moyaert, Rudi Visker, Ullrich Melle and Stefaan Cuypers have also presented papers.

The collaboration was extended to teaching as well. From the very beginning, Paul van Tongeren was involved in the Master of Applied Ethics, jointly organized by theologians and philosophers in Leuven. On Saturdays, together with our colleague Johan Verstraeten from the Faculty of Theology, we had a seminar in Applied Ethics, in which students from both Leuven and Nijmegen participated. When the MA of Applied Ethics was shut down, this joint seminar continued to exist for many years as the Bachelor’s Paper Seminar in our International program. Italian students from Macerata also presented their papers in Leuven in the framework of this seminar (they could come to Leuven thanks to cheap Ryan Air flights). The fact that we were
able to reimburse train tickets to Nijmegen with the covenant’s money made the collaboration much easier.

After the retirement of Paul van Tongeren, the joint teaching was suspended, but the research collaboration still continues, although the meetings now focus more on political philosophy than on fundamental ethics, and they are in English rather than in Dutch. Philosophers from the Nijmegen Faculties of Law and Social Sciences participate in the organization. The original rhythm of the two annual meetings, with one consisting of two days, turned out to be a little bit too intense and led to a kind of fatigue, because we got to know each other too well. To preserve mutual curiosity, we have recently skipped a year here and there.

We have always considered these meetings to be a place where ideas could be tested. The idea has been to integrate papers into PhD dissertations or regular publications. This is why the covenant meetings haven’t left behind many tangible things, like joint book publications. We have always been very careful with the covenant’s money. I’m not sure if the colloquia will continue to be organized when there’s no money left. Both universities have other priorities now. However, this kind of staff colloquia is an essential forum for the testing of ideas that are not fully mature, and an important means to the formation of young researchers. All participants will remember the warm conviviality of the meetings and the heroic discussion to which they have often led.

By Antoon Vandevelde

PHILOSOPHY IN THE NETHERLANDS: INSTITUTIONAL SHIFTS

Philosophers often appear in media because they want to contribute to the public debate, because they are convinced that a theme or problem is not fully discussed until philosophical arguments have completed the debate and/or sent it into a new direction. The position of philosophy itself, and certainly its institutional context, are much less frequently made the subject of public debate. And yet, precisely this has happened in The Netherlands on more than one occasion in the last few years, particularly on the occasion of the closing down – or the impending closing down – of philosophical faculties.

The history of the institutional position of philosophy in The Netherlands is long and varied. In the first half of the 20th century, on repeated occasions, debates were held about the need for a guaranteed status and place for philosophy at universities. Until then, philosophical education mainly took the form of chairs in philosophy, generally at faculties of Liberal Arts. An important milestone was the ‘Law on Scientific Education’ (‘Wet Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs’) of 1960, which
stated that every university in The Netherlands had to establish a Central Interfaculty. This Central Interfaculty had to realize several goals: it had to show, on the one hand, that universities offered not just a professional training in one domain, but also wanted to reflect on the connection between the sciences. Philosophy would play a central role in this because it was the source of all sciences and because it was able to elucidate this connection. On the other hand, philosophy could now prove that it wasn’t confined to a relationship with the Liberal Arts, but that it was able to engage in a conversation with the natural, behavioral and biomedical sciences as well. In short, the Central Interfaculty was created to give philosophy a central place at the university and to guarantee its scientific and academic seriousness. This durable basis justified the programming of philosophy as a formative course in other university programs.

In the debates on this subject, concern was repeatedly expressed that philosophy practiced outside the university was not serious enough, was too ideological or too shallow.

In spite of all these beautiful aims and intentions, the concept of a Central Interfaculty, after a while, turned out not to have enough support to continue existing. In 1987, after an external evaluation and financial cuts, the Central Interfaculty was officially deleted and replaced by a Faculty of Philosophy. This shift brought along much discussion among philosophers, because it meant, in fact, that the special status of philosophy at universities had come to a symbolic end. The Faculty of Philosophy was just one faculty among many others. To some people, this meant that philosophy could finally be considered as a real, full science in its own institutional structure. To others, it meant that a central feature of philosophy within the university had been lost. In the years following this decision, all universities in The Netherlands established a Faculty of Philosophy, which offered different programs, including separate programs for students who had already obtained an academic degree in another domain. Noticeable was the fact that the new faculties increasingly sought alliance with international evolutions, both in research and in teaching. Important factors in this regard are the requirements of funding institutions and the increasing use of the English language.

Observers have gradually found that these evolutions and the businesslike management of universities come to impose another logic on their organization. As from the end of the 1990s (e.g. 1997 in Amsterdam), the small philosophy faculties have been integrated into larger wholes, like faculties of the Humanities, or they have been made to form one joint faculty with the faculty of Theology. Today, only two independent faculties are left over, in Groningen and Rotterdam – the second one thanks to a loud protest of the philosophical community. Is it a coincidence that both belong to the most valued philosophical programs and research institutes?

Philosophy in The Netherlands finds itself at an important crossroads. Will it be able to maintain its position in a quickly evolving academic landscape?

By Bart Raymaekers
ZOOMING IN ON RESEARCH: THE CENTRE FOR LOGIC AND ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Spread between two locations in the centre of Leuven – the top floor of the Institute of Philosophy’s main building on the one hand, and the first floor of the Pedagogisch Instituut on the other hand – the 20 members (professors, post-doc and pre-doc researchers) of the Centre for Logic and Analytic Philosophy (CLAW) form a lively and brilliant community. Their research focuses on questions from logic and epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind and language, analytical metaphysics, theory of evolution etc.

Recently, the Centre launched some new initiatives: the Herman Roelants Lectures, a series of joint symposia with the De Wulf-Mansion Centre, and two new research groups. For the Alumni Newsletter, this was reason enough to zoom in on the CLAW and present both a part of its history, and some short reports about the new initiatives. This article is the first of a series, in which we will introduce each of the five research centres of the Institute of Philosophy.

Logic and analytic philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy prior to 1972

The Centre for Logic and Analytical Philosophy was officially founded by Herman Roelants in 1972 (originally as the Centre for Logic, Philosophy of Science, and Philosophy of Language). However, from the 1940s onwards, the Institute has had a strong tradition of research in analytic philosophy and especially logic.

Robert Feys (1889-1961) worked extensively on the history of logic, modal logic and combinatory logic. In modal logic, he was the first to study the logical system T, in which necessity is assumed to be factive. Feys also wrote a book on combinatory logic (which would become a landmark in the field), together with the American logician Haskell Curry, who was a visiting professor in Leuven during the academic year 1950-51. Joseph Dopp (1901-1978) shared Feys’s interests in modal logic and combinatory logic. Furthermore, he also worked in the philosophy of science, publishing, for example, an article on the complicated relationship between ancient and modern physics. Jean Ladrière (1921-2007), who was a student of Feys, worked in proof theory, but was also among the first authors to systematically explore the philosophical implications of Gödel’s infamous incompleteness theorems. Alfons Borgers (1919-2001) was primarily a mathematician, but he also worked under Feys, and regularly taught logic courses at the Institute. His research interests were mainly situated in the philosophy of mathematics, focusing on the foundations of set theory.

Feys, Dopp, Ladrière and Borgers were also involved in several organizational activities, and actively worked to introduce the recent findings of logic and analytic philosophy to
a broader audience. For example, Feys and Ladrière translated some of Gentzen’s seminal works on proof theory into French, Dopp (together with Paul Gochet from Liège) translated Quine’s *Word and Object* into French, and Borgers published numerous introductory articles on logic and mathematics in Dutch. Feys and Dopp were among the founding members of Belgium’s *National Center for Research in Logic* (CNRL/NCNL) (1955) and the journal *Logique et Analyse* (1958), while Borgers was the managing editor of the *Journal of Symbolic Logic* for an astonishing period of 30 years (1953-1983). In 1958, Leuven was also home to the *Colloque de Logique*, which attracted international logicians and philosophers such as A. Church, G. Ryle, P. Suppes and A. Tarski.

By Lorenz Demey

---

**Herman Roelants Lecture: Prof. James Ladyman, “Why atoms are not atoms, why particles are not particles, and why it matters” (Tuesday May 19, 2015)**

*Introduction by Prof. Stefaan Cuypers*

Het Centrum voor Logica, Filosofie van de Wetenschappen en Taalfilosofie, The Centre for Logic, Philosophy of Science, and Philosophy of Language, was founded in 1972 by professor Herman Roelants. Now emeritus professor Roelants, together with professor de Pater and professor Mertens, were the three promotors of a new centre at the Leuven Institute of Philosophy. On the official card of invitation, signed by the dean of that time, professor Wylleman, one can read:

“Bij de ingebruikneming van de bibliotheek van het Centrum voor Logica, Filosofie van de Wetenschappen en Taalfilosofie in het Hoger Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte zal een officiële opening van dit Centrum plaats hebben op dinsdag 14 maart 1972 te 17u. in de kardinaal Mercierzaal van het H.I.W. Een korte uiteenzetting van de doelstellingen van het centrum zal gevolgd worden door een voordracht van professor Heuts: *Wijsgerige implicaties van de biologie. [Een kleine receptie zal nadien aangeboden worden. Uw aanwezigheid op deze openings-szitting zou ten zeerste gewaardeerd worden.]”

Some titles of the papers, discussed in the first year of the Centre’s *interdisciplinary seminar* during the academic year 1971-72 were the following: Frege’s *Über Sinn und Bedeutung*, Russell’s *On Denoting*, Strawson’s *On Referring*, Sellars’ *Presupposing*, Montague’s *Presupposing*, Quine’s *Vagaries of Reference*, and Searle’s *Reference as a Speech Act*.

Now eight years ago, in 2007, the Centre changed its name to *Het Centrum voor logica en analytische wijsbegeerte*, The Centre for Logic and Analytic Philosophy. Although philosophy of science and philosophy of language still play an important role, the scope of the Centre’s research domain today extends to other fields of analytic philosophy as well, especially epistemology, philosophy of mind and Darwinian theory. Logic and philosophical logic, as well as respect for the analytical style of doing philosophy compose the basic glue which binds the centre and its members together.

It is, now 43 years after the centre’s origination, my great pleasure to welcome here our ‘founding father’ professor Roelants, in honour of whom we start today on Tuesday the 19th of May with a new lecture series in his name. We
are grateful to you Herman and thank you for taking the original initiative all these years ago to set up our centre, which today flourishes and will continue to excel and to play a major role at this Institute of Philosophy.

Introduction by Prof. Jan Heylen

The Centre for Logic and Analytic Philosophy organizes every two years the Herman Roelants Lecture on Science in honour of the founder of the centre, Prof. Herman Roelants. The upshot is to invite distinguished philosophers of science to give public lectures on science. The lectures are open to everyone, and they are accessible to non-specialists as well. The first installment of the series was a lecture by Prof. James Ladyman (Bristol University), who gave a talk entitled “Why atoms are not atoms, particles are not particles, and why it matters”. Prof. Ladyman was co-editor (with Prof. Alexander Bird) of the British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, for which he was previously a deputy editor and assistant editor (2004-2011). In addition, he was Honorary Secretary of The British Society for the Philosophy of Science (2003-2007). His book Understanding Philosophy of Science was awarded the Choice Outstanding Academic Text Award. In 2005 he received the prestigious Philip Leverhulme Prize in Philosophy.

CLAW-DWMC Symposium 2015 (Friday May 22, 2015)

On 21 March 2014, Prof. Jan Opsomer of the De Wulf-Mansion Centre for Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy (DWMC) gave a talk in the Seminar of the Centre for Logic and Analytic Philosophy (CLAW Seminar). The topic of his talk could be described as philosophy of ancient science. This led to the realization that philosophy of science is not confined to CLAW. More generally, Prof. Jan Opsomer and I came to the conclusion that there are DWMC research projects to which members of CLAW could contribute and vice versa. For this reason we organized a joint symposium. There were two speakers from each centre participating and each talk was commented on by a respondent from the other centre. The first speaker was Dr. Lorenz Demey (CLAW), who gave a talk entitled “Buridan’s and Avicenna’s Aristotelian Diagrams for Combined Operators”. Philipp Julius Steinkrüger (DMWC) responded to this talk. I was the second speaker. My talk was entitled “Self-predication”. Can Laurens Loewe (DMWC) was the respondent. The third speaker was Luca Gili, whose talk was entitled “Thomas Aquinas on Future Contingents”. Dr. Lorenz Demey was the respondent. The fourth speaker was Prof. Jan Opsomer, who gave a talk entitled “Epistemic Authority”. Prof. Chris Kelp (CLAW) was the respondent. The event was very well attended and it was very positively received by the participants and the audience. At the moment the speaker-respondent pairs are preparing joint papers for a kind of conference proceedings in Tijdschrift voor Filosofie.

By Jan Heylen
The Leuven Epistemology Group (LEG)

The Leuven Epistemology Group is a research group at the Institute of Philosophy. It was founded in 2014. This makes it one of the Institute’s youngest research groups. Even so, the LEG already has a sizeable number of members at all levels of seniority.

What ties us together is an interest in epistemology and in areas that are at the intersection of epistemology and other areas in philosophy such as the philosophy of language, logic, the philosophy of science and value theory.

While our research interests are thus rather broad, there are also some specific issues that are at the centre of our attention at present. In particular, a number of LEG members are currently working on a project on the nature of justified belief. More specifically, the aim is to explore the prospects of a knowledge-first virtue epistemology. The core idea of virtue epistemology is, roughly, to analyse knowledge and justified belief in terms of exercises of cognitive abilities. Key to knowledge-first epistemology is that knowledge is taken to be an epistemologically fundamental phenomenon that may be appealed to in epistemological theorising roughly as an unexplained explainer. The project puts these two together by aiming to offer an account of justified belief in terms of cognitive abilities, where these abilities are understood as abilities to know.

Another issue that has been at the forefront of research in the LEG concerns epistemic norms. In particular, we have been inquiring into what sorts of phenomena are governed by epistemic norms in the first place: just belief, belief and assertion, or perhaps belief, assertion and action in general. Of course, where phenomena are governed by epistemic norms, we have been trying to figure out what these norms actually require. Finally, we have been interested in whether epistemic norms generally prescribe certain forms of conduct or whether there are other kinds of epistemic norms, e.g. norms that specify conditions of epistemic goodness.

If you want to know more about LEG, please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Christoph Kelp, the coordinator of the group, at christoph.kelp@kuleuven.be

By Christoph Kelp
Philosophy of Science Leuven (PSL)

Philosophy of Science Leuven (PSL) coordinates all research concerning general philosophy of science and philosophy of particular sciences (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, cognitive science, social science, medicine and psychiatry). It is part of the Centre for Logic and Analytic Philosophy (CLAW), but it is open to participation and collaboration with philosophers from the other research centres at the Institute of Philosophy and scientists from across KU Leuven. The group collaborates with the Leuven Interdisciplinary Platform for the Study of the Sciences (LIPPS). If you want to be updated about the events organized by PSL, you can subscribe to one of the many mailing lists per subject on the PSL website: hiw.kuleuven.be/claw/psl

By Jan Heylen
THE HUSSERL MEMORIAL LECTURE 2015: SARA HEINÄMAA

This year we were fortunate to have Prof. Sara Heinämaa (Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki) present the Husserl Memorial Lecture. Prof. Heinämaa presented her paper “Sex, Gender, and Embodiment” to a packed lecture hall, in a contemplative yet engaging style. Students and faculty of the HIW also had the opportunity to observe her open and careful manner at a seminar the following day on the topic of generative phenomenology.

Prof. Heinämaa’s talk presented several ‘firsts’ for the Husserl Memorial Lecture. Although Prof. Heinämaa is not the first female professor to give the annual lecture, her paper was the first to explicitly tackle the issue of sex and gender — a topic that not many people would attempt to understand via the transcendental philosophy of a male thinker born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And while normally there are no questions after the lecture, (since it is meant to be as much an honour as it is a challenge), Prof. Heinämaa responded to a number of questions from the audience and the exchange revealed surprising and constructive connections between a classical, Husserlian approach to sex and gender, and the approaches of diverse fields like psychoanalysis, women’s studies, empirical sciences, and discourse analysis.

In her lecture, Prof. Heinämaa sought to show that Husserlian phenomenology provides an unconventional and fruitful starting point for thinking about sexual difference. The lecture’s aim was to clarify the possible meanings of sexual difference as it is constituted in personal and interpersonal experience. Prof. Heinämaa proposed that the concepts of ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ (as they have emerged from anthropological and psychological theories of the 1950’s and women’s studies of the 1960’s) have become a problematic basis for understanding sexual difference, and that by starting from the Husserlian conception of structures of embodiment, we can overcome a deeply entrenched dualism in the academic discussion of sex and gender: the rigid difference between culturally constructed gendered-roles and biologically determined sexed-bodies, or between social constructs of sex and gender on the one hand, and raw biological matter on the other.

Prof. Heinämaa began her talk by observing that there are two dominant ways to distinguish sex from gender. The first is the substantial distinction between sex and gender. According to this distinction, sex refers to somatic differences (e.g. gonadal and hormonal) while gender refers to psychological and behavioural capacities (e.g. emotional and cognitive capacities). Commonly appended to this view is the hypothesis that gender-differences coincide with or are caused by sexual differences. The second way of distinguishing sex from gender is criterial rather than substantial. This does not rely on a mind-body distinction. Instead,
gender pertains to any differences between men and women (whether somatic or psychological) that have a strictly cultural origin. Sex, on the other hand, refers to any differences that have a strictly biological origin, without social conditioning. It is the causal origin that matters — if physical differences arise from cultural causes, then in this view those are differences of gender and not sex.

According to Prof. Heinämaa’s analysis, the discourse on sex and gender often combines or conflates the substantial and criterial distinctions, with the result that gender is linked to the mind and society, while sex is tied to the body and nature. The problem with such a combination is that it leads to the assumption that only mental and behavioural differences have their origin in culture, while somatic characters (e.g. bodily shape, cerebral structure) are by and large indifferent to culture. In contrast to this, there is a more radical view (held by Judith Butler for one) that both gender and sex are cultural productions — the idea of sex being dimorphic and mutually exclusionary is after all an invention of the 19th century. These views — the combinatory and the radical — are not entirely innocent or straightforward, however, since they make certain assumptions about embodiment. Prof. Heinämaa argued that the metaphor of ‘production’ entails that the organism is a sort of inert ‘matter’ that precedes the sexual ‘form’ that shapes it. Even the more radical view still retains elements of the earlier distinctions between sex and gender, as it distinguishes between specific constellations of sex and gender on the one hand (which are the effects of cultural-causal factors), and an underlying substance on the other hand.

According to Prof. Heinämaa, phenomenology fruitfully criticizes these distinctions of cause and effect, matter and form in the body. Husserl’s approach to the body attends to the correlation of subjective and objective corporeal appearances, and as such does not present the body as a biomechanism but rather as a fundamental way of relating to the world. The body is united to instrumental intentions, aimed at manipulating material objects and using those material objects in turn to modify itself. The body is also united with expressive intentions, as the body manifests itself by means of meaningful gestures. Adding gender as a system of signification on top of a body that is conceived of as an inert member of a causal nexus misses the role that the body has in the formation of sense and signification. The intentional, expressive, instrumental body is a creative source of meaning, not just a substrate that suffers it. Husserl’s analyses of the lived body in terms of expression and motivation, articulation and action, shows how it plays an essential role in shaping the natural and cultural world where it resides.

Prof. Heinämaa showed that a phenomenological approach has the further advantage of giving more fine-grained descriptions of the givenness of different parts of our bodies (including those relevant to sexual difference). Organs and appendages of the body are not present to us indifferently. The lived experience of embodiment is heterogeneous. Some of our reproductive organs are directly perceivable in sight and touch, while others are hidden but appear in proprioception, and still others are hidden in such a way that they can only be accessible by indirect or invasive means, like cutting the flesh. The sensations that arise from the erotic zones of our bodies do not contribute to our awareness of the objective, thingly aspect of the world, but rather constitutes a field of affects and value-laden appearances for consciousness. Furthermore, the appearances of other persons as being either ‘male’ or ‘female’ is not strictly tied to the awareness of their possessing one sort or genitalia or another. Rather, they are given as male and
female through styles of movement and distinct comportments within a milieu. Thus the constitution of the masculine and feminine subjectivity is primarily tied to variations of living movement, rather than to biofunctions or genitalia. As we can see, phenomenological attentiveness to embodiment can help us to reformulate questions concerning how sex- and gender-identities are created and performed.

Phenomenologically speaking, sexual difference is not about different substances or sets of criteria and signs, but different modalities of relating. To quote Prof. Heinämaa directly, “the question of sexual identity is not a question of ‘what’ but of ‘how.’”

By Patrick Eldridge
SAINT THOMAS FEAST 2015: 
AN INTERVIEW WITH 
MARILYN ADAMS

Marilyn McCord Adams (Rutgers University, NJ) gave the 2014-2015 Aquinas Lecture. An Episcopalian priest, Adams is a philosopher of religion, a renowned historian of later medieval philosophy, especially of John Duns Scotus and William Ockham, and a theologian. Her monograph William Ockham (Notre Dame, 1987) remains the authoritative work on Ockham. Her publications in philosophy of religion include two books on the problem of evil, Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God (Cornell, 1999) and Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology (Cambridge, 2006). She has also published Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist: Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and William Ockham (Oxford, 2010). We sat down to discuss her introduction to medieval philosophy and theology, different ways to approach the history of the philosophy, and her solution to the problem of evil.

What brought you to medieval philosophy and to Ockham in particular?
Well, what brought me to medieval philosophy was an interest in theology and hence an interest in philosophy of religion. Medieval philosophy was the period in which theology set the syllabus for philosophy in a large degree and so it was a period in which really smart people were dealing with some of the problems that I was interested in. And because the period in which I studied as an undergraduate was somewhat hostile to religion, you had to go back to a historical period where there was such detailed and rigorous treatment of issues like omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability and all of these God arguments. It was a way to make progress in understanding those problems without having to prove the existence of God to my professors who didn’t believe in God and weren’t prepared to take it on as a live option.
And to Ockham?

And to Ockham. That was somewhat of an accident. I was at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Nelson Pike came to teach summer school and I took a reading course with him. At that point he had just finished working on his article on Hume on evil that had been published and I was doing a reading course on the problem of evil. But he was then working on foreknowledge and so I got interested in the foreknowledge problem. Norman Kretzmann said, “Well you know Ockham wrote a treatise on God’s foreknowledge;” and I was taking a course in medieval philosophy. He said, “It’s in Latin, however. You can translate it.” So that’s how I got started on Ockham. Once I got into it, I thought there is this strange terminology like “intuitive cognition” and that something is “a relative.” There are these funny notions and we need to explain what they are in the footnotes. So then I went off and started reading various bits of Ockham. And the rest is history [laughs]!

Would you say that your interest in Ockham is motivated by a belief that he got something right or because there are things that he says that that you find problematic.

At first it was that he was discussing this [foreknowledge] problem so I wanted to see what he said about the problem and then what other people said about the problem. But then I quickly realised that there was something about the methodology of this period…I mean, analytic philosophy was very piecemeal in the 60s when I was a student. You worked on one problem at a time and then you worked on another problem. I could see that Ockham and Scotus and Aquinas were coming out of reasonably well-worked out metaphysical and epistemological positions so that there was a lot of philosophical depth to what they said about given problems. I was drawn from a surface interest in what he said about foreknowledge and why to what his metaphysical position was and why and what were the alternatives that he was arguing against and what did they have to say for themselves?

I came to the view sometime in the middle that I didn’t think that I would end up thinking that God was immutable and impassable and so forth but I was drawn to their approach because it was analytical and systematic. If I could understand how their systematic positions worked and how making one move dictated other moves and changing one move might reconfigure the landscape, then I would learn how to do systematic philosophy and theology while still being analytically rigorous. So I thought, I am going to try to figure out what they think and why. Of course, then the more you get drawn into it, the more you get interested in the details because these people are so minute in their systematic analysis that you have to get into the details to understand what they are talking about. And of course one gets gripped by the metaphysical problems for their own sake as well. It was slippery slope but I am not sorry [laughs]!

Do you think that some of them [medieval philosophers] are better than others about presenting a more consistent systematic view?

I don’t think that I would put it quite that way. I prefer some more than others on certain problems or I used to think that I did anyway. I think that they have different strengths and I think that in doing the history of philosophy it’s best to work mostly on figures that you resonate with because you have a chance to understand where they are coming from. But if you try to work on figures whose intuitions are too alien to yours, you may not be able to get what they are trying to say. For me, Ockham was a good place to begin because he is very clear relatively speaking and he cuts through the metaphors and says, “What does this mean anyway? Let’s get to the bottom of this.” And that was very congenial to the methodology
that I was learning in analytic philosophy. I learned a lot from working through his ideas. The more I worked on them, however, and the more I returned to my original theological interests of trying to understand the Trinity and Incarnation, the more I saw that Ockham’s final positions were so reductive that they might not have enough metaphysical machinery to do the work. Especially with the doctrine of the Trinity, I think. And so since going to Yale in 1993, I have been drawn more to Scotus who retains a richer metaphysical stock of conceptual tools.

I guess I have been engaging in comparative anatomy. Aquinas was the least congenial to me. That was partly because in the days when I began to study medieval philosophy, to be frank, some parts of American Thomism were so dogmatic. It was almost fundamentalist. I remember in my early days I submitted a paper on divine simplicity to one of the Catholic journals and I got back the following rejection: this is a Platonist problem; Aquinas was an Aristotelian philosopher; therefore, your paper is rejected. And I thought, but I have generated this problem out of the text of Aquinas himself! It seemed to me that people cared too much to say that Aquinas had the truth of the matter and to actually explore the variety and complexity of Aquinas’s views. That was in the 60s and things have changed a lot in the meantime. But because of that I thought it better for me to work on Ockham because people think he is wrong anyway. So you are free to figure out whatever it is that he has to say and nobody will be hot and bothered about it. And in fact, you know, Ockham had been the whipping boy of various historians of philosophy and in my book I tried to argue that they had got him wrong on point after point so hopefully my book was clearing ground that no longer needs to be cleared.

Do you think that medieval philosophy is relevant today beyond its historical importance (I take it you would agree) and are there any particular continuities between then and now that would suggest that it is? As an analytic philosopher, I am not a historicist. Ideas should not be located in their historical context in such a way that one cannot extract them from their historical context and consider their theoretical merits. To that extent I have not repented of my education and many theologians would think that I am hopelessly naïve and I will just remain that way I guess. To my mind, I am interested in understanding the way they [medieval philosophers] approach various problems because they were both analytic and systematic. Analytic philosophy has come to be more systematic since the 70s. It has returned to theory-making. My suspicion is that while there has been a return to metaphysics big-time in the past decade, [contemporary metaphysics] is considering a one-sided syllabus of theoretical options. If we can retrieve some of these metaphysical options and put them on the table, this will enrich the discussion of, for instance, the constitution of ordinary objects and the relation between mind and body.

For example, throughout most of my career, reductive materialism has been the majority report but people have been moving away from that and now people think that the only option besides reductive materialism is dualism. But if we could somehow retrieve and re-present hylomorphism as an option and try to explain how it is the same or different from dualism, then perhaps that would be a contribution. I actually know people who can [make such a contribution]. Rob Koons who is at the University of Texas, Austin, is very sharp in mathematics and philosophy of science and so he can understand theoretical physics in a way that I myself cannot. He thinks that there are reasons for thinking that some of the theoretical explanations that physicists are reaching for have hylomorphic implications. Like every
human activity, philosophy goes for fads. It is part of the historian’s job to try to understand what past thinkers said and then for at least some historians to bring some of the results of that research to the table of the contemporary metaphysical discussion.

Do you think that part of our job as historians of philosophy involves a duty to bring what we learn to the contemporary table or not?

I think that doing the history of philosophy is a way of doing philosophy because you are trying to understand how philosophical systems that were developed by older thinkers in great detail work. I think that is such a complex job that there are different vocations. I wouldn’t want to say that every historian of philosophy is required to make it his or her business to talk to contemporary metaphysicians and make sure that they get what Scotus or Ockham or Aquinas was trying to say. For one thing, in order to do our work, we need people who are philologists and textual editors. You can’t be a philologist and a textual editor and at the same time be up-to-date on all the contemporary [developments] or least most people can’t. Of course there are always renaissance persons but most people cannot get all that done at once. There can be a division of labour. But I think that it is important for some of us, to the extent that we can, to try to build bridges.

There is always a need for balance though. Here is an example of a temptation for historians of philosophy in departments like Cornell. It is to take the weirdness out of the old-time figures and to make them more contemporary than they really are. That might not be a totally fruitless move because it might be that some people are willing to bite on a fragment or a distortion of what the old-time person thinks and get a really helpful idea or insight from it. On the other hand, I think it is important that some of us do detailed enough work that we can say, “No, they had a weirder idea than that. They weren’t really thinking of it as we do and that’s why we want to study them.” If they thought just like we did, there wouldn’t be any point in digging out these old texts and trying to edit them and comparing the variants and studying our Aristotle. If they thought exactly like we do then why bother? We could make it up ourselves. The point is that philosophy is too hard to make up from scratch; we have to get our orientation from what went before. We need to keep reminding ourselves of how differently people have thought about things. That is another thing that historians of philosophy do, they say, “Once upon a time they thought of it in this really strange way but there was a method in their madness. Let me try to explain to you what it was.”

You have written that the medieval engagement in doctrines of revealed theology provoked philosophical insights and innovations. Could you discuss what one of those would be and how it propelled medieval philosophers to break new ground?

I think that I had in mind developments in
categories and metaphysics. We have Aristotle with substances and accidents. Substances are the kind of thing that cannot exist in or be said of a subject and accidents are the kind of thing that can only exist in a subject. A variety of doctrines of revealed theology put pressure on those ideas and required them [medieval philosopher-theologians] to complicate the theory. For example, concerning the doctrine of the Incarnation they had to say that there is substance—thing that can have something else as its subject, namely, the particular human nature of Christ. We have an individual substance—thing that is not itself the ultimate subject of properties but is dependent on something else as its subject. And with the doctrine of the Eucharist, we have the idea that accident-things can exist without inhering in any substance as their subject; they can exist on their own. What these doctrines tell you is that Aristotle’s didn’t get it quite right. The way I like to think about it is this: they are not just making ad hoc exceptions. They are not just saying, “Oh well, we have an exception and it’s a mystery.” They are saying, “We have more data than Aristotle and so we need to tweak the theory,” in the way that Newtonian mechanics has to be reconceptualised in the light to Einstein. You don’t throw it away, we still teach it in elementary physics but it’s not the whole story and it needs to be seen as something that is only within a certain framework. So they said, “Well, Aristotle got it right for the database that he was working with but he didn’t have all the data. Now we need to make the theory more complicated and so we are not going to say that substances are such that it is absolutely impossible for them to have something else as their subject. We are going to say that they have a natural aptitude not to and accidents are not the kind of thing that can only exist inhering in a substance but they have a natural aptitude to.” You replace necessary tendencies with aptitudinal tendencies and then you have a systematic adjustment, which allows for the miraculous cases.

You have published extensively on the problem of evil. What is your solution to the problem of evil and particularly “horrendous evils,” as you put it?

What is my solution to the problem of horrendous evil? Christ is the one word answer [laughs]. The idea is this: horrendous evils are evils the participation in which, either as a perpetrator or a victim, prima facie destroy the positive meaning of an individual person’s life. The only thing that can swallow up the negative, the disvaluation, the ruin that participation in horrors produces, is a person’s on-the-whole intimate and in the end beatific and wholesome relation to the boundless goodness of God. My suggestion is that for a person’s horror participation to be defeated so that his or her life can on the whole and in the end have positive meaning, it needs to be caught up in the warp and woof of the individual’s relationship with God whether witting or unwitting in the present life.

The first stage of this is divine solidarity in horror participation. God becomes a human being, becomes incarnate – I believe in a two natures Christology much like Scotus’s – and becomes a victim of horrors. Most obviously on the cross but of course as someone with a prophetic vocation he also provokes horrors for the Pharisees by challenging their meaning-making systems and provoking them in the end to act out what was in their hearts, which was a desperation to make their meaning-making systems work that was so strong that they would even kill God. Prophets always provoke horror participation for the people whose meaning-making systems they are trying to undo. So, Christ becomes a horror participant but because Christ’s solidarity with us in horror participation means that our own horror participation is caught up in our relationship to God, then, stage two (mostly ante mortem), people can
be brought to realize this and appreciate the positive meaning-making consequences of God with us in the worst that we can suffer, be, or do. And, in the end, come to see that his or her life has positive meaning. In the afterlife, God will introduce us into an environment where horrors are no more. That is the eschaton.

My analogy was of buddies in the horrible trenches of World War I who survive and become life-long friends. They would retrospectively say, “We would never have enlisted if we had known what it was going to be like. We would never recommend that anyone join the army in wartime to make friends but in fact, we have become friends and this relationship has been one of the most important threads in our own lives. We would not retrospectively wish away from our history together that time in the trenches.” Similarly with a horror participant at some stage, the person could come to the point of saying, “Well, my relationship with boundless goodness – and it is really important that it is boundless goodness – is so much more than I can imagine, that I would not want to wish away from my life any moment of intimacy or togetherness that we actually had. So, I accept the horror participation, whether as a perpetrator or as a victim.” That is roughly it.

The life of Jesus and the Incarnation is pivotal for defeating horrors. In this regard, your approach is very Christian specific. How would a non-Christian believer or an atheist begin to grapple with the suffering that they experience?

There can be a Jewish version if you stress divine passability enough. Many Jewish thinkers, especially post-Holocaust who don’t go apophatic altogether, stress that God is a suffering God so that God suffers in God’s divine nature all the sufferings of this present life. Or think of Charles Hartshorne who thinks that God is a God who experiences all of our experiences and so feels of all our pains and so on. I think the Jewish approach would go even further to say, “Well, because God is divine, God’s capacity to suffer is even greater than our psychological capacities and so the depth of his grief and horror outclasses ours.” That would be a kind of divine empathy, that God was with us even though we did not recognize it at the time because our minds were blown. The disadvantage of that of course is that God’s mind can’t be blown. Even if you allow God to be passable, you don’t want to say that God’s mind can be blown because what would happen to the universe, right? There is a way in which the imagery of Good Friday is like that. The Temple veil is rent, there is an eclipse and an earthquake, and things are coming apart at the seams. That is what happens when God dies. But I think that that would be a way that non-Christian believers in God might accommodate it.

For atheists, I think that atheists have a tough time. I think that horrors are a good positive reason to believe in God and I have actually argued this in a feisty paper: if you are a purpose-driven optimist and you are an atheist, your posture is irrational because there are horrors. You have options. You can bet that you will be one of the lucky ones and you will curb your optimism so that you think not everyone is lucky enough to avoid individual horror participation but maybe I will be. And so my purpose-drivenness is based on the bet that I will be lucky. Or, you can curb your realism and screen out the fact that millions and millions of people die with horrors that so far as they can tell are unredeemed within their meaning-making systems. You can pretend that that doesn’t happen. But if you are a realistic purpose-driven optimist, then you should be a theist. You should believe that there is something that is big enough to solve the problem and make good on horror participation for everybody. That’s my line.

By Jenny Pelletier
Firstly, I would like to welcome you to the institute, on behalf of the students here. We are honored to have you here as the Cardinal Mercier Chair, and look forward to your presentation and seminars. In addition to your Lacanian psychoanalytic training in Paris, you also studied history of science there, and philosophy in Cambridge. What can Lacan offer to philosophy and society in the 21st century? Lacanian thinking is, one would hope, an essential part of any serious reflection on questions of contemporary society and of the place that philosophy has in it. Although, one might add that philosophy, construed from a Lacanian perspective, might be very different from the kind of philosophy that is taught in many institutions and schools in the western world.

What exactly are those differences? There are a number of basic differences. One could say that from a Lacanian perspective philosophy is based around a study of questions; questions which involve how human beings think, what the relation is of thought to action, and how human beings inhabit the body. Many traditions in philosophy see those as central questions, whereas especially in America and in Great Britain, much of the more recent philosophy tends to dispense with those questions as if they are not central to the philosophical inquiry. So, from a Lacanian perspective, one would bring philosophy back to questions of language, experience, the body, pain.

Lacan is easily misunderstood, and offers what some may deem to be a rather pessimistic anthropology. You, on the other hand, draw heavily from an underplayed aspect of Lacanian, psychoanalytic thought. Lacan explores the person’s capacities and methods for producing solutions to its problems. Does Lacanian anthropology have an underlying optimism? I wouldn’t call it an optimism but it is nonetheless a crucial distinction that he inherited from late 19th century psychiatry and then developed in his own way. It is basically the idea that rather than seeing what society situates as pathological phenomena as being uniform, one has to embark on a work of differentiating between those phenomena that involve a human being suffering, and those phenomena which involve a human being trying to make an attempt at self-cure. Too often those two are confused and identified. From a Lacanian perspective many of the phenomena of the psychoses, for example, are actually not in themselves pathological. Rather, they are efforts that the person has made and is making at recovery, finding a solution themselves, trying to construct or build something to find a way forward. Lacan’s project is obviously to learn from that, to theorize, to conceptualize what those methods and functions might be (that people use) and then to see how those might be best formulated using psychoanalytic theory. So in that sense, Lacan is taking an area that is deemed to be in itself a problem and differentiating it into...
that which pertains to the problem and that which pertains to the solution — or an attempt at solution.

Yes, the term ‘solution’ here becomes controversial, perhaps even problematic. For some, a solution would imply a closure, a resolution. But that is not exactly what Lacan has in mind.

Yes, it is more a project of restructuring. That is a better way of putting it.

Your work seems to stress the importance of identifying what is wrong for the person, rather than what is wrong with the person. From a psychoanalytic perspective, this is a most crucial distinction. What does this mean for how we conceive of the patient/analysand/person, both philosophically and in clinical practice?

Yes, you have put it very well, in a formulation that I have never made myself: the difference between what is wrong with them, and what is wrong for them. I think really that is the main difference between psychoanalysis and mental hygiene. In all the forms of mental hygiene that are prevalent in society today — which obviously go under different names — essentially what they have in common is the idea that one can know in advance what is good for a patient without first listening to what they have to say. That is really the benchmark. In psychoanalysis, on the other hand, you can’t know in advance what is best for someone. You have to hear them speak, find out what is problematic for them, what is difficult for them, what is an obstacle for them. Then you work with them on some kind of path, whether it is normative as seen by society — which is possible in some cases — or whether it is idiosyncratic. What matters is what is specific for the particular person, and what they are able to construct themselves. It is one of the reasons why Lacanian psychoanalysis never buys into the current categories on the diagnostic marketplace, which classify symptomology rather than seeing how certain phenomena might be present or absent for a particular person.

In reading your work one quickly sees that your Lacanian training and your critical thinking about social issues has produced a distinctive listening style. Do you think that the listening style that is implied in psychoanalysis is itself misunderstood?

Psychoanalysis would not be psychoanalysis if it wasn’t misunderstood, by both lay people and by psychoanalysts themselves — myself included. There are diverse listening styles, and not just between practitioners. At different moments of the day, you might be listening in a different way. It is an area of psychoanalysis that hasn’t been so deeply studied. People use expressions like ‘evenly suspended attention’, or ‘freely floating attention’. What I found interesting and what I have been studying in the last couple of years is what psychoanalysts do while they are listening. They hardly ever just listen. They are always doing something with their hands. One of the questions that I have been trying to think about more recently is why that is necessary, why do analysts have to knit, or doodle, or scratch, or take notes. Why is it almost impossible to listen without the body?

Your work has many interwoven threads. We have here contributions to debates in contemporary philosophy of psychiatry, as well as critiques of modern culture, and even reflections upon the arts. How would you say these threads are unified in your work, perhaps by an overarching project? Or rather, why might a meaningful discussion of any one of these threads actually demand some coverage of the others?

What all of those have in common is a concern with the effects of discourse and representation on people. I do a lot of work with artists and I have done for many years. I have learned a huge amount from that dialogue. One of the first things that any art student will learn in their first year, or what is called ‘foundation’ (the year prior to art school), is how representation works. For example, the students are all
told in the first week to take something that we take for granted, as an everyday object, and do something with it to make it unrecognizable—or to take something unrecognizable, and make it recognizable. They are taught to think about and play with the function of representation. Artists have something in their training that most non-Lacanian analysts and therapists do not have, which is a fundamental sensitivity to how convention and symbolic systems organize what we take to be our reality. The analytic process is about questioning and troubling that reality, exactly as for many artists, their own artistic projects share a similar concern. One of the things I have found over the years is that artists tend very often to understand immediately how language works in constructing our world in a way that many people who work in the world of so-called ‘mental health’ do not. In ‘mental health’, many buy into a kind of DSM model of biological realities vs everything else. So, artists are in a privileged position there. And they certainly share something with the analysts.

I would like to shift now to questions about your more recent work on bipolar disorder, or rather, manic-depressive psychosis. In your most recent book, Strictly Bipolar, you offer a compelling account of bipolar disorder, wherein mood states, particularly mania, are secondary manifestations of a deeper, lived structure. Not all features of mania are equally obvious to the untrained eye. How would you describe the core of mania and the manic-depressive structure to someone who has not witnessed or experienced a genuine manic episode?

I think the first thing to do is to think about the differences between a mania and the many phenomena of excitation, agitation and acute exuberance that one can find in many other clinical structures. Very often, both in psychiatry and in psychoanalysis, the fact that someone seems to be on a high is immediately equated with the presence of a manic episode. If you look at the history of psychiatry, you will find that the people who started thinking most rigorously about circular or periodic psychoses—as they were then called—were very careful to distinguish what they saw as a new diagnostic entity from the very common phenomena of excitation and agitation that you can find across the board. Through studying that, and through working with patients who at times experience a manic episode, I think that the fundamental features are: what are known as the flight of ideas or flight of words as some people call it, which is something highly structured and not something aleatory; a sense of connection to the world, which has a benign, rather than a malignant quality. Thirdly, an emphasis on the separation of traits—devils and angels are demarcated quite robustly; an oscillation that you find sometimes between the beginning and end. Again, it is important to see mania not as a uniform state, but as an arc that starts off when the person believes that she has the words to say what she wants to say, and it starts to disintegrate over time when they realize that not everyone is on the same page as themselves, that the world is seeing things a bit differently, that their demands cannot always be met. And the other feature is the empirical presence of an addressee, which you don’t find in many other states of exuberance, excitation, and agitation. So I have tried to describe and understand something about those different qualities of mania in the book, and also in a more technical article, The Specificity of Manic-depressive Psychosis, that I published afterwards.

In your book you focus on the uniqueness of manic-depressive psychosis, while the article seems to focus on the challenge of matching its unique character to the specifics of certain Lacanian notions. In particular, you focus on distinctions between manic speech and embodiment as they relate to aspects of schizophrenia. There is more critique of a too casual use of the word mania in Lacanian circles. There are a few very good studies of manic-depression,
but not that many. Generally, the term mania is not used with much precision. So I was trying to make people think a little better and question Lacan’s references in particular, which are always repeated as gospel, and to make them question exactly what is specific to mania. If you look at most of Lacan’s references you find that actually they are not that specific and they could well be questioned, which is something that I’ve done in that article. At the end of the article, as you know, I come to the conclusion that probably because of the quite remarkable symmetry between the kinds of processes you might find in manic-depressive psychoses and what you find in schizophrenia, that maybe we are dealing with something linked to the same fundamental dilemma. One of the things you learn on day one of history of science is that if any two theories can be contrasted point by point, then they are the same theory.

Now, you’ve stressed already that thinking of mania as a mood state or a brain state is inadequate. In your experience educating people about these things, are there very specific phenomena about which the mood-disorder model is most misleading?

The most misleading part is the very concept of a mood-disorder. The expression is often attributed to Kraepelin when in fact he has practically nothing to say about moods, as far as he doesn’t use the term ‘mood-disorder’. The whole notion of mood-disorder comes with the creation of the so-called mood-stabilizing drugs which were invented by the marketing department of Abbot Pharmaceuticals. It is a very recent establishment of the term. Everyone has moods. In a sense, what is a mood if not something that changes? There is no such thing as a mood without the notion of a mood change or even a mood swing. It is fundamentally incorrect to try to define psychical structure in terms of the mood that the person has. One of the arguments that I make in the book is that, at its very simplest, mood is simply a failure to connect two trains of thought or two ideas. If you wake up in the morning in a bad mood, it may be linked after a while to your recognition that there is a phone call that you have got to make or something you have got to do but do not want to do. When you put the pieces together, it often has an effect on mood. When someone presents as having a so-called mood-disorder, you have to find out exactly how they articulate their experience. You have to go beyond the vagaries of reference to mood, and on to thought, to thinking – to find out what that person is thinking about.

Some more simplistic approaches to mania might conceive of it as a freedom of expression, or an unfettered libido. This approach is sometimes used to explain some of the selfish or self-oriented behaviours of the manic individual. You seem to use psychoanalytic ideas to turn this on its head. Yes, in a sense it is a problem of libido, but this excess of libido is in itself always already oriented towards an other. In this way, is not mania indeed selfless, precisely because it is libidinous?

One of the things that I argue is that one should always pay attention to the altruistic side of the apparently selfish, narcissistic behaviour that you find in mania. There is always a wish to protect the other or preserve the other from harm or danger. It is fascinating, if you look at the history of serious psychoanalytic contributions to the question of manic-depression. They divide very clearly I think between those people that see mania simply as a consequence of a psychical breech, and those that see mania as an attempt at finding a cure. And Lacan belongs to the first of those. Klein, Glover and Abraham, perhaps, belong to the second, where at one point mania was described as a flight into object-relations. The person is desperately trying to make links – with others, with the world, with ideas, with people – in order to save themselves or someone else from catastrophe.
Let’s talk more about the libido. This is one of the terms that many people misunderstand despite its being so central to psychoanalytic theory. Would you say that this misconception of the libido regarding mania is merely a coincidence, or do you think that this is somehow related to the public’s overall misconceptions about the libido of psychoanalysis?

Libido is a difficult concept to define, if one wants to stay with the definition. One often hears it defined as the strength of an attachment. In pre-analytic psychiatry you have the notion of morbid excitation and agitation in the body, which seems a little bit closer to what we are dealing with. I think that any serious thought about that question would have to define what the relations are between states of excessive agitation or morbid excitation, and the strength of attachment. Is the strength of attachment in itself a treatment of the state of excitation or agitation that might precede it? Michael Balin might be helpful in thinking about that question. But again, I think one of the problems with a lot of contemporary psychoanalysis is that these terms are used descriptively, so the description comes to explain things, in a way. It is the same track that a lot of mainstream psychiatry falls into as well, with the idea that once you can describe a so-called disorder you have explained it, rather than searching for something a bit deeper.

This brings us back to a common problem in philosophy of psychiatry: etiology vs nosology.

Yes, exactly. Increasingly, since the early 70s, the two have been confused. The nosological entity is treated as in itself constitutive of etiology. We’ve seen this in the example that we’ve just talked about with mood and mood-stabilizing drugs. ‘You need mood-stabilizers because you have a mood-disorder.’ ‘But what is a mood-disorder?’ ‘It is that which responds to the mood-stabilizing drugs.’

You have spoken about how manic-depression is structural. Lacanian thought has a very specific notion of what is implied in a psychotic structure, and any lived structure, really. You seem to use psychoanalytic ideas in order to help us identify the structure, while also suggesting that the structure was always there. The person’s experiences seem to inform rather than condition the structure. This is a duality that I see you identifying. Does your approach to understanding this pre-existing structure allow us to avoid the classic criticism of psychoanalysis, namely that a person’s condition cannot be reduced to the processing of external causes?

Obviously, these are complicated issues. I think that the psychical structure is established probably within the first five or six years of life for most people. I don’t think the structure itself can change. Well, I’ve never seen it change in cases that I’ve been able to follow or trace back. But at the same time, a lot of things can happen within a structure. A structure isn’t a prison cell. You can see it more as a set of potentialities – potentialities along with limits. You can never predict what is going to happen. If you use a diagnostic category for someone, it is never really to say anything about what that person can do or cannot do, or what path they will take, what path they are looking for. There is really no way of knowing. You have to see in each individual case how things pan out, and what gets created and constructed in the analytic work. It think it is important not to see the really quite minimal diagnostic categories that Lacanians use as reductive structures. They are not defining prognostic pathways in the way that psychiatric categories often do. Psychiatric categories are often used as cards that are dealt to a patient, which will determine the rest of their lives. The analytic use of diagnostic categories is radically different from that.

You speak about limits and potentialities when discussing the significance of a structure. At bottom, these represent possibilities for human consciousness. So, what does the possibility of manic-depressive psychosis tell us about the
potentialities of human consciousness in general? Do these structures teach us something about the human condition? I am not too keen on the idea of the human condition. I think that, as a way of responding to the question, one could look at some of the dangers of approaching that question in the wrong way. In what we hear very often nowadays, manic-depression is used as a kind of paradigm of contemporary creativity. People find examples of artists, writers and entrepreneurs who apparently have manic-depression. It is traced back historically with the idea that, ‘Hang on, don’t stigmatize this, do not see it as a pathology. It is something great. Look at these amazing theories that have been discovered, all these amazing sculptures and paintings made by these wondrous people!’ That kind of project is well-meaning, I suppose. But ultimately it is quite damaging because it implies that the value of a human life is its social utility. What about all of the people who might have manic depression who don’t make a sculpture or a painting, or invent a scientific theory? What about all of the people who do or don’t do different things? It seems to me that the well-intentioned focus on the social utility of what might be seen as a pathology is fundamentally misguided for that reason.

In line with that thinking, and what we have discussed just now, some might speak of an immanent approach to a person’s condition. Instead of allocating value to the products of someone’s structure or someone’s states, is there a sense in which the structure itself is a manifestation of the production of value? If we want to validate the experiences of these people without reducing them to their social utility, can we see another sort of value directly in the tendency to produce solutions?

I think one has to recognize the effort and the work that goes into any minimal form of creation – however small that might be – rather than dismiss it, or only want to have the great paintings, sculptures or scientific theories. Even if someone manages to build a delusion, that is a remarkable achievement. Any kind of movement towards an activity, a position, things that people do that might be incredibly difficult for them to do. Even constructing maybe a geography in a place – having different points to walk to, to run to, to take the bus to – that can be a massive achievement for someone who finds it difficult to leave their room. So you have to see a kind of continuum between what culture valorizes as wonderful achievements, and the mundane and everyday achievements of a suffering subject.

Let’s talk more about how your conceptual influences relate to contemporary trends in care. You employ psychoanalytic theory, as well as classical phenomenological-psychiatric ideas. Might a more rigorous synthesis of these two disciplines enrich contemporary notions of mental health? Might they even inform a replacement for such notions? I don’t like the notion of mental health because it introduces the dichotomy of health and illness, which is fundamentally wrong and discriminatory, and ultimately stigmatizing. There is no such thing as mental health. There are just an awful lot of different ways in which people try to survive.

If mental health is a misleading category, what then is the core of mental, psychical or personal well-being? The ability to refuse a meal on an aeroplane.

What does it mean to care in a clinical setting, from a psychoanalytic perspective? When people work with other people in all of the settings in which that can take place across society, you just assume that there is a fundamental concern for the other. Obviously, philosophers have had a lot to say about that. In the end, you often end up with a kind of Christian concern, where there is an anonymity to the care, such that you care for the person who walks in the door of the office for the appointment time. And that can be deeply disturbing to many people who don’t want an anonymity of care, and some of whose dif-
ficulties might have been fostered precisely by having received an anonymity of care in their childhood. So the worst thing for them would be to walk into a room with a therapist who pretends to care about them. Concern is a little bit different. Lacan elaborated a model whereby something is produced by the analytic process itself, which generates a certain kind of desire. This isn’t so much about the patient’s well-being, but is a desire to access unconscious material and to follow the elisions, the discontinuities, the ruptures in an analysand’s speech. Lacan called that among other things the analyst’s desire, seeing it more as a kind of function, which is different from a Christian care. So I think one could oppose or contrast those two models.

You give the common exhortation that we do not spend enough time with our patients in contemporary approaches to psychiatry and mental health care. An all-too-common response to that sentiment is that we simply do not have time for that anymore. Such statements seem to point to a multifaceted problem of medicalization that is both economic, institutionalized, and perspectivally biased. How might these problems facing our institutions – supposed lack of time and resources – point to broader problems facing our society?

The obvious answer to that is in the notion of commodification. Even if there is a certain amount of time – which is of course never enough – allotted to the so-called patient, commodification lies in the fact that in late capitalism human beings are seen as units of energy and work that can be substituted for each other if they have the same level of skills. This is a relatively recent idea that means that you immediately break-down any coherence to the relational bond between people. You might build up over time a trust in your GP, your doctor, but if every time you go to your doctor it is a different person there, it has broken the dimension of human relationship or human narrative. From the point of view of the economist, it is fine, because the person has got the same skills, so you can substitute them in a function. So, what gets lost in the equation is the very basic notion of relationship. What you see then – and this is not a new perspective – is the massive opposition between the ethos of late capitalism, and the construction of the relationships that are necessary for some level of functioning.

I would like to draw now from your thoughts on the history and philosophy of science. You have expressed concerns about the state of neuroscience. Particularly, its accomplishments and its methods. Even if neuroscience as we conceive of it now was executed perfectly, what limitations would remain intrinsic to the information that these studies would ultimately produce?

There are a lot of schools of neuroscience. I don’t really know what neuroscience is. I know something about experimental psychology, and I know something about scanning techniques and the history of scanning techniques. But what kind of science needs to put the word science in its name? We have physics, chemistry, biology, and then this thing we call ‘neuroscience’. I am not making a generalization about all activities that go under that name. But basically it is a set of endeavors that take us back really in many cases quite squarely to the ethics and methods of the eugenics movement of the late 19th and early 20th century. Much neuroscience uses techniques and practices that would just generate laughter in a school philosophy class. The idea that you want to study human memory, and you put someone in a scanner and show them certain images of a smile or a frown, is an absolutely laughable experiment. The real question is why the media embraces them with such enthusiasm. One of the things that ought to be more publicized is the fact that so-called ‘scanning techniques’ are not real-time technologies. It is not as though there is an optical apparatus that can see the brain. When we see in the newspapers or in scientific
journals the image of a so-called brain scan, the model of the brain is not the brain of the person who has been in the scanning machine. It is a statistical composite that has been constructed, given a number of statistical variables, with blood oxidation then coloured in. Until relatively recently, certainly in America, it wasn’t permitted to use coloration to demarcate areas of blood oxygenation because it was so misleading. But now of course you look in the papers and the journals and the colours are nicely differentiated. You really see the construction of a kind of scientific fairy-tale.

Your criticism of contemporary psychiatry seems to avoid common pitfalls of a more radical anti-psychiatry, particularly a tendency to romanticize human freedom and employ a shallow understanding of the significance of symptoms. These tendencies risk ultimately producing a sort of naïve humanism. How can Lacan’s thinking help us to avoid these tendencies?

It can, but sometimes it substitutes things that are worse. I am quite a fan of naïve humanism, in that I prefer a naïve humanist to someone who talks about a case like it is an autopsy. Lacanian thought gives you ways to think about a more rigorous approach to suffering. It helps us to look at the specificity of the case, to try and understand why the person has gotten to the point where they are at, and explores how listening and eliciting the history – what they want to talk about – how that will help one to find some way beyond their pain.

Those are all of my questions for you today. Thank you for your time and reflections. I look forward to attending your lecture and participating in the seminars to follow.

By Philip D. Kupferschmidt
THE HIW’S 125TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

HERITAGE DAY FLANDERS 2015

In the academic year 2014-2015, we celebrated the 125-year anniversary of the Institute of Philosophy. To commemorate the occasion, several special events were scheduled throughout the year. Most of them were academic, but the final event of the jubilee programme was more of a cultural kind: the Institute of Philosophy and the Leo XIII seminary participated in the Heritage Day Flanders on September 13, 2015. The Heritage Day is a well-known yearly tradition in Flanders (as well as in the rest of Belgium: Brussels and Wallonia have their own Heritage Day). Buildings and architectural sites that are not usually open to the public are opened to visitors, and some buildings – particularly the more intriguing or usually inaccessible ones, like prisons, private palaces or the freemason temple in Brussels – attract thousands of visitors on this day. The number of visitors that passed through the iron gate of the Institute of Philosophy on September 13 was more modest, but we still had about 500 visitors, spread over the whole day, who strolled over our cobbled courtyard and nostalgically remembered their time as a student of the HIW or the seminary or admired the neo-gothic buildings of the site. In the Cardinal Mercier Room, professors were present to answer questions people wanted to discuss with a ‘real philosopher’. In two other rooms, there were workshops on ‘Socratic conversation’ and ‘Philosophizing with children’.

Both the iron gate and Constantin Meunier’s bas-relief were professionally restored and attracted many visitors’ attention.
Both the iron gate and Constantin Meunier’s bas-relief were professionally restored and attracted many visitors’ attention.

Bart Raymaekers, Dean of the HIW, showed the portraits of his predecessors and the gowns of Cardinal Mercier in the Council Room.

Griet Galle lead two workshops on ‘Philosophizing with children’. Meanwhile, the children’s parents visited the buildings of the Institute of Philosophy and the Leo XIII seminary.
The Cardinal Mercier Room was one of the main attractions. In a corner of the room, Professor Erik Meganck listened carefully to a visitor’s philosophical questions.
The Joseph Van de Wiele Fund’s 25th Anniversary

On October 14, 2015, the Institute of Philosophy celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Joseph Van de Wiele Fund. The Fund was officially inaugurated on February 22nd, 1990, in commemoration of Prof. Joseph Van de Wiele, who died, suddenly and unexpectedly, on April 15th, 1989. The Fund mainly consists of capital, gathered by the Van de Wiele family, supplemented with gifts from various benefactors. It intends to encourage academic research in philosophy by supporting activities organized by, or in collaboration with, staff members of the Institute of Philosophy. More precisely, the Fund wants to stimulate international contacts (invitation of guest professors, conferences etc.), to support the Tijdschrift voor Filosofie and to promote philosophical publications.

The Board of the Joseph Van de Wiele Fund consists of professors and emeriti professors of the Institute of Philosophy, and of members and representatives of the Van de Wiele family. Every year, the Faculty Board of the Institute of Philosophy considers and ranks the requests from staff members of the Institute and advises the Board of the Van de Wiele Fund, which makes the final decision and awards the grants.

In 25 years, the Fund has awarded a total sum of € 356,000 to support a broad range of activities. We have made a list of the activities promoted by the Fund during the last 5 years:

Prof. Joseph Van de Wiele was not only a professor of Metaphysics and Phenomenology at the Institute of Philosophy, but also the brilliant manager of a family company in Kortrijk, that produces carpet and velvet looms. In this picture, Prof. Van de Wiele meets with Prince Albert of Belgium (who later became King Albert II), on the occasion of a royal visit to the company.
### 2015
- Tijdschrift voor Filosofie
- Conference on ‘Virtue Epistemology’ (C. Kelp)
- Conference ‘Mirrors for Princes in Antiquity, and their Reception’ (G. Van Riel)
- Conference ‘Pathologisering van lichaam en geest’ (A. De Block, M. Eronen, J. Sholl)
- The Leuven Kant Conference 2016 (K. de Boer)
- Workshop ‘Sicut dicit... A methodological workshop on the editing of commentaries on authoritative texts’ (P. De Leemans)
- The Leuven Epistemology Conference 2015 (J. Heylen, C. Kelp)
- Workshop on Hugo Grotius’ moral and political philosophy (R. Geenens, J. Olsthoorn, E. De Bom)

Total sum: € 16.820

### 2014
- Tijdschrift voor Filosofie
- The Leuven Kant Conference 2015 (K. de Boer)
- The Epistemology of Perception (Conference and Pre-Conference Graduate Workshop, C. Kelp)
- Congress ‘Towards the Authority of Vesalius. Representations of the Human Body in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance’ (P. De Leemans)
- Translation of the book Force – Pulsion – Désir into English (R. Bernet)
- Research project and colloquium of the Institute of Philosophy and Kadoc (Catholic Documentation Centre) on the influence of Neothomism (B. Raymaekers)
- Conference ‘The Idea of Purposiveness in Kant and German Idealism’ (K. de Boer)

Total sum: € 18.910

### 2013
- Tijdschrift voor Filosofie
- Conference ‘300 Years of Wolff’s German Logic’ (K. de Boer)
- Conference ‘Power and Representation’ (A. Braeckman)
- Workshop on Montaigne (R. Breeur, A. Robiglio)
- Conference ‘The Medieval Translator’ (P. De Leemans)
- Colloquium ‘Shaping Authority’ (G. Van Riel)

Total sum: € 14.200

### 2012
- Tijdschrift voor Filosofie

Total sum: € 10.000

### 2011
- Tijdschrift voor Filosofie
- Workshop Aristotle on ‘What depends on us’ (P. d’Hoine)
- Conference ‘Reasons of Love’ (K. Schaubroeck)
- Symposium ‘Theories and Modes of Beauty’ (P. Cortois)
- Feest van de Filosofie (A. Vandevelde)
- Colloquium ‘Human Nature in Bioethics and Sport Ethics’ (A. De Block)

Total sum: € 16.650
The Erasmus Exchange Program

Erasmus (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) is an exchange program, mainly known for its student mobility program, which provides students with the opportunity to follow courses and/or perform research in another institute within the European framework (33 countries). The student only pays a tuition fee at the home university and gets a scholarship. It is possible to do several exchanges with the Erasmus program. Students can do one exchange per study program. For example, they can do one in their Bachelor’s and another in their Master’s. What many people don’t know is that Erasmus + also exists for staff members. They can make use of the Erasmus + program, either for teaching or for training, up to two times per academic year.

The condition for an exchange between institutes is that they both have an Erasmus charter and that there is a valid agreement between these two institutes. While the HIW has an agreement with 47 universities in 18 different countries, it is notable that in general our students choose to go to universities where courses are offered in English. The motivation for this is obvious, and it immediately brings out one of the main reasons why the HIW is such a popular destination for students from other universities. With our full BA, MA and Research Master programs, taught entirely in English, they have a wide variety of courses to choose from. This makes it easy to fulfill the program requirements of their home university and, for most, requires only minimum effort.
as far as the foreign language of instruction is concerned.

“I really enjoyed my Erasmus experience in Leuven: every professor was available for everything we needed, and all the university’s employees were kind and efficient. The English programmes of the KU Leuven are what every Erasmus student is looking for, because they are an occasion to meet students coming from all around the world: I heard a lot of interesting stories, and that’s what I was looking for when chose Leuven! So yes, I would recommend Leuven, because I learned a lot of things, and because I met many many good people!” Daniele Scollo, Università di Siena, Italy

Mobility in education is an important goal of the European 2020 strategy for growth and employment. Studying abroad helps young people to develop qualities that are much appreciated by employers: knowledge of foreign languages, a higher intercultural awareness, but also qualities like leadership and flexibility.

With a yearly average of 37 incoming students versus 9 outgoing students over the past three years, there is a great imbalance to be noted at the HIW. After inquiring with our students we learned that lots of them just find it too good at the HIW to leave. This is, of course, very good news, though it won’t help us to meet the European goal of 20% student mobility. Other obstacles they mentioned are the huge administrative burden that comes with an Erasmus exchange and the financial aspect.

“My exchange experience in general was good, it was short—five months— but I guess that is what makes it good because it makes it intense.

A negative aspect for me were the methods of my receiving university which I didn’t like. But at the same time, it showed me other ways of doing things and made me able to compare methods. It also made me realize how much I like Leuven and Flanders because I was missing the organization and the formal aspect of academic studies that we have in Belgium.

Overall, I think that the main problem of Erasmus+ is the paperwork, which is enormous and quite discouraging. The finance is also an issue: I only had a scholarship for four months, though I was there for five months.

But I am happy I did it and would totally recommend it to fellow students. I think everyone should get the opportunity to spend some time abroad. It benefits you in a personal way; in my case, my exchange made me much
less afraid about getting out of my comfort zone and also less shy.” Cécile Houwen, BA Philosophy, international program

Students that did put in the effort to make the exchange possible are all unanimous in saying that they are very glad that they did.

“Even though academically demanding and intense, requiring flexibility but also an ability to work independently, overall I had a very rewarding experience, where positive involvements far outweighed the negative ones. I’m very grateful for this opportunity and would definitely recommend it to motivated students who are not afraid to challenge themselves.” Patrisia Costenco, BA Philosophy, international program

Over the past few years several initiatives have been made to promote Erasmus exchange at the HIW, and it appears that these are beginning to bear fruit. With 26 students submitting an application for an exchange abroad in 2016-17, the number of applications rose 86% over the number from the previous year and 225% over the number from two years ago! So we will keep on motivating our students to consider the opportunities that come with the Erasmus + program.

By Evelyn Dehertoghe
“Courses in the spotlight” is a new section in the Alumni Newsletter. Each year we will present several courses with a particularly popular, trendy, topical or unexpected subject, an innovative format or special evaluation form. This year we chose S. Wenmacker’s and P. Thyssen’s seminar on the Philosophy of Time in the Dutch MA program (Masterseminarie theoretische filosofie, WoAG7A), M. Deleixhe’s BA seminar on Refugees and Hospitality (Bachelor’s Paper with Seminar, WoEB7B) and N. de Warren’s MOOC on The Great War and Philosophy.

It Was About Time!

Time plays a central role in our lives. Yet it remains an elusive concept. Does time really pass? And why does it flow in only one direction? How come we remember the past but not the future? Is time travel possible? And does time have a beginning or an end? Humbled and perplexed by the mystery of time, the medieval theologian and philosopher St. Augustine of Hippo felt forced to admit: “If no one asks me, I know what time is; but if I wanted to explain it to him who asks, I plainly do not know!” Sixteen centuries later, scientists and philosophers alike are still hard-pressed to tell us what exactly time is. But this, of course, doesn’t mean there hasn’t been any progress since the dark ages!

Clearly then, the time is ripe to take stock of our current understanding of the nature of time and why it matters. As the theme for this year’s Master Seminar on Theoretical Philosophy, we thus chose the Philosophy of Time. (It really was about time! As far as we can tell, this was the first time in the history of the KU Leuven that an entire course was taught on the mind-boggling nature of time.)

We thought this theme would be of interest to students within philosophy, but also to students in the sciences. Hence, we decided to hang posters at both campuses and make the course accessible to all.

During the first seminars, we jumped straight into the big questions. The first and most fundamental question – What is time? – is a seemingly simple question about a fundamental aspect of our world, relevant to anyone who seeks understanding of the cosmos. Yet it turned out to be very hard to answer. We turned to philosophy, physics, and psychology for answers. The second question – Does time have existence independently from the events it ‘contains’? – led us to a discussion of substantivalism and relationism about time (and space-
time). The third question – Does time really pass? – was introduced via McTaggart’s famous article on the unreality of time and helped us to define the A and B theories of time.

After this, we spent four weeks introducing the students to the basics of special and general relativity (we celebrated the centennial of Einstein’s field equations), thermodynamics and statistical mechanics, and quantum mechanics. Each of these physical theories encapsulates certain findings or assumptions concerning the nature of time, but they are not always easy to combine. In the eighth week, we discussed the logical and physical possibilities of time travel. The overarching goal of these seminars was to introduce students to scientific ideas concerning the nature of time and to contrast them with the way we experience time. In the ninth and tenth week, we therefore wondered whether ‘scientific time’ can be reconciled with ‘manifest time’ and how various views on time relate to our notion of free will.

Each week, the students read a chapter from the book *A Brief History of the Philosophy of Time* by Adrian Bardon by way of preparation for the seminar. For some weeks, we provided a different text or online video. Afterwards, we provided supplementary information via Toledo for students who wanted to write on this topic for their paper. The final three seminars consisted of student presentations of about 15 minutes each on widely diverging topics, including the ethics of time travel, time and black hole event horizons, and was Einstein a Kantian?

Sixteen students officially participated in the course, but many additional students attended at least some of the lectures, filling room N completely. Besides students from the regular and the international MA program in Philosophy, several students from MA programs in the Sciences attended the course. We hope to revisit these topics at a later occasion, in the “Advanced course Philosophy of Science / Natural Philosophy” in the new MA program.

By Sylvia Wenmackers and Pieter Thyssen

---

**BA seminar on Refugees and Hospitality**

What the ongoing asylum crisis has made abundantly clear in the last few months is that European political communities have an issue with the hosting of foreigners on their soil. Despite being formally committed to the principles of refugee law enshrined in the Geneva Convention, or having signed the Schengen agreements that – in principle – should guarantee the free movement of persons inside most of the EU territory, several countries have decided to close their borders to the outside world and to deny access to the vast majority of the migrants coming from Syria. In the rare instances where this has not been the case, the decision to grant hospitality to needy outsiders has been met with fierce internal controversies.

In the current context, it would be easy to jump quickly on our high horses and to morally condemn those that lack the open-mindedness required to welcome foreigners. But a philosopher is not a moralist. Her role is not to judge but to raise questions. And in this instance, what seems urgent is to go back to the roots of what hospitality entails to better understand why so many appear to find it a difficult virtue to exercise.

For granting hospitality is a strange act. It implies inviting the outsider to find a place inside. But, if the outsider is only allowed in *on the terms of the insiders*, then this generous gesture turns out to be conditional and more self-interested than it is ready to admit. It is not
really a universal invitation but rather a selective act of generosity. Hospitality, in order to be a pure and noble act, would have to be defined as a strict openness, as an unconditional welcoming of whatever may happen. However, if such a hyperbolic definition of hospitality may be used to characterize, as Levinas did, the core of our ethical experience, it fails to sketch any sort of pragmatic policy. While pure hospitality commands us not to count and to welcome unconditionally, politics has to deal with the issues of justice and requires us to balance competing interests. Hospitality is then caught in a double bind. To be real, it would have to be pure. But a pure act of hospitality would be impossible to implement in the political world. Are we then supposed to despair over the possibility of a politics of hospitality?

In order to tackle this philosophical question, the 25 students that have chosen this optional seminar will closely read several important texts that take hospitality as their main theme – texts such as Toward Perpetual Peace (Kant), Of Hospitality (Derrida), The Origins of Totalitarianism (Arendt) and We the People of Europe? (Balibar) and discuss them collectively in class, before writing a personal essay that will reflect their own views on the matter.

By Martin Deleixhe

A group of migrants tries to reach the European soil to claim asylum by climbing over a golf course fence in Melilla, a Spanish enclave located in Morocco. The picture is so dramatic it has often been suggested it was fake, but it is not.
A philosopher’s instinct is to be both cautious and curious when confronted with the new. When I was first approached with the idea of creating a MOOC for philosophy here at KU Leuven, my first reaction was receptive skepticism. Ever since their introduction in 2008, massive open online courses (MOOCs) have steadily grown in popularity and diversity on an international level. A MOOC is a publically accessible online course aimed at a broad, indeed, unlimited population. Based on video-taped lectures, the multi-media platform of a MOOC enhances the learning as well as teaching experience through the integrated use of visual material (paintings, film clips, etc.), interactive discussion forums, and variety of on-line learning tools. Any self-defining student with a reliable internet connection can have access to MOOCs and thus to a learning environment that comes to you while at the same allowing you to reach beyond your own location and circumstances.

It was precisely this teaching at a distance that provoked my initial reservation. Is philosophical instruction essentially not a form of orality in which each person, teacher and student, is accountable to the other in the living act of speech? The orality of philosophical instruction is inseparable from the question of whether philosophy can be at all taught. My first concern with the prospect of designing a MOOC in philosophy was therefore not so much the loss of a face-to-face encounter with students, but rather with the worry that confronting the impossibility, i.e., difficulty, of teaching philosophy would itself be made impossible in a MOOC. My principal concern, in other words, was that a MOOC environment would make philosophy into an all too accessible and effortless enterprise. Instead of the ambition to challenge students through philosophical content, my worry was the reduction of philosophy to an instantaneous delivery of content. This basic worry was further amplified when I was informed that filmed lectures within a MOOC should not exceed 10 to 15 minutes, and that the completion rate for MOOCs hovers around 10%.

And yet, contrary to my better philosophical daimonion, I nonetheless remained receptive to the lure of the MOOC as opening a space of encounter that reached beyond the traditional population of undergraduate and graduate students. The open accessibility of a MOOC seemed to offer a novel possibility for fulfilling by digital means John Dewey’s ideal of democracy and education. In its digital form of access, a MOOC in philosophy should not seek to democratize philosophy, but should rather allow philosophy to confront and challenge a broader population, and hence, in this manner, contribute to the democratization process of the public sphere on an international level. This receptivity to the idea of a MOOC as a means for developing citizenship in the Republic of Letters was further animated in my mind by the challenge of how to meaningfully do philosophy in an environment not essentially (or exclusively) in viva voce. This challenge turned on recognizing a MOOC as an essentially visually driven environment of learning. Whereas the arguments and narratives of philosophy are traditionally driven by either spoken or written word, philosophy in a MOOC must be driven by both word and image. The screen must become philosophically salient. A MOOC thus presents a new kind of challenge to the teaching of philosophy: how to speak in both word and image to an audience beyond the familiar type of university student – to a truly democratic audience – in such a manner that retains and indeed insists upon the robustness of philosophical confrontation?

With these thoughts in mind, I decided to
take up the challenge of designing a MOOC in philosophy. The choice of topic was self-evident. I had recently become interested in the impact of the First World War on philosophical thought, and given the Centenary remembrance of this “original catastrophe” of the 20th-century throughout Europe, it made good sense to offer a MOOC on the theme of “The Great War and Philosophy.” Not only would such a course have a broad and international appeal, but it would speak to issues that are very much still unresolved in our society today in this world of ever intensifying conflicts over world-views and unfettered proliferations of violence. Most importantly, I understood this course as an investigation of the complex ways in which the First World War mobilized philosophical reflection during the war as well as the varied ways in which philosophical thought responded to the war. My aim would be to maximize intellectual complexity. Towards this end, students in the course would be introduced to different philosophical reactions to the First World War through discussion and analysis of texts, documents, images, artworks, film, and music. My intention was to challenge students through the reading of primary texts. My own compressed lectures on these texts would aim to establish different possible interpretations, clarify relevant historical contexts, and motivate further reflection.

Given the immense range of possible reading materials and topics, I divided the course into four thematic modules, each of which contained four different reading assignments and video lecture: a) A War of Absolutes (Clausewitz and Modern War, War and Colonialism, War and Revolution, War and Existence), b) The Clash of Civilizations (The Ideas of 1914, Philosophicus Teutonicus, Bergson and L’union sacrée, The Jews and Germany), c) Memento Mori (Foreboding, The True Enemy, Fronterlebnis, Death Drive), and d) Peace and Utopia (Above the Battle, Pacifism and Revolution, The European Anarchy, Mysticism and Anarchy). Each module would combine canonical authors with lesser known figures. The arc of the narrative traced through these four modules would also lead from the war years of 1914-1918 to the present, in the form of a reflection on the project Europe as a project for perpetual peace in the aftermath of the war to end all wars.

Rather than film a set of lectures in a classroom, I decided to vary the mode of presentation for my lectures, and chose on four different modes: to speak at a historical location of the war (for example the Missing of Somme War Memorial in Thiepval, France); to speak in the reading room of the Central Library at KU Leuven; to speak from my desk in a studio setting where we reconstructed an
office atmosphere; to speak in a cafe where I would engage with a discussion with one of my PhD students. With the format of discussing with my PhD student at a local cafe in Leuven (Cafe Noir on Naamsestraat), my idea was to “de-formalize,” as it were, the lecture format and engaged instead in an intellectual discussion. Given the international reach of a MOOC and the global relevancy of the topic, I decided to innovate in how to organize the discussion forums. In addition to a main discussion forum in English, I also established discussion forums in French, German, Italian, Dutch, and Chinese. Each of these forums was moderated by native speaker (a PhD student or Post-Doc at the Husserl Archives). The diversity in language forums provided an incentive for students who were not native English speakers to discuss the reading materials, my lectures, and their own views in their native language. It also allowed for more focused discussions, for example, on Italian Futurism or French war literature and poetry.

When the MOOC was finally designed, filmed, edited, and installed, we launched its maiden voyage in October – December 2015. We tallied more than 4,000 registered students, although only a fraction of those enrolled completed the course in its entirety. In the case of this MOOC on the Great War and Philosophy, what pleasantly surprised me the most was the intensity of commitment and discussion of those who did follow the MOOC, whether completely or only partially. The discussion forums were generally extremely lively and reflected a genuine need among students to have the opportunity to exchange their views. Perhaps in no other form can a military instructor at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, a nurse from the Philippines, a retired financial lawyer in London, a high school teacher in Brazil, and a Flemish student from Sint-Truiden (to cite a representative sample of students in the MOOC) speak to each other. If for no other reason, this experience of teaching a MOOC has convinced me that the value of this technology is less a question of its purported “revolution” or “transformation” of the university, but more a question of its reach beyond the university and the traditional demographics of student populations.

By Nicolas de Warren
OPEN ONLINE COURSES IN PHILOSOPHY

Since 2014-2015 the Institute of Philosophy has been working on a number of open online courses. This is done, however, not just for the sake of improving its online visibility. Its main aim is to enable prospective students to prepare themselves for their pursuit of obtaining a degree in philosophy at the KU Leuven. At the KU Leuven they will get in touch with a wide range of philosophical disciplines. Often entering the BA and MA programs of the Institute of Philosophy laterally, international students have diverse backgrounds. Not only do some students come from disciplines other than philosophy, their philosophical education can also vary significantly.

Since September 2014 the courses on logic (dr. Lorenz Demey), epistemology (prof. dr. Christoph Kelp), medieval philosophy (prof. dr. Russell Friedman), phenomenology (prof. dr. Julia Jansen) and political philosophy (prof. dr. Helder De Schutter) have been completed. In 2016 two courses on philosophy of religion and continental philosophy will be produced. Although the courses offer different grades of difficulty, they are all introductory level. In case a prospective student feels like his or her academic training lacks some basic philosophy, they are directed from the Institute’s homepage to the online platform where they can freely engage in the course of choice.
Next to the differentiation in courses, the courses themselves are set up topically. Every course consists of four to five units. For example the Introduction to Epistemology course consists of the units The Nature of Knowledge, The Sources of Knowledge, The Value of Knowledge and The Extent of Knowledge. After the general theme, goals and used literature of the course are introduced in the portal page, participants can go straight to the unit of their interest, although a linear approach is encouraged.

Every unit entails a ‘Watch’, ‘Read’ and ‘Practice’ section. For the ‘Watch’ sections special web lectures were produced. Every unit consists of a ten minute lecture by a professor dealing with a specific topic. The video unit ends with an interlude: a two minute montage in which the professor relates to the content by way of telling a relevant anecdote, highlighting an illuminating example from literature or sharing a famous result from research. After watching the web lecture, the student is asked to read a book chapter, an article or an encyclopedic lemma, thereby going into further detail. Depending on the specific discipline they are then expected to put the material into practice. Finally, there is a ‘Want to know more?’ section that offers extra material about the specific topic.

The videos are recorded at different locations around the Institute of Philosophy, and the intro and outro show the main building, library, garden and cobbled road of the Institute. In this way, through participating in the courses, students not only get in touch with basic notions in philosophy, but also with the specific locality. This gives them the opportunity to imagine their future selves as students at the Institute of Philosophy in Leuven.

Fitting in with KU Leuven policies on student orientation, the project was received in a very positive way by KU Leuven administration. Also the online material has drawn a lot of attention. Since the first lecture was put online, the web lectures in total have been played more than 7,600 times. The fact that around 50% of the views came from abroad shows that the courses also cater to a Belgian audience.

By Willem Willems
Graduation Speech,
July 1, 2015

Esteemed Rector, Dean, and Vice-Deans, Colleagues, Guests, and most especially of all: students!

It's that time of year once again. As the summer break approaches and the academic year winds down, it's time for us to gather and celebrate the academic accomplishments of our students. Whether in the Dutch or in the International Programme, to those of you who are graduating today, we say: congratulations and job well done! This day is for you, a celebration of your achievement as you bring to a close one chapter of your life that we at the Institute of Philosophy were lucky enough to share with you. With that said, to those students who, for whatever reason, haven't yet finished working on their degree, today can be a bit of … encouragement. A degree in philosophy from Leuven is doable – some of your friends and acquaintances have just done it! – it merely requires some more hard work, and then you too can have a summer without the burden of exam preparation and paper and thesis writing. Wouldn't that be nice? I want to send a special note of welcome to the families and friends of our students who are with us tonight from near and from far: welcome and thanks for celebrating with us. Last but not least, on this July 1, 2015, I'd like to send an extra special thought to our many Canadian students and their families and friends: Happy Canada Day!

But if this is a time for us to celebrate you, our students, and your achievements and to welcome your families from near and far, it's also a time for your friendly neighborhood International Programme Director to figure out some worthy subject to speak about. After all, it's both a privilege and a responsibility to offer a graduation speech. A graduation speech represents a chance to be warm and welcoming, a chance to be (one hopes) a bit entertaining, but also a chance perhaps to remind you students in some informal way why you may have chosen to study philosophy in the first place. For several days last week, my choice of topic weighed heavily on my mind: what should I talk about? I thought, and I considered, and I mulled. Last Friday, on my way home from a long day at the Institute of Philosophy, as I passed through the tunnel under the Leuven central train station, so preoccupied was I with the topic of today's speech that it took me some time to register the fact that quite literally hundreds of young people were all around me, happy, confused, loud, excited, hundreds of young people on their way to the rock festival at Werchter. When I finally made it home, I sat down wearily in front of the TV set, tuned to the BBC, and there I could watch highlights from this year's Glastonbury rock festival. It seemed to me that I was surrounded by rock and roll, much as I was surrounded during most of my days by philosophy. And then there came a germ of an idea: a speech about philosophy and rock? Could it even be done?

Well, I decided I'd give it a try. But what kind of link can you make between philosophy and rock? My first approach was to think about what it is that philosophers do. What is special about philosophers when they're philosophizing. The best that I could come up with is that philosophers … ponder. They ponder deep questions about existence, about behavior, about thinking, about humanity. Pondering … engaging seriously and deliberately for long periods of time with some
of the most difficult questions, that’s what philosophers do. And then I had my speech: I would link rock and roll and philosophy by telling you about your favorite rock band and mine: Poi Dog Pondering.

What, you’ve never heard of Poi Dog Pondering? They still exist, alive and well and living in Chicago. For the bargain basement price of 1000 US dollars plus travel and accommodations, they’ll come to your very home or place of work and give a private concert. The Dean doesn’t know it yet, but later tonight, after a couple of beers, I’m going to try to convince him to hire Poi Dog Pondering for next year’s graduation ceremony. You heard it here first! But who exactly are Poi Dog Pondering?

The band was originally formed in the Waikiki beach area of Hawaii in the mid 1980’s. Their music is best described as eclectic – but then again, could music from a Hawaiian band be anything but eclectic? Often in one and the same song, Poi Dog Pondering exhibits clear inspirations from folk, bluegrass, blues, and integrates them into straight ahead rock and roll, making frequent use of a wide range of musical instruments: not just the usual guitar, bass, piano, and drums, but also violin, mandolin, accordion, and a variety of percussion instruments whose names are incredibly hard to pronounce. Vocally, their music is rich in harmonies, including both male and female voices. Their lyrics I would describe as “quirky”, often featuring very evocative and beautiful, but rather unexpected and many times humorous, turns of phrase. Consider the classic Poi Dog Pondering song named “Spending the Day in the Shirt that You Wore”. In this song you find the inimitable line “Sticking Fingers on Paintings to See the Way They Feel”. Just think about that: “Sticking Fingers on Paintings to See the Way They Feel”. The words flow off the tongue in an unexpected but vibrant way, and they evoke a powerful image: isn’t this something that we’ve all wanted to try before, and maybe some of us have actually done it? The mixture of visual and tactile terms make you think a bit, or at least make me think a bit – ponder, if you will – and bring a smile to my face, and that’s one of the things I like about Poi Dog Pondering and is often characteristic of their lyrics.

I want to give you just two examples of the way that Poi Dog Pondering, this rock band from Hawaii with the big sound and the quirky lyrics, can make you think about things that you might otherwise rarely or never think about, give you some perspective on everyday actions and events. Both of these examples are from their 1990 album Wishing Like a Mountain and Thinking Like the Sea. The first example is a song titled “The Ancient Egyptians”, but I really wish the title had been “The Walking Song” or just “Slow Down”. Here’s how this song goes:

Well the Ancient Egyptians, and the other Africans
The Mayans, the Incas, and all the Polynesians.
All around the world, a long long time ago,
People would walk, where ever they had to go.
They didn’t have car keys, and they didn’t have roads –
They didn’t have those ugly convenience stores, or Texacos
In fact, all around the world, a long long time ago,
people would walk, where ever they had to go.

Well now it’s the 1990’s, and the gasoline does flow,
but I still try and walk most of the places I have to go.
But sometimes my friends will stop and say,
“Hey RUSS! There’s a bus or a cab over there...
Why don’t we go ahead and get in it?”
But I say no, no, no, and didn’t you know,
you get to know things better when they go by slow.

“You get to know things better when they go by slow.” It’s a thought pretty far removed from our hyperconnected, hypermobile, 24/7 world. “Always on the go, and the faster the better” might be the motto of the 21st century. But with their quirky, funny words Poi Dog
Pondering reminds us to think about things that we might normally take for granted. To put just a bit of distance between yourself and the habits and the thought patterns that dominate your life. It’s easy sometimes to forget that you experience things differently when you’re walking, and taking things slowly, than when you’re rushing about, in a car or just from one event to the next in our all too busy lives. “You get to know things better when they go by slow”. Poi Dog Pondering offers a possibility of gaining just a little perspective on yourself and the world around you. Come to think of it: disrupting patterns of thought and challenging your normal intuitions is something that you might have noticed is also a characteristic of philosophy.

The second example of what I find attractive in the rock music of Poi Dog Pondering is what may be their greatest song. A song in which words and music come together to make a whole greater than the parts, a song moving and edifying in equal measure. The song’s title is “Thanksgiving”, and it’s about those occasions where you feel like your life isn’t going according to plan. I can’t give you the total experience – for that you’ll have to look at the greatest invention of the 21st century: Youtube – but I can give you some of the lyrics and tell you why I find this song to be so special.

Somehow I find myself far out of line
from the ones I had drawn
Mine wasn’t the best of paths, you could attest to that,
but I’m keeping on.
Would our paths cross if every great loss
had turned out our gain?
Would our paths cross if the pain it had cost us
was paid in vain?

Thanksgiving for every wrong move that made it right.

There was no pot of gold, hardly a rainbow
lighting my way

But I will be true to the red, black and blues
that colored those days.
But I owe my soul to each fork in the road,
each misleading sign.
‘Cause even in solitude, no bitter attitude
can dissolve my sweetest find.

Thanksgiving for every wrong move that made it right.

Probably every single one of us has been in the situation before: something has gone terribly wrong, we’ve made a mistake, it’s not going the way we planned. To that situation Poi Dog Pondering says: “Thanksgiving for every wrong move that made it right”. What an optimistic way of looking at the world! It’s a reminder that many, if not all, of those mistakes along the way, they may really be mistakes and they may go against the plans that you set out for yourself, you are indeed “far out of line from the ones you’ve drawn”. And yet, and yet: this too will become part of you, and even the unexpected and the unwanted may lead to defining moments and defining elements in your life. Poi Dog Pondering invites you to consider that you may indeed owe your soul, who you are, to each fork in the road and each misleading sign: before giving up, before despair, step back, gain some perspective, this too will pass, this too will become part of you.

Of course, I hope that none of our students, not a single one, whether graduating today or still in the course of their studies, think about their time in Leuven as a wrong move. I hope that none of our students offer Thanksgiving for the wrong turn that was Leuven! But I do hope that all of our students look on their time in Leuven and their study of philosophy as offering them a bit of perspective, as giving them some resources to enable them to step back and consider their lives, their experiences, their challenges with a bit of breadth. Certainly this search for perspective and for wisdom is one of the reasons that we read great literature,
because perspective and wisdom are there; certainly they can also be found in poetry; and, yes, they can be found in Poi Dog Pondering and a host of other rock bands that offer insight and another point of view, reinforcing the thoughts and the lyrics with voices and music. But this is also one of the things that philosophy can give you. Philosophy that teaches you to consider problems from many different angles and points of view, to weigh up advantages and disadvantages of various solutions, to probe and test arguments. Philosophy that teaches you that difficult problems are just that: difficult. Philosophy that teaches you to appreciate that nearly all solutions have their weak spot. These aren't the only reasons that you might be or might have been tempted to study philosophy – there are many, many more – but they are ways in which philosophy can offer you insight, perspective, and wisdom. I hope for all of our students, graduating and still working on their degree, that when you look back and ponder your time in Leuven you'll remember the spring days in the Institute’s Courtyard, the friends you've made and the trips you've taken, the beer you've drunk and the chocolate you've eaten. But I also hope you remember the wonder of the library, and the excitement of the classroom, and the expanding horizons that philosophy in a truly international context offers. I hope that your experiences here in Leuven stay with you happily for the rest of your lives, and perhaps bring you back to us, if not immediately then in some years. Congratulations on your success, best of luck, and keep in touch. Thank you very much.

By Russell Friedman
Roy Varghese, *Capabilities and Resources. Sen and Dworkin on Justice, Equality and Markets*. PhD supervisor: Prof. Antoon Vandeveldt

This dissertation compares Amartya Sen's capability approach and Ronald Dworkin's theory of equality of resources. Both Sen and Dworkin propose a normative theory of justice that is inspired by liberal values. Both also hold a positive view about market operations in order to enhance individual freedom. Similarly, Sen and Dworkin share the idea that a theory of justice must stipulate (re)distribution of resources so as to compensate for the disadvantages in personal resources due to natural lottery. They differ, however, in how they want to fix and justify the amount of compensation. Here the capability theorists suggest that society should channel additional resources to those with capability shortfalls, whereas Dworkin recommends compensation only for the shortfalls suffered by victims of brute luck, not for bad option luck. Sen argues for a basic equality of capabilities while Dworkin advocates equality of resources for individuals.

Varghese argues that a democratic relationship is constitutive in ensuring distributive equality. In the capability approach, Sen draws on the Aristotelian tradition within an egalitarian framework to rejuvenate the Marxian theme of real freedom, and develops liberalism in the direction of republicanism. Similarly, the promise of Dworkin's equality of resources is that it can marry traditional right-wing support for the free market with traditional left-wing concerns about the plight of the people who start off with nothing or whose talents the market does not value. He thus draws on the Platonic tradition of self-development within a liberal framework. He connects the Aristotelian view of the good life to a socialist-egalitarian principle of equality and to the Kantian deontological principle of individual autonomy and liberty. The capability approach does not offer a full-blown theory, but a comparative framework of analysis. The most important drawback is its lack of any boundaries to justice. The theory of equality of resources, on the other hand, fails to ensure the social preconditions that could lead people to make intelligent choices. An egalitarian theory of justice must not only deal with natural endowments, but also account for social endowments. A critical theory of justice should be equipped to interact with cultural and social structures which require us to go beyond the liberal paradigm.


We're probably all familiar with cases in which we are deceived by our senses: the black tie from the shop turns out to be dark blue, the monster in the bedroom is just the shadow of a tree, no one actually called your name even though it sounded just like it. Although you would probably make a false judgment in these circumstances, you consciously experienced the world as being that way. Hence, you were justified in your belief. This notion of perceptual justification, and its relation to conscious experience and reasons, is the main topic of investigation in this thesis: does one need conscious experience to have perceptual justification, or is reliability all that matters?
Note that perception is not just fundamental to us, it appears to have a similar importance for more unsophisticated animals. Therefore, a theory of perceptual justification should not be too intellectualized, or else it would prevent animals from having any justified beliefs. On the other hand, our reflective capacities also lead to some differences: we - but not animals - can give reasons for our beliefs and reflect on the strength of those reasons.

One crucial point of this thesis is that we can accommodate both similarities and differences between ourselves and less sophisticated animals by distinguishing between evidential and non-evidential justification. The latter form of justification merely requires the reliability of the cognitive processes leading to belief, instead of also requiring some kind of accessible reason. Perceptual justification is best analyzed in terms of this form of non-evidential justification. This will allow animals to have the same kind of justification as we do. However, our reflective capacities also offer us the possibility to strengthen, or weaken, this perceptual justification on the basis of reasons: “I know that there’s milk in the fridge, because I just saw the carton there.”

The surprising consequence of this theory is that conscious experience plays no crucial role in perceptual justification. We don’t have to investigate our own experiences to know that we are seeing that such-and-such is the case, this introspective knowledge is also best accommodated by appealing to a reliable unconscious cognitive mechanism. In other words: when it comes to justification and knowledge, conscious experience is overrated.

Siwen Lei, *Duns Scotus on Metaphysics and the Transcendence of God*. PhD supervisor: Prof. R. Friedman

The transcendent of God is one of the most fundamental doctrines of monotheistic theology. Duns Scotus tries to develop a new structure and understanding of Aristotelian metaphysics, and at the same time preserve the transcendence of God in metaphysical and non-metaphysical dimensions. Radically different from his predecessors, Scotus presents an anti-Aristotelian model of metaphysics, which Siwen Lei calls a ‘decentralization of metaphysics’: the subject of metaphysics is the transcendental that cannot fall under genus and categories, and the concept of being is univocal, but not analogical. Metaphysics is neither focused on the divine as the highest and central point nor substance as the focal meaning of being. Metaphysics becomes a transcendental science that transcends the distinction between metaphysical center and peripheral dependent elements.

The decentralization of metaphysics may give more freedom and omnipotence to God, since it frees God from a too-close relation to creatures’ formal likeness with him. The decentralization does give some commonness to God and creatures, but this commonness is not a real one, and is not related to a central point of metaphysics. Instead it can even allow God and creatures to be more distant and diverse in reality.

Three of the disjunctive transcendentals preserve the transcendence of God: infinite/finite, cause/the caused, necessary/contingent. All of them play an important role in Scotus’s natural theology. Besides these three approaches, perfection without qualification can also preserve the transcendence of God, since God contains all perfections without qualification and is the most eminent being. After having elaborated these four approaches, the dissertation turns to Scotus’s non-metaphysical approach and shows that practice and the divine will both transcend the restrictions of the realm of metaphysics and speculative science and keep the diversity between God and creatures.
These five approaches can establish the diversity between God and creatures, at the same time they guarantee that God is never bound or limited by creatures but independent of them, and guarantee that creatures completely depend on God.

Kristof Nijssens, *Anti-Oedipus: een metaphysisch en metapsychologische verkenning* ("Anti-Oedipus: a metaphysical and metapsychological exploration") PhD supervisor: Prof. P. Moyaert

*Anti-Oedipus* is a tough nut to crack. The book is inaccessible, perplexing and exciting at the same time. This dissertation turns to the earlier writings of Deleuze and Guattari in order to clarify *Anti-Oedipus*. What is a body? What are partial objects? What do machines have to do with desire? And how does schizophrenia fit into all this?

Of crucial importance are the two theses Deleuze defended in 1968 to receive his doctorat d'état. *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, which is mainly a historical work, reveals why Deleuze is attracted to Spinoza. In his second book, *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze launches an attack against traditional metaphysics, which has since its inception by Plato preferred the same over the different. Deleuze is able to reverse Platonism by finding, in Plato’s own writing, the means to turn Plato against himself. In Deleuze’s reading, difference becomes the first principle of Plato’s metaphysics.

The second chapter examines how the ontological system that is presented in *Difference and Repetition* affects Deleuze’s reading of Leibniz. Leibniz, according to Deleuze, is an eminent theorist of the Event. The Event does not refer to matters that take place in our actual world. Events happen in the depths of the monadic world. In chapter three, Nijssens focuses on Leibniz as a mathematician. According to Deleuze, who is himself influenced by seventeenth century mathematics, Leibniz’ discovery of infinitesimal calculus has changed metaphysics for good.

Chapter four is devoted to Spinoza. Spinoza’s philosophical masterstroke is that he grasps essence as a degree of strength. The essence of a thing is not a quality, but a power (or a degree of the infinite divine power).

The question remains: what does metaphysics have to do with schizophrenia? Chapter five is devoted to answering this question. It starts with an overview of Freudian and Lacanian theories of psychosis and desire. Whatever they all have in common is that they grasp schizophrenia as a failure or a shortcoming. The schizophrenic lacks discipline, language, a Father, Oedipus, desire and so on. Spinoza allows us to approach psychosis in a positive way: not as a lack, but as a degree of power. Deleuze and Guattari want to explain psychosis without referring to what it is not. The final chapter uses the knowledge from the previous chapters to read *Anti-Oedipus* from an informed perspective.


The historical period of the Enlightenment is usually perceived as the high point of human self-emancipatory optimism through rational reconfiguration of (human) reality. Yet, this rationalist propensity to remodel and reinvent the world is testament to a pessimistic analysis of the human condition. Thus, the Enlightenment made an analysis of the natural, traditional and historical condition of human- ity which suggested that underneath its emancipatory, rationalist optimism lurks an unspoken pessimistic perspective on reality. Vanden Auweele calls that perspective ‘the horror of existence’, i.e. the tacit acknowledgment that whatever is naturally and historically presented to the human agent is to be treated with suspicion. Nietzsche even declared such squinty eyes part and parcel of the bad blood of Western
metaphysics in its ignoble resentment towards the vitalistic full-bloodedness of existence. Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer are the protagonists in the investigation into the pessimistic focal point that looms underneath the Enlightenment’s optimism. Three points of inquiry are central to unravelling this pessimism. First, to ascertain how underneath Kant’s ethics of dutiful autonomy there is a dimension of existential pessimism, which blocks any natural inclination towards morality. The human agent is ill-disposed towards the moral law and radically inclined to overturn the moral world order. Accordingly, Kant turns to certain religious tools to bestow a kind of moral education that would augment the appeal of morality. Second, to show how Schopenhauer’s more overtly pessimistic philosophy is a continuation of a certain philosophical impetus at work in Kant’s philosophy. After Schopenhauer questions the irresistible appeal of rationality, he finds that the Kantian recalcitrance to morality could very well be understood as self-justified self-expression of a blind, amoral will. Schopenhauer turns Kant’s moral anthropology into metaphysics, which renders his pessimism more absolute. Only certain counter-natural can then facilitate relief from depraved nature: an ethics of compassion, a sublime piece of art, a pessimistic religion and proper philosophical insight can facilitate an escape from reality and (re)turn the human agent to blissful nothingness. Third, this specific sense of pessimism is a philosophical translation of a certain theological perspective on the interplay between nature and goodness, namely the Lutheran radical separation of nature and grace: works do not justify. Similarly, Kant and Schopenhauer reiterate how a radical change in the normal behavior of the human agent is the only escape from his/her depraved condition.

Charalampos Ventis, Political Constructivism and Ontology: John Rawls’ Freestanding Political Conception versus Liberal and Religious Comprehensive Doctrines (A comparative study). PhD supervisor: Prof. A. Braeckman

This dissertation intends to explore the feasibility and possible worth of the inclusive form of social togetherness adumbrated by the late political philosopher John Rawls; this, with a view to offering a critical assessment of the said model, as a balanced response to the acute problem of creating a sustainable, inclusive platform for public discourse, in the midst of growing social conflict and disagreement, fueled by religious, cultural, and other partisan differences. A secondary, side goal of the dissertation will be the attempt to demonstrate that Christianity, thoroughly considered (i.e. when its enlightened premises are taken into account) naturally supports and endorses the Rawlsian view.

Is the creation of such an inclusive public arena for social deliberation possible at all? Is it socially profitable, assuming it is feasible in the first place? The present dissertation strives to answer these questions in the affirmative, chiefly by recourse to Rawls’ freestanding conception of the political, as an artificial theoretical construction free from cultural, ideological, and above all, religious (or militantly atheist, for that matter) foundations. In Rawls’ vision, all these metaphysical worldviews, including atheism, are collectively designated by the term ‘comprehensive doctrines’, and while not in themselves critiqued in his work, they are deemed inappropriate for political public discourse, because they are perceived as loaded with exclusivist versions of the ‘common Good’. As a person of faith and a liberal, Ventis was drawn to Rawls’ latest work (significantly distanced from his groundbreaking earlier A Theory of Justice), because unlike previous forms of liberalism, his version refrains from assailing religion or from likewise setting up Enlightenment secularism as an indispensable prerequisite for democracy. It thus strikes a
much-needed balance between the private and the public domains, instilling as it does a neutrality which helps to de-politicize faith and de-theologize politics.

Benjamin Schewel, *Seven Narratives. An Analysis of the Contemporary Scholarly Discourse on Religion*. PhD supervisor: Prof. W. Desmond

The theory of secularization holds that religion will undergo a process of marginalization and decline as the forces of modernity advance. This theory has dominated Western scholarship on religion during the previous century. However, secularization theory has fallen on hard times in recent decades, as a ‘global resurgence of religion’ appears to be taking place. Indeed, the situation has become so dire that many scholars today argue that secularization theory has been falsified outright. Nevertheless, it is not yet clear how we should alternately narrate religion’s evolving place in human affairs. Certainly, we know that religion has somehow evolved from its tribal beginnings through the archaic, Axial, and medieval periods, up through modernity, and into the current global age. But there is no clear consensus about what dynamics have driven this process forward. The primary purpose of this dissertation is to organize and evaluate the primary narrative frameworks that scholars are advancing today, paying particular attention to how they describe the shifting place of religion in the modern world. Schewel’s basic argument is that the contemporary scholarly discourse on religion pivots around seven narrative frameworks, which he describes respectively as the i) subtraction, ii) renewal, iii) transsecular, iv) postnaturalist, v) construct, vi) perennial, and vii) developmental narratives. Schewel discusses one narrative in each chapter and shows how three prominent yet diverse scholars operate within its domain. He further argues that each narrative provides unique insights into the historical and contemporary operations of religion. The concluding chapter endeavors to weave these respective insights into a broader and more nuanced narrative frame.


This dissertation addresses the function of the scientific first principles in the overall argument of Avicenna’s *Metaphysics of the Healing*. Avicenna takes metaphysics to be an Aristotelian science whose many demonstrative arguments are rooted in its first principles. In order to set in relief the function of these first principles in the central argument of Avicenna’s metaphysics, this study’s first part commences with Avicenna’s theory of a demonstrative science in his logic. After establishing that Avicenna takes concepts to be the most fundamental kind of principle for any philosophical science, the dissertation turns to the primary concepts proper to metaphysics. Avicenna holds that the most fundamental philosophical concepts are being, thing, one, and necessary. This thesis tracks how Avicenna employs these four concepts to work out his grand metaphysical vision of reality, causality, and the existence and nature of God. The second part of the dissertation locates these primary concepts among the subject, principles, and objects of inquiry proper to metaphysics. The third and fourth parts of the thesis explicate at length Avicenna’s understanding of being, thing, one, and necessary and elaborates the way his philosophical exploration of these concepts ultimately leads to the conclusion of the central argument of the metaphysics, namely, that the study of being as being leads to metaphysical knowledge of God as the Necessary Existence in Itself. The dissertation concludes that the concept necessary is the most fundamental scientific first principle.
in Avicenna’s metaphysics, because it performs the most important function in the central argument of his metaphysics.

Alessandro Mulieri, Political Representation: A Historical and Conceptual Investigation into its Polysemy. PhD supervisor: Prof. A. Braeckman, co-supervisor: Prof. T. Heysse

The aim of this study is to value the complexity of theoretical formulations that different traditions and authors have provided on the problem of political representation. This is achieved by relying on Hasso Hofmann’s Studien zur Wort- und Begriffsgeschichte von der Antike bis ins 19. Jahrhundert (1974). Hofmann’s book, even though it is scarcely known in the non-German academic environment, presents a unique methodological and conceptual outlook on representation. Hofmann’s main objective is to draw a history and theory of representation that values the polysemy of the Latin word *repraesentatio* from Antiquity until the 19th century. To prove the relevance of this approach for the contemporary debate, Mulieri applies Hofmann’s semantic-conceptual map of representation to the study of political representation in such diverse authors as Marsilius of Padua, Carl Schmitt, Thomas Hobbes as well as contemporary authors such as Bernard Manin, Nadia Urbinati and others. In so doing, he shows that the answer to the question: “what makes representation a political notion?” is far from univocal. Hofmann’s interpretive lens provides an alternative approach to what is still considered the classical study of political representation in the Anglophone world: Hanna Pitkin’s The Concept of Representation. A critical comparison of Pitkin and Hofmann’s approaches demonstrates that Pitkin’s normative perspective should be revised. Pitkin argues, first, that it is possible to pinpoint a general meaning of the concept of representation as “making present again” and, second, that there is a general concept of political representation that is identified with “substantive acting for” and in which all aesthetic meanings of representation are excluded. In contrast to this approach, Hofmann stresses the polysemic character of representation, and the impossibility of narrowing down a general meaning of the concept. Drawing on Hofmann, one can argue that the semantic richness of political representation is just as broad as that of the word ‘representation’ itself and that what makes representation political varies from epoch to epoch, from author to author. As a result, the common way to look at political representation nowadays, i.e. as democratic representation, is far from the only one but constitutes, rather, just one of the numerous ways to look at this concept over time. Moreover, the aesthetic meanings of representation are always and intrinsically bound up with political representation in all the authors who have theorized this concept. Any meaningful concept of political representation must also include the aesthetic and symbolic meanings of representation.

Timothy Mc Mynne, Definition, Demarcating the Falsifiable and Ramsey-Sentences: A Falsificationist Approach to the Rational Criticism of Public Policy. PhD supervisor: Prof. Antoon Vandevalde

Politics suffers from a problem: how do we judge the efficacy of public policy and hold politicians accountable for their promises? This dissertation offers a solution to improve the testability of – and encourage a debate about – public policy.

Karl Popper’s falsificationist methodology offers an inclusive approach to political debate, but it does not sufficiently discuss what counts as a falsifying instance, and Popper too quickly dismisses the difficulty of definitions. Definitions must play a central role in determining the testability of a theory. In order to find a solution to the problem of testing public policy, we construct acceptable definitions that isolate our shared intuition of the term, i.e. a
To construct such definitions we must list the attributes of each difficult-to-define term. To do so, we adopt the method of Frank Ramsey, who has shown how such definitions can operate within a scientific theory. Ramsey replaces the theoretical with empirical terms, and, in a nod to humility and future theoretical growth, asserts the substitution as temporary and context dependent. The method steers clear of essentialist definition, anticipating changes in meaning and testability. The theory encompassing the terms influences our stipulated definitions, and Popper cleverly illustrates this as a searchlight. Our expectations govern our theories, including our definitions, causing us to drag along an ideology. Although the prejudices may be, at times, problematic, they are not necessarily so if we acknowledge the embedded nature of the definitions. Theories, and their embedded prejudices, can be likened to story-telling. Our theories, and the subsequent testing, are stories about the world. But this does not doom us to relativism. We can prefer certain theories over others because one has a greater likelihood of being falsified or because it better squares with certain metaphysical beliefs that we consciously accept. Although amending Popper with Ramsey does not allow us to refer to a transcendent truth, we can rest content with tentative solutions to problems. Just as the history of science is riddled with new problems falsifying previously accepted theories, politics will be no different. The clearer we define our terms, the better we will be able to test how effective our public policies address our social problems. Applying Ramsey’s method of defining theoretical terms to Popper’s falsificationism allows us to better judge the efficacy of public policy.

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand Reid’s notion of freedom, moral responsibility and personal identity, and to solve the problems related to these notions. Specifically, what this dissertation contributes to the debate of Reid’s theories are three things at large. Firstly, it offers a new interpretation of Reid’s notion of personhood: a person is not identical with the mind, but with the unity of mind and body. Secondly, the dissertation tries to solve the problems of inconsistency which plague Reid’s notion of freedom based on agent-causation: the infinite regress problem of volition, Reid’s inconsistent explanation on the nature of motives and the possibility of occasionalism. Lastly, it is argued that there is a consistent and unified view between personal identity and moral responsibility in Reid: the notion of moral responsibility requires the notion of a person as a free agent who can perform physical actions as well as mental operations. In order to achieve this purpose, both the comparative method and the analytic method are used as research method. Locke’s idea of personal identity, freedom and moral responsibility serves as the target of comparison with Reid’s ideas. The comparison between Locke’s and Reid’s position on these matters helps to understand Reid’s theory of personal identity and moral responsibility clearly, since Locke and Reid have fundamental differences in the nature of personhood, freedom and moral responsibility.

Femmy Thewissen, ‘Governance’, a new political condition? A conceptual analysis of political regimes in terms of representation and (de)politicization. PhD supervisor: Prof. T. Heysses

Today we are witnessing a gradual shift towards governance decision-making. ‘Governance’ is seen as an answer to the complexities of contemporary politics. Private actors now cooperate with public actors in network structures with the aim of creating
effective outcomes by way of steering and regulating (instead of executing plain decision-making) through standard and norm setting (soft law instead of hard law). Governance entails a tendency towards a fundamental political modification, of which this dissertation provides a philosophical analysis.

The first research question, which incited this dissertation, was ‘What is the exact relation between democracy, representation and politics?’ Thewissen understands representation as constitutive. According to Claude Lefort, in democratic regimes the constitutive logic of representation is institutionalized. Thewissen draws attention to two primordial dimensions of a democratic system that are presupposed in Lefort’s analysis of democracy. 1°) The first dimension is a vertical split between the place of power (the representatives) and the represented. This split is institutionalized in modern societies by way of the division between a political sphere and a social sphere. It forms what Thewissen calls the theatrical setting of representative democracy. 2°) The second presupposed dimension is a discourse that ‘represents’ the common good. This discursive representation of society is put forward as indeterminate and contestable.

The second central question of this dissertation was ‘What are the theoretical implications of the concept of (political) representation for the current debate on governance?’ Precisely the two presupposed dimensions of the democratic system mentioned above have been put under strain by the rise of governance. Because of the networked character of governance the theatrical setting disappears in governance. As there is no longer a localizable pole of power the exercise of power is rendered invisible and almost non-localizable. Furthermore the discursive representation of society is rendered invisible in governance.

The evident question that follows from this analysis is ‘How can governance be re-politicized again and what role does representation play in this?’ Drawing on Rosanvallon, this dissertation addresses the question of how governance could be institutionally re-engineered so that it resembles the ‘political’ character of representative democracy more. On the other hand, the work of Rancière is used to describe the specificities of a social process of contestation that can have the impact of re-politicization.

Gregory Gricoski, Being as the Unfolding of Meaning. An Investigation of the Ontology of Edith Stein. PhD supervisor: Prof. W. Desmond

This dissertation explores and develops the ‘meaning of being’ in Edith Stein’s later philosophy. Edith Stein proposes ‘unfolding’ (Entfaltung) as the meaning of being (‘being is the unfolding of meaning’). What does this mean? Gricoski interprets Stein’s ontology of unfolding to mean that being is a relation with its meaning.

Every being is meaningful, and every being unfolds its meaning. The relationship of being and meaning is arranged in such a way that meaning cannot be reduced to being, nor can being be reduced to meaning. Gricoski proposes a ‘relational’ interpretation of unfolding. Stein’s ontology resists the reductions either to essence or existence by proposing distinct and related modes of being. The mode of actual being pertains to existing things such as persons and chairs. Every actual thing also has its own essence, which obtains the mode of essential being. Finite actual being is the temporal unfolding of one potency after another. A person is actually running now, and will sit down later. Both running and sitting are potencies of the person which belong to the person’s essence. The essence refers to all of the person’s potencies. The essence, in its mode of essential being, is the a-temporal being-unfolded of all of an object’s potencies. It is as if in its essence the person is both sitting and running at the
same time, while in actuality only a portion of potencies is activated at any given time. The a-temporal essence and the temporal actual being belong to each other. The essence and its actual object are also analogous to each other, since each has qualities which the other lacks. The essence is a-temporal and saturated with overlapping meanings. The actual object is temporal and active, vibrantly activating one potency after another.

By positing ‘unfolding’ as the meaning of being, Stein lays the foundation for a fundamental ontology in which all beings are relationally and analogically self-transcendent. Actual and essential being depend on and complete each other. The whole reality of a being cannot be described either in terms of its present alone or of its essence alone. Beings are adequately described as the relationship between being and meaning. Hence, being is better described as an irreducible relation of being and meaning: being is the unfolding of meaning.

Dries Deweer, Naar een personalistisch republikanisme. Persoon-zijn en burgerschap bij Ricoeur. (“Towards a personalist republicanism. Personhood and citizenship in Ricoeur”) PhD supervisor: Prof. B. Raymaekers

The research question of this dissertation is as follows: to what extent did Ricoeur’s thought continue to be influenced by personalism, such that an exploration of his thought can help instigate a personalist perspective within contemporary political philosophy? Answering this question requires a four-step process. The first step addresses the political philosophy of personalists such as Maritain, Mounier and Landsberg. The thought of each of these thinkers depends on three central ideas: (1) the idea of a personalist democracy, i.e. an ethical vision of democracy as a political system that aims to provide a framework for enabling every human being to fully develop as a person, (2) distrust towards power, and (3) a plea for the responsibility of every citizen to pursue vigilant and active citizenship, based on an awareness of both the ethical task of political institutions as well as the dark side of power. The second step investigates the young Ricoeur’s involvement in the personalist movement and shows that Ricoeur developed his own unique interpretation of the core ideas of the political theory of personalism. In the third step, the common belief that Ricoeur abandoned personalism at the end of the 1960’s is refuted. His late philosophy retained the core ideas of personalism, but in such a way that accommodated his prior criticisms. In the fourth and final step, Deweer brings the same continuity to the fore on the level of political philosophy. He indicates how Ricoeur’s position points to the possibility of introducing the personalist perspective into contemporary political philosophy, specifically with respect to Anglo-American political philosophy. It is argued that Ricoeur’s political philosophy addresses the fundamental criteria of contemporary republicanism, while the personalist emphasis in his thought avoids the pitfalls of mainstream republicanism. There are three benefits to this research. First, insofar as Ricoeur’s hermeneutical phenomenology shows that there are still viable means to elaborate the core ideas of personalism, it clarifies the status of personalism in contemporary philosophy. Second, it shows that a personalist kind of republicanism can provide valuable input in the contemporary philosophical debate on the nature of citizenship. Finally, the most tangible result of this research is to provide a deeper understanding of Ricoeur’s oeuvre, insofar as it shows that personalism is an important and above all underestimated perspective that is essential to understanding all of his work.

Stephen Hudson, The Rational Content of Patriotism in Hegel’s Philosophy of Right. PhD supervisor: Prof. Prof. L. De Vos
The thesis of this dissertation is that patriotism, and specifically Hegelian constitutional patriotism, is rational. The analysis of the duty of patriotism begins by examining how it is possible to show from the concept and idea of right the development of duties such as patriotism.

Next follows an analysis of the state and the duty of patriotism as such. Hudson gives an overview of the concept as Hegel articulates it, focusing on the various significant passages in which he mentions it. For Hegel, the duty of patriotism is intended to be a kind of rational liberation insofar as it allows all citizens to share in and enjoy their own communal freedom. Hegel’s patriotism can become reflective, and this is good, but not in and of itself necessary if patriotism is based on rational institutions.

The dissertation then examines how this duty of patriotism could be something rational, by giving the definition of rationality as such and rationality within the form of the state. The state’s inner differentiation in accord with the concept allows it to be a truly unified whole, which one can only comprehend by grasping the intelligible aspects of the state. For Hegel, this comprehension involves an analysis of syllogistic relations, and these determinations have their true source and actuality in the pure freedom of the concept itself.

The dissertation contends that Hegel’s focus on the concept of a constitutional state means Hegelian patriotism is rightly characterized as a variety of constitutional patriotism. It is this articulated and structured constitutional state that provides the rational content of patriotism.

Hudson then analyzes the relations of the various forms in Hegel’s state, to show more specifically what the content is of Hegel’s constitutional concept of patriotism. The result of this analysis is that without each section of society doing their various patriotic duties, the institutional structures which make up the constitution cannot be sustained, and hence the freedom of all citizens is threatened by lawlessness, corruption, and the eventual downfall of the whole constitutional state.

Olivier Lemeire, *The scientific classification of natural and human kinds*. PhD supervisor: Prof. A. De Block

Both lay people and scientists organize the world around them by categorizing particular things (objects, processes, etc.) as belonging to *kinds*. Scientists speak and theorize about various kinds of things, like hydrogen, gold, and water; electron and neutron; *Canis lupus* and *Felis catus*; igneous rock, sedimentary rock, and metamorphic rock; schizophrenia, psychopathy, and autism; Caucasian, African, and Amerindian. Given this variety of scientific kind categories, one fundamental question for philosophers of science is whether any of these kinds really are *natural* kinds, and if so, what it is that constitutes their naturalness. That is to say, when we classify particular things as belonging to the same kind, is it ever the case that they really or naturally belong to the same kind? Do we ever carve the world at its joints, so to speak?

In this dissertation, a realist account of natural kinds is defended, according to which some kind classifications are more natural than others. It is argued that the naturalness of scientific kinds can be accounted for by the Causal Unification Theory. According to this view, the naturalness of a kind category lies in the contribution this category makes to our epistemic practices (inductive projection, explanation, etc.), as a result of accommodating these practices to a causally unified group of properties. Because the properties of natural kind-members are causally unified, they ground multiple causally sustained generalizations. Thus, natural kinds are the metaphysical grounds of systematic scientific research. This view is developed in response to the historically
most important theories about natural kinds and several more recent ones.

In the second part of the dissertation, this Causal Unification Theory of natural kinds is then put to work to elucidate the naturalness of two controversial human kind classifications, namely the biological classification of human races and the social psychological classification of homophobes. The current metaphysical race debate is criticised for being too focused on the question whether racial terms refer. It is shown that asking about the naturalness of racial distinctions, rather than about the existence of referents for racial terms, allows for a more nuanced debate that is more dependent on empirical results. The example of homophobia is discussed in relation to the worry that the normative dimension of many human kinds in science diminishes the extent to which they can be considered natural kinds.

Jan Verpooten, *Art and Signaling in a Cultural Species*. PhD supervisors: Prof. Prof. A. De Block and Prof. M. Eens (Universiteit Antwerpen), co-supervisor: Prof. S. Dewitte

Since the (re)discovery of tens of thousands of years old paintings, sculptures and musical instruments we know that art is not a recent invention. But what is the evolutionary origin of art? Does art serve a biological function? Is art uniquely human? Can an evolutionary approach to art say something about contemporary art and its appreciation? Researchers from diverse backgrounds try to answer these and other questions by combining insights, concepts and methods from different disciplines. This dissertation tries to contribute to this by combining mainly biology, philosophy and psychology. It evaluates the criteria generally used to support the contention that art is a biological adaptation and demonstrates that they do not suffice to make that claim. Verpooten notes that the art of current and ancestral hunter-gatherers is always connected with ritual and discusses its implications for the evolutionary origin of art. He endorses applying cultural evolution theory, a theory that also takes cultural processes into account to explain the evolution of human behavior. For example, the appearance of complex figurative art 45,000 years ago (more than 100,000 years after the appearance of anatomically modern humans) is the result of cultural evolution rather than genetic evolution. Furthermore, Verpooten pays particular attention to architecture. He discusses the parallels between human and non-human building behavior and links monumental (religious) architecture to cultural evolution. Finally, in three experimental studies he verifies whether art connoisseurs and laymen differ in their appreciation of art. Indeed, it appears that experts appreciate the same artwork more if it hangs in a prestigious museum, while laypersons do not seem to be affected by prestige. Regarding the content of works of art, the experiments indicate that laypersons appreciate artwork with very attractive content (in this case, beautiful faces) more than works with moderately attractive content. Experts, on the other hand, prefer art with moderately attractive faces above very attractive faces. Cultural evolution allows us to distinguish three possible causes for these differences between laymen and experts: (1) experts have socially acquired resistance to an evolved preference for beauty; (2) experts seek an intellectual challenge; (3) experts try to distinguish themselves from lay people to raise their status. Further research into both conscious and unconscious reactions of experts to art can weigh the relative importance of these three hypotheses.


This thesis presents a defence of federalism as a desirable institutional model, based
upon its ability to contribute to the liberal goal of furthering individual autonomy. The essence of the argument is that federalism maximises the extent to which any individual can live in a world which corresponds to their own preferences. It does this by simultaneously making the individual a member of a large state – which typically has greater capacity to control the social environment and generate the outcomes that citizens desire; and of a small state – in which the individual is likely to see their own preferences realised more frequently due to increased homogeneity of preferences. Federalism provides the ‘best of big’ and the ‘best of small’ by allowing us to make decisions with as few people as possible, but as many people as necessary.

Moreover, it is argued that federalism is likely to produce greater diversity within a society, and this can prove beneficial to autonomy by supplying the individual with more examples of how they might choose to live their life, and more opportunities to test their own ideas against other conceivable alternatives. In both instances, the goal is that the individual can arrive at a conception of how they wish to live their life which is as favourable as possible to their own wellbeing. Once the argument for federalism is completed, Jewkes then moves to consider the specific model of federalism that he will endorse, outlining a set of both institutional and non-institutional conditions for a successful federal state which can avoid common accusations of divisiveness and dysfunctionality. Finally, he turns his attention to potential applications and extensions of the theory that has been developed; asking what federal liberalism would recommend for a range of real-world cases, and for the possibility and desirability of global government.

James DiFrisco, *Process and Levels of Organization*. PhD supervisor: Prof. R. Breeur, co-supervisor: Prof. A. De Block

The contemporary life sciences describe biological systems as being fundamentally dynamic at all scales, from the evolution of species to the developmental construction of individuals to the continual energetic turnover of metabolism. This dissertation argues that biology motivates the adoption of a hierarchical process ontology and the abandonment of our intuitively entrenched ontology centered on substances and essences. Among the primary motives for this shift are problems that substance ontologies face in handling the pervasive variation in the living world. Biological variation between individuals can create difficulties for classification into kinds defined by common qualitative properties. A less appreciated problem stems from variation within biological individuals in their properties over time. The wide extent of this intrinsic temporal variation undermines efforts to model an individual’s persistence over time in terms of the conservation of an essence or set of qualitative properties. Such difficulties can be avoided by adopting a conceptual scheme in which persistence over time is a mereological (part-whole) relationship of causal continuity.

Although some theorists have called for something like biological process ontology in the past, such proposals have not been systematically pursued. This dissertation seeks to explore what this sort of ontology might be like. DiFrisco begins by introducing his guiding presuppositions, which include scientific realism and methodological naturalism. Chapter 1 develops a conception of ontological category theory in order to make sense of the idea that a shift in ontology can be at once empirically motivated but underdetermined. Chapter 2 aims to systematize the main features of the proposed ontology by contrasting processes and substances/object in terms of individuation in space and persistence over time.

Chapters 3 and 4 aim to apply the catego-
rial scheme developed in the previous chapters to two problems in the life sciences: the relation between life and nonlife and the nature of biological levels of organization. Chapter 3 argues in detail that life is distinguished by the property of organizational or metabolic closure, but that this property remains abstract without being realized in concrete hierarchical processes. Chapter 4 argues that the typological and compositional basis of concepts of biological levels is problematic and should be recast from a dynamical perspective in which levels are different time scales of processes. DiFrisco concludes by examining how the proposed ontology might shed new light on two contested topics in recent philosophy of biology – biological functions and biological individuality.


This thesis presents a defense of federalism as an institutional means of pursuing political justice between different political communities. The core of the argument is that, historically, federalism, or as Grégoire calls it, ‘free-deralism’, has developed as the republican, i.e. egalitarian, alternative to the imperialistic model of citizenship integration, i.e. feudalism (or ‘feu-deralism’). The expression ‘sharing freedom’ refers to the idea that the power to shape the norms of citizenship is shared between the communities who are subjected to a common authority, instead of being monopolized by one group which can impose its norms, institutions, language, religion and so on onto other groups. Although the argument has strong historical credentials, this thesis addresses contemporary issues that take center stage in multinational states such as Belgium, Canada, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The argument unfolds by providing reasons for federalism as well as by addressing the question of how to organize federal states. If freedom only exists in egalitarian relationships, justice can only be preserved if cooperation equally satisfies the interests of all. Sub-units should enjoy substantial powers over what competences they delegate to the federal government, so as to provide a safeguard to the imperative that what is decided at the federal level tracks the interests of all constituents. The result is that, in many cases, asymmetrical federalism is the best way to achieve stable political equilibriums. Finally, the thesis concludes by suggesting that language policies should be decided locally: each sub-unit should be allowed to choose the official language in which it wishes to operate in what official language it will operate. The federal state should declare every language adopted by sub-units as an official language of the federation as a whole. In this way, federal states can be representative of their constituencies and not only of dominant groups within them.

The process of citizenship integration that is characteristic of federal states should reflect diversity in order to generate stability and to provide a cogent and viable link between the local and the global. Federalism can provide this link as long as it allows for a sharing of freedom – i.e., if the interests of all are integrated and that all have an equal share of influence onto the common norms of citizenship within the federation.


This dissertation undertakes a constructive reimagining of the *analogia entis* in a postmodern, and specifically, Catholic intellectual context, by means of a creative retrieval of the analogical vision of the 20th-century Jesuit
Erich Przywara.

The *analogia entis* is presented as the metaphysical touchstone and treasure of a specifically Christian narrative of being, for the following reasons. First, the *analogia entis* is expressive of the fundamental relationship between God and the creature. This relation is grounded in a participatory metaphysics which safeguards the God/world distinction from any and all forms of metaphysical totality and identity, which seeks to fuse and confuse the difference between God and the world. The *analogia entis* fully recognizes that creation has been gratuitously set free and created by the loving God of creation and redemption. This, for Przywara, is specifically seen in the formulation of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) which states that whatever similarity there is between God and man the dissimilarity is always greater. However, this distance and difference of God from the world is not a sign of indifference and aloofness but, rather, the sign of God’s freeing love which truly lets creation be as what is other to God. The *analogia entis* is expressive of a *commencement* between God and his creatures which results in an *analogia caritatis*. Second, following from this view is an interpretation of man as non-autonomous, non-foundation and non-absolute. Man, as created, is a *homo abyssus*, a groundless gift which is intrinsically orientated to and opened-up beyond himself towards God. Third, following from the previous two, philosophy is understood in a participatory fashion which shows it to be non-autonomous, transitive and relational thereby finding its completion in Christian revelation, a revelation which does not destroy the essence of philosophy (or the creature), but alone completes it.

These three elements of the *analogia entis* are thus expressive of a specifically Christian metaphysical vision and grammar which are able to counter and address the autonomous, secular and fundamental nature of philosophically modernity by thinking the meaning of Christian analogical difference and relation within the resources of the Christian narrative of being. This vision of being is inherently peaceful and is alone respectful of true difference, insofar as it is rooted in the difference of all differences, namely, the difference between God and man.

Ye Yang, *Pietro Pomponazzi on natural causality. A study of his De incantationibus and De fato*. PhD supervisor: Prof. R. Friedman, co-supervisor: Prof. A. Robiglio

This dissertation explores Pietro Pomponazzi’s (1462-1525) notion of natural causality, i.e., the connections between causes and effects in natural phenomena, including both final causality and efficient causality. Pomponazzi’s notion of natural causality is examined in two frameworks: the history of the concept of natural causality, and the tradition of Aristotelianism. The major texts used to this end are his treatises *De incantationibus* and *De fato* and his *Quaestio de regressu*.

Having explored Pomponazzi’s notion of natural causality in his various works, Yang finds the following five features of Pomponazzi’s notion of natural causality: 1) a shift from final cause to efficient cause: Pomponazzi establishes a notion of natural causality as the regular connection between efficient causes and effects in natural occurrences. Pomponazzi’s notion of efficient causality is a combination of the Stoic conception of efficient causality and Averroes’s notion of efficient causality. Pomponazzi attempts to replace the Aristotelian teleology with the efficient causality of the motions (of heavenly bodies, animal spirits, etc.) as the uniform principle of nature which rules the whole sublunary world. 2) This natural causality is necessary, i.e., excluding chance occurrences and miraculous phenomena. 3) Pomponazzi considers natural causality as based on divine causality but having relevant autonomy from
divine causality, by distinguishing between God’s absolute power (which is merely a logical possibility) and his ordained powers.

4) Pomponazzi’s concept of natural causality provides a basis for the empirical method of natural philosophy and his view on natural philosophy as the fundamental science for all other sciences. The necessity of natural causality makes natural philosophy a science which is as certain as human beings are able to obtain.

5) Pomponazzi’s concept of natural causality, with its stress on the unity of a universally applied principle of nature, necessity of natural causality, and the empirically-directed method of natural philosophy, paves the way for the early modern notion of laws of nature. In this sense, Pomponazzi’s notion of natural causality is a link between ancient and medieval views on natural causality and the early modern conception of laws of nature.


What is globalization? And how should our political institutions respond to it? Through a close reading of Rousseau, Kant and Hume, this dissertation asks whether globalization is democratic and how it could be, whether it is legal and how it could be, and whether it leads to increased prosperity as well as how it could do so.

In Rousseau’s ideas of democracy, it finds a justification for tying democracy to the institutions of representative democracy in the state, which give each person an equal vote. In Kant’s ideas on law and morality the dissertation however finds a way to make good on the global democratic promise by reframing it. Rather than giving each person an equal vote and an equal share of power, the international extension of law can give each person equal rights. Kant (who advocated a world of equally sovereign states, rather than imposing a shared human rights standard through international institutions like the UN) transforms the global democratic ideal to the ideal of a universal law between us. This ideal of a universal law can be constructed through voluntary global exchange and cooperation.

In Hume’s ideas on international trade and exchange, the dissertation further explores what can spur such cosmopolitan exchange and cooperation. Because economic exchange generates a relation of mutual benefit between distant strangers, it provides an incentive to interact beyond borders. When properly regulated, international trade moreover provides a way to alleviate global poverty by making poor economies more prosperous. However, international exchange is only mutually beneficial and able to alleviate poverty when it takes into account both Kant’s ideal of sovereign equality as well as Rousseau’s ideal of statist representative democracy.

As a whole, globalization is thus best understood through the ‘co-originality’ of democracy, international law and international trade. The dissertation finds three principles of ‘global justice’ that make globalization just. Principle 1 specifies the priority of sovereign democracy, so that no cross-border coercion should exist between sovereign states. Principle 2 demands legal cooperation between states, so that the mutual adjustment between systems of state law can voluntarily conform to the ideal of a universal law. Principle 3 then advocates that each state maximizes its share of international trade as a share of its economy and that it gives priority to (global) worst-off under international trade.

Jeremiah Reyes, *Loób and Kapwa: Thomas Aquinas and a Filipino Virtue Ethics*. PhD supervisor: Prof. R. Friedman, co-supervisor: Prof. R. Pe-Pua (University of New South Wales)

There is a set of concepts which since the
1960s, thanks mostly to American scholars, was called ‘Filipino values’ and was considered crucial to understanding Filipino culture and society. Most of these so-called ‘values’, however, have been misunderstood because these concepts are ‘pre-modern’ concepts produced by two ‘pre-modern’ traditions, namely the Southeast Asian tribal-animist tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition which have syncretized with each other for more than 300 years (1565-1898). This dissertation argues that a different interpretive framework, namely Thomistic philosophy, can help articulate and systematize these concepts in a way that is more faithful to their pre-modern character and makes the important interrelationships between these concepts more explicit. The general thrust of this dissertation is to move from ‘Filipino values’ to a ‘Filipino virtue ethics’. ‘Values’, roughly speaking, are concerned with what people want or consider good and important. ‘Virtue ethics’ on the other hand is about what a person becomes through his habitual behavior, towards a certain ideal. A lot of the concepts that were called ‘values’ are in fact ‘virtues’ or have to do with ‘virtues’.

The two main pillars of ‘Filipino virtue ethics’ are loób (‘inside’) and kapwa (‘other’ or ‘other person’). The goal of ‘Filipino virtue ethics’ is called pagkakaisa (‘unity’ or ‘oneness’). The Filipino virtues are supposed to draw the loób and kapwa closer to each other towards a greater pagkakaisa.

After the above basic concepts are established, the Filipino virtues are explained and organized using the virtue ethics of Aquinas as an organizing framework. Aquinas has seven principal virtues (faith, hope, love, prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude/courage). He also talks about other virtues which are subordinated to these principal virtues. Reyes organizes the Filipino virtues in comparison with Aquinas’ principal virtues though he has only chosen five Filipino virtues and not seven.
HIW NEWS 2014-2015

Personalia:

On October 1, 2015, the HIW welcomed three new professors: Pieter Adriaens, Matthias Lievens and Stefano Micali. Pieter Adriaens and Matthias Lievens previously worked at the HIW as postdoctoral researchers. They were appointed as part-time lecturers to teach introductory courses in philosophy at various KU Leuven campuses across the country, from Oostende to Diepenbeek. Both researchers also remain part-time doctor-assistants at the HIW. Stefano Micali worked as a postdoctoral researcher in Nijmegen and Heidelberg. He came to Leuven to be appointed as a tenure track lecturer in philosophical anthropology.

Jan Opsomer was promoted to the rank of full professor, and Stefan Rummens was promoted to the rank of professor on October 1, 2015.

Events:

Jubilee Programme

In the academic year 2014-2015, we celebrated the 125-year anniversary of the Institute of Philosophy (KU Leuven) and the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie (Université Catholique de Louvain). To celebrate the occasion, several special events were scheduled throughout the year.

The festivities started with the award of the Doctor Honoris Causa degree to Will Kymlicka on November 6. On December 18, a faculty conference on Truth took place at the Institute of Philosophy’s Council Room. One professor from every research centre presented a lecture on the topic. The yearly (Dutch) alumni association study day was transformed into a lecture series on Famous alumni. Carlos Steel gave a lecture on February 20 on Maurice De Wulf and Belgian Philosophy. Carine Defoort and Koen Peeters honoured Patricia De Martelaere with a guest lecture on March 17. On April 21, Rudolf Bernet gave a lecture on Phenomenology between Freiburg and Paris: Van Breda and De Waelhens. Herman Van Rompuy and Yves Petry gave the final lecture of the series on May 12 by presenting a lecture on the meaning of the Institute of Philosophy. The yearly Saint Thomas Feast was also devoted to the 125-year anniversary. Marilyn McCord Adams gave a guest lecture on Housing the Powers: Self-Actuation and Cosmic Design, followed by the formal exhibition opening of Ashes to Archives: War and Philosophy in Leuven at the Central Library. The final event of the jubilee programme was the participation of the Institute of Philosophy and the Leo XIII Seminary in the Heritage Day Flanders on September 13, 2015.

Thursday Lectures and Lectures for the 21st Century

In 2014-2015, the Institute of Philosophy had a rich programme of lectures and seminars.

There were six Thursday Lectures:

• Hans Lindahl (Tilburg University) Recognition as Domination: Constitutionalism, Reciprocity, and the Problem of A-Legality (16 October 2014)
• Florence Caeymaex (F.R.S.-FNRS Senior Research Associate / Université de Liège) Truth and Subjectivity. Ethics in 20th-Century French Philosophy (30 October 2014)
• Pieter d’Hoine (KU Leuven) Aristotle as Failed Platonist (27 November 2014)
• Stéphane Symons (KU Leuven) Georg Simmel’s Philosophy of Art: The Essays on Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and Rodin (26 February 2015)
• Jennifer Radden (University of Massachusetts Boston) Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy as 21st-Century Cognitive Neuroscience (26 March 2015)
• Jennifer Saul (University of Sheffield) Dogwhistles: The Philosophy of Language and Politically Manipulative Speech (7 May 2015)

The Lectures for the 21st Century celebrated their 21st edition. The 2014-2015 programme was as follows:
• H.K.H. Prinses Laurentien der Nederlanden, De eigen kracht van jongeren: niet grijs, wel wijs (3 November 2014)
• Stefaan Pleysier en Johan Put, Watseburt?! Criminaliteit door de jengd van tegenwoordig (10 November 2014)
• Geert Deconinck, Slimme energienetten voor een duurzamer energieverzuiming (17 November 2014)
• Axel Haelterman, Fiscaliteit voor een vergrijsde samenleving. Denksporen voor een vernieuwd fiscaal evenwicht (24 November 2014)
• Stan Maes, Is ons financiële systeem voldoende hervormd na de crisis? (1 December 2014)
• Katelijne De Nys, Terugbetaling van geneesmiddelen in België (8 December 2014)
• Guido Vanheeswijk, Secularisatie: een complexe en gelaagde realiteit (15 December 2014)
• Dirk De Geest, De dood van de literatuur? (9 February 2015)
• Marc Dubois, Bouwen is nog geen bouwkunst (16 February 2015)
• Frank Delmulle, Leren van Tissergate (23 February 2015)
• Jan Van der Borg, Toerisme en erfgoed: zijn er grenzen aan toeristische ontwikkeling? (2 March 2015)
• Geert Van Hootegem, Total Workplace Innovation: het paradigma dat de arbeidsplaats zal veranderen (9 March 2015)

• Frédéric Amant, Kankertherapieën nu en in de toekomst: op weg naar een behandeling op maat (16 March 2015)
• Gert Storms, Wetenschappelijke fraude en twijfelachtige onderzoekspraktijken (23 March 2015)

Other lectures and conferences
From September 24 to September 26, the Centre for Logic and Analytic Philosophy organised an international conference on The Epistemology of Perception. The keynote speakers were Annalisa Coliva, Peter Graham, Jack Lyons, Alan Millar and Duncan Pritchard.

The Husserl Memorial Lecture 2014 was given by Dieter Lohmar. On Wednesday, October 15, he gave a guest lecture in the Cardinal Mercier Room on Non-Linguistic Thinking from a Phenomenological Point of View. The next day, there was also a seminar on Special Cases in Human and Animal Non-Linguistic Thinking.


Several conferences took place in the spring semester: the international conference Reasons and Revelations (April 15-17, organised by Henning Tegtmeier), a special commemoration of the Armenian Genocide on April 30, entitled Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, Surviving the Catastrophe, the third edition of the Leuven Kant Conference (May 28-29, organised by Karin De Boer), a conference on The Ontology of Change in the 13th and 14th Century Thought: Physical and Theological Perspectives (June 3-4, organised by Can Laurens Loewe and Luca Gili) and the Leuven Workshop on Fourteenth-Century Philosophy (June 4-6, organised by Jenny Pelletier).
The Centre for Logic and Analytic Philosophy organises every two years the Herman Roelants Lecture on Science in honour of the founder of the centre, Herman Roelants. On May 19, James Ladyman was invited to give a guest lecture on *Why atoms are not atoms and particles are not particles and why it matters*.

The Fifth *Graduate Student Conference* took place on March 27. The Graduate Student Conference is held over one day in the early spring of each year and brings together graduate students to present their research projects. Jan Heylen gave the keynote lecture on *Why is there something rather than nothing?*

The yearly Festival of Philosophy on April 4 focused on the topic of *inequality*. The keynote lecture was given by the British philosopher John Gray. There were also lectures and talks by Philippe Van Parijs, Frank Vandenbroucke, Eva Brems, Bea Cantillon, Toon Vandevelde, Julian Hetzel, Matthias De Groof and Raf Geenens. The evening performance was given by Christophe Meierhans on *Some use for you broken clay pots*.

The summer school of the Institute of Philosophy celebrated its seventh edition. From August 17 to 20, a group of 40 participants studied and discussed Immanuel Kant’s four questions: “What can I know?”, “What should I do?”, “What may I hope?”, “What is man?”. For the third time, the summer school included an advanced programme (for 50 participants). The theme of this programme was “Contemporary Philosophy”.

To conclude the academic year 2014-2015, two final conferences were organised: the *Virtue Epistemology Conference* (September 16 to 18, organised by Chris Kelp) and the *Wittgensteinian Approaches to Moral Philosophy (2nd Edition)* (September 17 to 19, organised by Stefan Rummens and Benjamin De Mesel).
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 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/

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
Description: Short postdoctoral positions for KU Leuven doctoral students (BOF-PDM). 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.

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 publically 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/. Application deadline: each year in November.

**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.

**Canadian Government Student Loans**

**Description:** The Government of Canada and most provincial or territorial governments work together to deliver federal and provincial student loan and grant programs. **Qualifications:** Applicants must be Canadian citizens, permanent residents of Canada or designated as protected persons. **Application:** see [www.canlearn.ca/eng/loans_grants/loans/apply.shtml](http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/loans_grants/loans/apply.shtml)

**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. **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.

EDITORIAL OFFICE
Tijdschrift voor Filosofie,
Kard. Mercierplein 2,
B-3000 Leuven, Belgium.
+ 32 16 32 63 26
Tijdschrift.Filosofie@hiw.kuleuven.be
http://tijdschriftvoorfilosofie.eu/en

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. dr. Roland Breeur (KU Leuven)

SUBSCRIPTION
Belgium and the Netherlands:
€ 60 (students € 30).
Other countries: € 75.
Subscribers receive the printed Tijdschrift voor Filosofie four times a year and obtain access to all available online articles.
New subscribers address to Peeters Publishers, Bondgenotenlaan 153,
B-3000 Leuven, Belgium.
+ 32 16 23 51 70
order@peeters-leuven.be
www.peeters-leuven.be.