Oxford Philosophy 2012
Welcome to this fourth issue of Oxford Philosophy. We are pleased to have this opportunity to stay in touch with you, whether you read Philosophy as part of an undergraduate degree or you were a graduate student here.

Elsewhere in this magazine one of our new colleagues refers to Oxford as ‘the world’s leading centre of philosophy,’ and another new colleague refers to our ‘exciting and vibrant philosophical community.’ Oxford holds its leading position not only because good philosophers work here, but because many philosophers work here and talk to each other. The articles in this edition give some idea of the quality and the variety of philosophical activity in the Faculty and its connections with other parts of the University and with life outside Oxford and outside the academy. In many areas (including, but not confined to, Ancient Philosophy, Philosophy of Science, Applied Ethics, Philosophical Logic) Oxford has the largest, or one of the largest, concentration of experts in the world.

We are able to form these impressive research clusters because we have a large number of philosophers. We have many philosophers because we need them for undergraduate and graduate teaching. All Oxford students know that individual teachers are the backbone of philosophical research and philosophical education in Oxford. These forms of teaching are labour-intensive but give some idea of the quality and the variety of philosophical activity in the Faculty and its connections with other parts of the University and with life outside Oxford and outside the academy. In many areas (including, but not confined to, Ancient Philosophy, Philosophy of Science, Applied Ethics, Philosophical Logic) Oxford has the largest, or one of the largest, concentration of experts in the world.

This system is expensive, and the University needs to find resources to support it. Most of our academic appointments are supported jointly by the colleges and by the central University. A recent initiative to raise money for these joint appointments is the Teaching Fund, which provides funds from the central university to match funds raised by individual colleges. We are fortunate to have had several posts in philosophy that are now fully endowed in this way. So far Worcester, Trinity, St Anne’s, and Somerville have raised funds to qualify for matching funds from the central University. Other colleges are still raising the funds, and we hope for further successes in this area.

Oxford Philosophy has strongly influenced the development of philosophical research and education throughout the world, because students who have received an Oxford degree have become leading professional philosophers. To continue this tradition, we need funds to support graduate students. Some funds for this purpose have been raised, and recently the University has begun another matching-funds initiative, the Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Fund, worth up to a total of £10 million. The scheme is designed to encourage new philanthropic donations for fully-funded graduate scholarships covering University and college fees and living costs. All matches will be at the ratio of 60% from the donor and 40% from the Matched Fund (subject to certain caps). Please let us know if you would like further details about the scheme.

If you come back to visit us, you will notice another recent effort to encourage our collective philosophical life. We are no longer in 10 Marten Street, and we have moved to our new home in the Radcliffe Humanities building, formerly the Radcliffe Infirmary. Both the Faculty administrative offices and the Philosophy and Theology Faculties Library are now in this handsome eighteenth-century building. We hope to benefit from the move mainly because our space in the new building includes more space for graduate students to work and to talk. This extra space should help to build up our philosophical community. If you are in Oxford, come and have a look.

Professor Terry Irwin
Chair of the Philosophy Faculty Board

Matched Fund (subject to certain caps). Please let us know if you will be at the ratio of 60% from the donor and 40% from the Matched Fund (subject to certain caps). Please let us know if you would like further details about the scheme.

If you come back to visit us, you will notice another recent effort to encourage our collective philosophical life. We are no longer in 10 Marten Street, and we have moved to our new home in the Radcliffe Humanities building, formerly the Radcliffe Infirmary. Both the Faculty administrative offices and the Philosophy and Theology Faculties Library are now in this handsome eighteenth-century building. We hope to benefit from the move mainly because our space in the new building includes more space for graduate students to work and to talk. This extra space should help to build up our philosophical community. If you are in Oxford, come and have a look.

Professor Terry Irwin
Chair of the Philosophy Faculty Board

Contact us
Oxford Philosophy
Faculty of Philosophy
Radcliffe Humanities
Radcliffe Observatory Quarter
Woodstock Road
Oxford, OX2 6GG
UK
email: news@philosophy.ox.ac.uk
tel: +44 (0)1865 276928

For news, events and further information, please visit:
www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk

Acknowledgements
The editors would like to thank the following people for their kind help and assistance:
Gail Anderson
Peter Catapano
Michelle Conway
Suzie Dummett
Ernie Lapone
Adrienne Lingard
Charlotte Paradise

Front and back cover: Images of Radcliffe Humanities, new home to the Faculty of Philosophy.
In 2014, the lectures will be given by Martha Nussbaum (Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago).

The Locke Lectures are among the world’s most distinguished lecture series in philosophy. They began in 1950, funded from the bequest of Henry Wilde and more recently through the generous support of Oxford University Press. Lectures are open to members of the public; further details about timings and locations will be posted on the Faculty’s website in due course.

Establishing the Philosophy of Cosmology

In a new partnership between Oxford and Cambridge, researchers in physics and philosophy Simon Saunders, Joe Silk, and David Wallace at Oxford University, and John Barrow and Jeremy Butterfield at Cambridge, are to join researchers at a cluster of US universities to establish the field of philosophy of cosmology as a branch of philosophy of physics in its own right, with its own distinctive problems and motivations. The initiative will last for three years and will culminate in a major international conference.

http://philcosmo.physics.ox.ac.uk

Two New Major Research Awards

The Faculty was recently the recipient of two major awards from the John Templeton Foundation.

New Insights and Directions for Religious Epistemology

John Hawthorne, Wayne fruit Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy, will direct a major new research project which aims to bring recent developments in epistemology to bear on topics in the philosophy of religion in a way that will open up new channels of research in religious epistemology. Valued at £1.3million, the project will include funding for five postdoctoral researchers, 22 visiting research fellowships, nine public lectures, four roundtable discussions, six workshops, and one major international conference.

www.newinsights.ox.ac.uk

New Appointments

Susanne Bobzien
Senior Research Fellow, All Souls

We are delighted to announce that internationally distinguished philosopher, Susanne Bobzien, will re-join the Faculty in summer 2013, taking up a Senior Research Fellowship at All Souls College, one of the blue-ribbons of academic life.

Susanne did graduate work at Oxford and was a fellow at Balliol and Queen’s College between 1989-2002, before moving to the US to be Professor of Philosophy at Yale University. She is the author of Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy (1998) and has published numerous articles in ancient philosophy and philosophy of logic and language. Her current research projects are, in contemporary philosophy, vagueness with focus on higher-order vagueness; and in the history of philosophy, post-Aristotelian ancient logic. She also continues to be interested in determinism, freedom and moral responsibility, and in several other areas of philosophy.

Jeffrey Ketland
Tutorial Fellow, Pembroke

Having grown up in Birmingham, I studied physics and mathematics at Cambridge, and then philosophy and logic, first at Warwick and then LSE, where my PhD work was mostly about the applicability of mathematics and axiomatic truth theories. I have written on topics like truth, paradox, validity, incompleteness, proof, indiscernibility, structure, realism and nominalism. After positions at LSE, Nottingham, KCL, Leeds, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Munich (Munich Center for Mathematical Philosophy), I was delighted to join Pembroke College as a Tutorial Fellow, and the Faculty of Philosophy as CUF Lecturer, in September 2012.

Ralf Bader
Tutorial Fellow, Merton

After having read PPE at Teddy Hall, I did my graduate work at St Andrews and then spent the last two years as a Bersoff Assistant Professor and Faculty Fellow at New York University. My research focuses on ethics, contemporary metaphysics, Kant scholarship and political philosophy. I am also interested in early analytic philosophy and neo-Kantian philosophy. I am thrilled about my return to Oxford and being part of its exciting and vibrant philosophical community.

News

We are delighted to announce that the next series of John Locke Lectures in Trinity Term 2013 will be given by Ned Block (Silver Professor of Philosophy, Psychology and Neural Science at New York University) under the title “Attention and Perception.”

In June 2013, Keble College will be host to this new series, which in previous years have been given by such major figures as John Gray, George Williams, and Martha Nussbaum.

Two New Major Research Awards

The Faculty was recently the recipient of two major awards from the John Templeton Foundation.

New Insights and Directions for Religious Epistemology

John Hawthorne, Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy, will direct a major new research project which aims to bring recent developments in epistemology to bear on topics in the philosophy of religion in a way that will open up new channels of research in religious epistemology. Valued at £1.3million, the project will include funding for five postdoctoral researchers, 22 visiting research fellowships, nine public lectures, four roundtable discussions, six workshops, and one major international conference.

www.newinsights.ox.ac.uk

Establishing the Philosophy of Cosmology

In a new partnership between Oxford and Cambridge, researchers in physics and philosophy Simon Saunders, Joe Silk, and David Wallace at Oxford University, and John Barrow and Jeremy Butterfield at Cambridge, are to join researchers at a cluster of US universities to establish the field of philosophy of cosmology as a branch of philosophy of physics in its own right, with its own distinctive problems and motivations. The initiative will last for three years and will culminate in a major international conference.

http://philcosmo.physics.ox.ac.uk

Two New Major Research Awards

The Faculty was recently the recipient of two major awards from the John Templeton Foundation.

New Insights and Directions for Religious Epistemology

John Hawthorne, Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy, will direct a major new research project which aims to bring recent developments in epistemology to bear on topics in the philosophy of religion in a way that will open up new channels of research in religious epistemology. Valued at £1.3million, the project will include funding for five postdoctoral researchers, 22 visiting research fellowships, nine public lectures, four roundtable discussions, six workshops, and one major international conference.

www.newinsights.ox.ac.uk

Establishing the Philosophy of Cosmology

In a new partnership between Oxford and Cambridge, researchers in physics and philosophy Simon Saunders, Joe Silk, and David Wallace at Oxford University, and John Barrow and Jeremy Butterfield at Cambridge, are to join researchers at a cluster of US universities to establish the field of philosophy of cosmology as a branch of philosophy of physics in its own right, with its own distinctive problems and motivations. The initiative will last for three years and will culminate in a major international conference.

http://philcosmo.physics.ox.ac.uk

Two New Major Research Awards

The Faculty was recently the recipient of two major awards from the John Templeton Foundation.

New Insights and Directions for Religious Epistemology

John Hawthorne, Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy, will direct a major new research project which aims to bring recent developments in epistemology to bear on topics in the philosophy of religion in a way that will open up new channels of research in religious epistemology. Valued at £1.3million, the project will include funding for five postdoctoral researchers, 22 visiting research fellowships, nine public lectures, four roundtable discussions, six workshops, and one major international conference.

www.newinsights.ox.ac.uk

Establishing the Philosophy of Cosmology

In a new partnership between Oxford and Cambridge, researchers in physics and philosophy Simon Saunders, Joe Silk, and David Wallace at Oxford University, and John Barrow and Jeremy Butterfield at Cambridge, are to join researchers at a cluster of US universities to establish the field of philosophy of cosmology as a branch of philosophy of physics in its own right, with its own distinctive problems and motivations. The initiative will last for three years and will culminate in a major international conference.

http://philcosmo.physics.ox.ac.uk
Two New Degrees

For the first time in nearly four decades the Philosophy Faculty has established new joint honours schools

Philosophy, Psychology, and Linguistics

In December, philosophy tutors will be interviewing candidates for a new degree course in Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics and the first PPL students will arrive in October 2013. The new course is a successor to Psychology, Philosophy and Physiology (PPP), which was Oxford’s first psychology degree, beginning in 1947.

The establishment of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics as the newest Faculty within the Humanities Division presents an opportunity to enhance the successor degree to PPPP with Linguistics replacing Physiology. Psychology students will be able to include General Linguistics, Phonetics and Phonology, and Psycholinguistics in their course with Psychology options on Language Acquisition and Reading and Language: Development and Disorder. Philosophy students with a theoretical interest in language will now be able to study General Linguistics, Syntax, and Semantics alongside Philosophy of Logic and Language and Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein. The Psychology and Philosophy combination will, of course, continue as before, enhanced by the new Finals paper on Philosophy of Cognitive Science, examined for the first time this summer.

The 1950s witnessed the cognitive revolution in psychology and the beginnings of the interdisciplinary endeavour that is known as cognitive science. The six disciplines involved were psychology, philosophy, linguistics, computer science, neuroscience, and anthropology. Some commentators regard the conception of cognitive science as having taken place in September 1956, at a meeting at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

It is pleasing to think that in 2016, sixty years on from that conception, Oxford will see the first PPL students – and also the first cohort of students on the four-year course in Computer Science and Philosophy – completing their degrees.

www.psy.ox.ac.uk/undergrad/ppl-course

Michaelmas Term 2012 saw the first intake for our new degree in Philosophy and Computer Science. This is a three or four year course, leading either to a BA degree after three years, or a Masters degree after four years.

Computing and Philosophy are close intellectual cousins. Artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, virtual reality are fascinating areas where Computer Science and Philosophy meet. But there are also many others, since the two disciplines share a broad focus on the representation of information and rational inference. In a future where philosophical reflection about the living world – both biological and social – will be increasingly informed by computer modelling, philosophy has much to gain if some of its proponents are able to programme themselves.

The course is largely based on the Computer Science half of the “Mathematics and Computer Science” degree and the Philosophy half of the “Mathematics and Philosophy” degree. In the first year students will cover core material in both subjects, including a bridging course studying Alan Turing’s pioneering work on computability and artificial intelligence. Later years will include a wide range of options, with an emphasis on courses near the interface between the two subjects. The fourth year provides the opportunity to study advanced topics and to undertake a more in-depth research project.

We expect the degree to appeal to students with broad interests and mathematical aptitude, who prefer intellectual exploration and discovery to learning of established theory. The only firm academic prerequisite for the course is study of Mathematics to A-Level (or equivalent), and we hope to attract students with broad interests, who might be studying any combination of subjects.

2012 is 150th anniversary of the birth of Alan Turing, the father of computing, and there could be no more fitting a time for the commencement of this new degree.

www.cs.ox.ac.uk/admissions/ugrad/Computer_Science_and_Philosophy

Marianne Talbot introduces the range of options for studying philosophy at Oxford’s Department for Continuing Education

In The Republic Plato makes clear his belief that the study of philosophy is especially fitted to older people. As Director of Studies in Philosophy at Oxford University’s Department for Continuing Education (www.conted.ox.ac.uk) I am constantly amazed at the energy and enthusiasm that older people will put into the study of philosophy, often around the edges of senior and demanding positions. It is my job to provide as many opportunities as possible for studying philosophy informally and part-time, for fun or for credit.

Our philosophy weekend schools are particularly popular. People come from all over the country, and from abroad. Each year we run seven schools, on topics such as philosophy of physics, metaphysics in pre-Socratic philosophy, the philosophy of artificial intelligence and the nature of normativity. Each weekend consists of four lectures, given by professional philosophers, and a discussion session. There is plenty of opportunity to socialise with others interested in the subject, and with the speakers. Even more people come from abroad to our summer schools. They spend a week living in Rewley House’s comfortable accommodation, taking tutorials, attending lectures and writing essays so they really get to grip with their subject as well as having time to socialise and explore Oxford.

For those who live near Oxford, we have a weekly class programme of approximately 35 classes throughout the year. These are held in Oxford, Reading, Newbury and Gerrard’s Cross. All involve weekly 2 hour classes and the completion of an assignment.

Many Oxford philosophy postgraduates get their first teaching experience as members of OUDCE’s panel of part-time tutors. This is a wonderful way to start a career in teaching philosophy because mature students are extremely motivated and unafraid to ask questions.

Many people have gone from studying philosophy informally at OUDCE to studying formally. Last year we had two new PhDs, and quite a few MA’s. Our Philosophical Society has 280 members, many of whom contribute to the annual Philosophical Society Review and attend the annual Members’ Day. Check out their website on: http://oxfordphilsoc.org/

There is no need, therefore, for an Oxford education in philosophy to end at graduation: if you still hanker after doing some philosophy come and join us
Ph""""ilosophy moved from 12 to 10 Merton Street in the summer of 1976. 10 Merton Street had been purpose-built for the History Faculty in 1954-56 (from designs by Sir Hubert Worthington, dating from 1938-9); it was soon to be adapted to our needs and quickly took on much of the shape that will be familiar to the readers of Oxford Philosophy who matriculated from the late 1970s onward.

The jewel in the building's crown was the Library, which, under the History Faculty's residency had occupied the whole of the upper floor of 10 Merton Street, in two reading rooms. However, this proved much larger than the space needed for the lending library that the Philosophy Sub-faculty agreed to establish in order to secure the premises. So instead the Philosophy Library was restricted to the splendid reading room looking out over Merton Street and the Fellows' Garden of Merton College, and what had been the northern reading room was partitioned to provide a large seminar room – or, as it came to be called, the Lecture Room – and a stack room.

The largest room on the ground floor had been used by the History Library as a map room. It now became a seminar room. One of the first acts of the building's new Management Committee was to instruct the Curator, Justin Gosling, to write to Gilbert Ryle proposing that the room be named after him. Gosling's letter ends: "I have been asked to discover whether you have any reasonable objection?" to which he added, "If not, we shall go ahead, if so we might of course still use that name, despite the accidental resemblance to your own, but also might not." Ryle replied, "Dear Gosling, I'm delighted with the idea. I shall always be showing visitors over our new home and passing for long enough for them to ask: And what is this room called?" A year or two later John Macbod, Ryle's long time colleague and friend gave the Sub-faculty an excellent photograph he had taken of Ryle, looking up from reading Pepys in a lawn chair in his garden in Isip, which was framed and put up in the Ryle Room. Later Simon Blackburn donated a striking photograph he had taken of Peter Strawson. These became the nucleus of a photographic pantheon of contemporary Oxford Philosophers in the Ryle Room, established by John Hyman when he was Curator of 10 Merton Street, a selection of which appeared on the back cover of Oxford Philosophy last year.

Even with an undergraduate lending library incorporating philosophy books from Social Studies, the Philosophy Library had no use for the basement book stacks, and the University retained them for storage. A collection of "Greek squeezes" as they were called (i.e., latex impressions of ancient Greek engraved inscriptions) were stored there, and hundreds of paintings left by University benefactor Georges von Houten. The basement stack was also used as the staging area for Ruskin School admissions portfolios, a connection that resulted in several loan exhibitions for the common room of John Newberry's Discours de la méthode, which came to the Philosophy Sub-faculty thanks to Peter Hacker's personal contact with the artist and which remained there until our departure (and which – like the collection of Ryle Room photographs – have moved with the Faculty to its new home on the Woodstock Road).

When it became clear that Phase 1 of the Humanities Building and Library would not be built anytime soon, the Vice-Chancellor offered the Radcliffe Infirmary, which had been earmarked for his office and that of other top University administrators, to the Humanities Division. The Radcliffe Infirmary was considerably too big for the Divisional Headquarters alone and, following a series of twists and turns, we agreed in January 2011 that the Philosophy Faculty and Library would move there in the summer of 2012. On agreeing to move, we also obtained an assurance that we will not be required to move again until the new Humanities Building materialises. We anticipate that this may be some time coming, but are delighted by our new home and in no obvious hurry to leave.

This piece is based on a longer article by Daniel Isaacson, University Lecturer in Philosophy of Mathematics and Pellow of Wolfson College, which can be found at http://eudyn.com/9bdt8/
An Undergraduate View

S

sitarian moments from every first year
philosopher’s most hated road, Logic
Lane, the Philosophy Faculty managed
provide a relaxing retreat from the fast
paced, stressful, day-to-day life of an Oxford
student. A traditionally picturesque Oxford
building, the Philosophy Faculty was in the
perfect place; right behind the lectures in Exam
Schools and opposite Christ Church meadows
where thoughts could be collected in the lush
open spaces whilst on a soothing solitary stroll.

It seems apt that 10 Merton Street was not
referred to as ‘The Philosophy Library’. Whilst
serving the functions of a place where books
could be borrowed – it soon became so much
more to those who knew and loved it. In fact,
‘The Philosophy Family’ would seem a more
appropriate name. Librarians said ‘hi’ and were
up for a chat, whilst the oval room provided
a dinner table-like environment for studying.
From undergraduates to the mythical creatures
of All Souls, the common room served as a
comfortable place for anyone to talk, grab a
20p cup of coffee, and have a browse through
the day’s newspapers. In Trinity Term, the
Faculty became even more inviting due to its
homely garden. There the few benches for
reading and philosophising took you away
far from any reminder of The Logic Manual
to the intellectual corners of a summer’s day.
Aristotle, Plato, and John Stuart Mill would
have loved it.

Emily Cousins (3rd year PPE)
that Oxford has a pre-eminent tradition in philosophy few could deny, and in illustration thoughts might turn to the later middle ages (to Duns Scotus, William of Ockham and John Wycliffe) or the seventeenth century (to John Locke, Robert Boyle, and John Norris) or more recently the ‘ordinary language’ tradition of the last century (to J.L. Austin, Gilbert Ryle and Peter Strawson). Few, however, would think of the late Victorian era – 1870s and 1880s – and yet this period was arguably the highest watermark in Oxford’s philosophical reputation, a time when virtually all the most able philosophers in the country were Oxford trained.

The reasons why this time of great renown has been largely forgotten are not hard to find, for the Edwardian mind reacted harshly against the age that came before it and perhaps nowhere more so than in philosophy, where a new school of thinking arose – within whose shadow the modern discipline still falls – which so defined itself in opposition to its predecessors as to virtually erase them from memory. But this amnesia is to be regretted, for the philosophy which Oxford advanced at that time was one with wide and practical appeal, a vital counter example to the perennial accusation that philosophy is an academic, it is significant that the alternative occupation which Green considered was that of a dissenting minister, for throughout his career his concerns never ventured far from those that might in the broadest sense be called ‘religious’. His position was never orthodox, however; indeed his motivation was to find a form of belief that could preserve what was of value in religion without compromising the rational conclusions to which he felt that modern science, scholarship and philosophy pointed.

Elected to the White’s Chair of Moral Philosophy in 1878, Green died of blood poisoning in 1882 at the relatively young age of 46, yet in his short career he exerted an immense influence. Bernard Bolzano, R.L. Nettleship, William Wallace, F.H. Bradley, A.C. Bradley, John MacCunn, D.G. Ritchie, J.H. Muirhead, Arnold Toynbee, H.H. Joachim were all pupils of his; and this small list of Oxford philosophers – the School of Green as it was often called – between themselves dominated the philosophical scene for some thirty years.

The institution of the lay sermon – the metaphysically uplifting and morally motivating address – to which several of the Idealists were attached, illustrates clearly both how the philosophy prize was set up in his memory which, now in the form of a scholarship for graduates working in ethics, the Philosophy Faculty continues to administer to this day.

Through opting in the end for the life of an academic, it is significant that the alternative occupation which Green considered was that of a dissenting minister, for throughout his career his concerns never ventured far from those that might in the broadest sense be called ‘religious’. His position was never orthodox, however; indeed his motivation was to find a form of belief that could preserve what was of value in religion without compromising the rational conclusions to which he felt that modern science, scholarship and philosophy pointed.

The chief figure of this movement was T.H. Green, who first entered Balliol as a student in 1855, becoming a Fellow in 1860. Encouraged by Jowett, he made use of Kantian and Hegelian ideas, which until that point had largely been ignored as ‘dangerous,’ developing an Idealist world view in which God, or as he called it the ‘eternal consciousness,’ was to be thought of as a principle immanent throughout reality and, in particular, gradually manifesting itself in the process of human development, both intellectual and moral. In this light the individual could be understood only as part of a larger social whole, and society itself as an organism properly aiming at the ‘common good’.

Elected to the Whites Chair of Moral Philosophy in 1878, Green died of blood poisoning in 1882 at the relatively young age of 46, yet in his short career he exerted an immense influence. Bernard Bolzano, R.L. Nettleship, William Wallace, F.H. Bradley, A.C. Bradley, John MacCunn, D.G. Ritchie, J.H. Muirhead, Arnold Toynbee, H.H. Joachim were all pupils of his; and this small list of Oxford philosophers – the School of Green as it was often called – between themselves dominated the philosophical scene for some thirty years.

One of the most interesting aspects to this story is that while Green’s influence was immense, it was transmitted not through his writings – which were few, difficult and nearly all posthumous – but rather through his teaching and the force of his character. Indeed, the University and the wider city itself took Green to its heart as it has perhaps no other of its academics, and on the day of his funeral the Mayor and Corporation, together with two thousand people, processed (through torrential rain) from the council chambers to Balliol and thence to St Sepulchre’s Cemetery on Walton Street where he was buried. A moral religious impulse was linked to an ethic of practical involvement, and how philosophy was as often preached as it was taught. The school of Green (where the philosopher R.G. Colingwood) sent out into public life a stream of ex-pupils who carried with them the conviction that philosophy, and in particular the philosophy they had learned at Oxford, was an important thing, and that their vocation was to put it into practice…. Through this effect on the minds of its pupils, the philosophy of Green’s school might be found, from about 1880 to about 1910, penetrating and fertilizing every part of the national life” (An Autobiography, p.17).

Green’s conviction that it was not enough to think but that one must also act, inspired his followers, such as the young Arnold Toynbee, who went to live and work with the poor in the East End of London, with such zeal as to lead him to an early death and give the movement its first ‘martyr’; And when, in 1883 Samuel Barnett gave a lecture at St John’s College entitled ‘Settlements of University Men in Great Towns’ in which he suggested that the lives of the poor might be helped by the setting up in the inner cities communes of university educated men dedicated to the service and education of those less fortunate than they, this was a suggestion that appealed to many who had heard Green’s message; the call resulting in the establishment in 1884 of just such a settlement in Whitechapel, East London, named Toynbee Hall, after Green’s pupil who had died the previous year.

Through its association with Green, Balliol became the very heart of the British Idealist movement, a position cemented by its election in 1893 of the philosopher Edward Caird as the new Master (in succession to Jowett) a position he held until 1907. Caird had himself been a student at Balliol, shortly after Green with whom he was a close friend and philosophical colleague, and then briefly a fellow at Merton before returning home to Glasgow, so his appointment was very much a continuation of the Oxford Idealist tradition. Certainly Caird maintained and developed Green’s ethic of social service, but while his own inspiring Lay Sermons no doubt sent a generation of students out on their way to public service both in this country and in the various corners of Britain’s empire, no more than Green was Caird a conservative spokesperson for the status quo. He was, for example, an outspoken critic of both the Boer War and the University’s conferment of an honorary degree upon Cecil Rhodes, making public his dissent from the establishment in the pages of The Times.

Ready for Deconstruction?

Stephen Mulhall discusses and questions the basis for the division between ‘analytic’ and ‘Continental’ Philosophy

For most of the 20th century, philosophy departments in the English-speaking world were united in their stated aim to believe that they had to choose between two very different traditions or approaches to the subject, called the ‘analytic’ and the ‘Continental’, with most choosing to see themselves as ‘analytic’. And yet, a moment’s examination of these labels is enough to suggest that the usefulness of this division. For they define one approach in terms of allegiance to a certain method (that of analysis, and ‘the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle’), and another in terms of a geographical location: Bertrand Russell compared this to an attempt to divide all cars into front-wheel drive and Japanese. This peculiar cross-categorisation also obscures the fact that many of the most influential members of the ‘analytic’ tradition came from Continental Europe. How could such a mutually misbegotten dichotomy have taken on such powerful institutional and cultural purchase?

The ‘analytic’ tradition took off at the end of the 19th century in Cambridge from revolutionary developments in logical theory initiated by Frege and Russell, which were then accepted (with the help of G.E. Moore) as the foundation of a new kind of philosophy. These philosophers believed that their new analytical tools not only provided a better understanding of the future, V.C. K.不好, but, more importantly, of language and thought: this, in turn, revealed that potentially philosophical problems about the nature of reality were confused because of a misunderstanding of our means of representing that reality.

Wittgenstein’s version of these ideas, presented in the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1921), led a group of philosophers calling themselves the Vienna Circle to assume the movement known as logical positivism. They held that a proposition could be meaningful only if it was possible in principle to verify it (and so too facts). The propositions of natural science passed this test, and the propositions of mathematics and logic were also acceptable since they articulated analytic truths (that is, they were true by virtue of the meanings of their constituent terms), but all other kinds of proposition fail it and so were condemned as meaningless. This condemnation provided not only the evocative propositions of religion, ethics, politics and aesthetics, but also the metaphysical propositions and projects of the Western philosophical tradition. So philosophy could justify its own continued existence only by restricting itself to winnowing out the meaningless from the meaningful, and analysing in further detail the logical structure of scientific propositions.

Political developments in Europe during the 1930s led many of the leading logical positivists to flee to America, thereby embedding their version of analytic philosophy into this new cultural context, just as Wittgenstein began to criticise the presuppositions of the Tractatus and develop a wholly new way of engaging in philosophical inquiry. In his later work, epitomised in the posthumously published Philosophical Investigations (1953), he regarded philosophical clarity (whether about language or about whatever language might itself be about) as something to be attained by means of a careful description of our ordinary practices of employing words. Wittgenstein’s later work in this way seemed to dovetail with that of J.L. Austin in Oxford, and brought about the brief hegemony of what became known as ‘ordinary language philosophy’. Its dominance was ultimately ended by the importation from America (in the 1960s and 1970s) of arguments and ideas associated with Continental philosophy which were both themselves developments of and critical reactions to the earlier American importation of logical positivism, and that in put in question any attempt sharply to distinguish the normative structure of language from its empirical content – a distinction without which it appeared that neither logical positivism nor ordinary language philosophy could continue to defend its methods. And at this point, ‘analytic’ philosophy began to fragment into a diverse array of different projects.

The story of ‘analytic’ philosophy is relatively easy to summarize (however crudely) because it makes sense to regard it as a distinctive school or movement – a collective enterprise held together by shared commitments to certain methods and doctrines which developed over time, but only within certain limits. But no such story can be told of ‘Continental philosophy’, because that label was used to denote all the major philosophical schools or movements that held sway in the continent of Europe (primarily in Germany and France) from the death of Kant (at the beginning of the nineteenth century) to the present day. It thus includes German Idealism (especially Hegel), Marxism, Nietzsche, Existentialism (from Kierkegaard to Sartre and Camus), Phenomenology (from Husserl to Heidegger), Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. Critical Theory (especially the work of Adorno, Horkheimer and Habermas), Deconstruction (Derrida), and so on. ‘Analytic’ philosophy could usefully be compared with any one of these schools or movements, each of which is held together by certain shared commitments; but it makes no sense at all to compare it with all of them – as if there were some set of commitments that every one of them shared.

So it’s not at all surprising that ‘Continental’ philosophers never identified themselves as such; rather like the idea of a ‘Continental breakfast’, the idea of ‘Continental philosophy is one used primarily by those outside the cultures to whose products it refers. It is, in short, essentially an invention of ‘analytic’ philosophers, and applies to anything and everything in the post-Kantian philosophical scene that is not analytic philosophy (including those few British and American philosophy departments who stubbornly maintained a ‘Continental’ allegiance). Since Moore and Russell’s founding of analytic philosophy had involved them in a campaign against versions of Hegelian Idealism which had created the academic high ground in Oxford and Cambridge for decades, sensitivity to ‘Continental’ influences was always likely to linger. And it’s true that many ‘Continental’ philosophers did (although each in different ways) reject commitments central to the ‘analytic’ tradition – by questioning the priority of logical analysis, by pursuing avowedly metaphysical (and so purportedly meaningless) projects or taking them seriously enough to engage in critical dialogue with them (and so presenting the history of the subject as an essential context for its current work), or by aligning philosophy more with the humanities and social theory than with the natural sciences.

In that sense, there is a minimal (although essentially negative) descriptive content to the idea of ‘Continental’ philosophy. But it was never really a purely descriptive category; anyone trained (as I was) within the philosophical culture that deployed it knew that it was a term of disparagement, and at the limit a term of abuse. For it tended to be assumed (and not always without justification, or at least provocation) that ‘Continental’ philosophers not only did not do philosophy ‘our’ way, they did it in such a way as to threaten the integrity of the subject: their querying of the significance of logical theory was taken as a rejection of rational standards, and their willingness to speak metaphysically was taken as a willing embracement of obscurantism.

‘Continental’ philosophy was thus a kind of anti-philosophy, what Plato would have called ‘sophistry’. Little wonder that passions were so deeply stoked not long ago, when Cambridge University proposed to award an honorary degree to Derrida, and many of the members of the Philosophy Faculty there led a campaign against it.

Nowadays, passions run less high. Anglo-American philosophy retains a real concern for plannness, rigour and clarity of expression; but it is far more aware of the historical specificity of its ‘analytic’ influences and so far more likely to question that movement’s basic commitments – with the result that work in moral and political philosophy is flourishing, metaphysics is once more an intellectually serious enterprise, and a plurality of methods is evident. As a result, a generation of Anglo-American philosophers has emerged whose members find it easier to draw useful Ideas and approaches from the various ‘Continental’ traditions without either feeling (or risking accusations) that they have betrayed their calling. The day when we can write philosophy as if the division between ‘analytic’ and ‘Continental’ no longer has any institutional purchase is now a more realistic aspiration.

Michael Dummett 1935-2011

Michael Dummett was a staunch advocate of ‘analytic’ philosophy, a movement within philosophy that focuses on the structure of the thoughts that we use to express our ideas. He was also an influential authority on logic and mathematics, and was remembered for his exegesis of Frege as he will for his own seminal contributions to analytic philosophy.

Dummett held that the way in which the words in a sentence combine reflects the structure of the thought that the sentence expresses. In the sentence ‘Michael smoked a cigarette’, a proper name combines with a verb so as to express the thought that a particular person, Michael, indulges in a particular activity, smoking. This thought is true if Michael does in fact smoke, and false otherwise.

On this apparently innocuous and simple basis, Frege erected an elaborate set of ideas that have had an immense influence. Nevertheless, Dummett believed that Frege made certain assumptions concerning truth and falsehood that could be called into question. Frege allowed for the possibility of a thought that was neither true nor false. An example would be the thought that Father Christmas smokes. Given that there is no such person as Father Christmas, then neither is there anything to make this thought true or false. But Frege was not in a position to call it either true or false without our having any way of telling which. An example might be the thought that Plato would have enjoyed smoking. This is what caused Dummett to pause.

He also took great pleasure in the good things in life, and had a wonderfully infectious sense of humour. He was always a generous and inspirational teacher. He never lectured twice on exactly the same material, preferring to maintain as much freshness as possible in his delivery. It was impossible to hear him lecture and not to have a profound respect for the passionate way in which he often approached the ideas of others. Nor could anyone who came into professional contact with him fail to be struck by the passion with which he defended all that was precious to him in all his fields. His work was revered “as an absolutely rational man”, which I should be sorry not to know; perhaps some of his readers have now added volume.

Dummett had originally intended to publish the long-awaited sequel to the first book, which was intended to be called ‘The Origins of Analytic Philosophy’. Indeed, Dummett seemed to be constitutionally inclined to do anything and everything he desired. It is true that his sentences often contained ironies, but these were intended to have a certain effect on the listener. It is ironic that he was so preoccupied with the structure of the thoughts that they were conveying their meaning.

Born in London, Dummett was educated at Sandroyd school in Wiltshire. While attending Emmanuel College, Cambridge, he decided to study philosophy, and was awarded a first class degree in the Royal Artillery and Intelligence Corps in India and Malaya from 1943 to 1947. Upon graduating, he was elected to a fellowship at All Souls, Oxford. He remained there until 1974, after which he was elected Wykeham Professor of Logic and a fellow at New College. He retired in 1992.

The upshot would always be a beautifully written book, which I should be sorry not to know; perhaps some of his readers have now added volume. He also wrote Elements of Inductionism (1977), on the intuitionist school in logic and mathematics, the Logical Basis of Metaphysics (1954), a systematic statement of his own most basic ideas; The Origins of Analytic Philosophy (1993), in which he emphasised the significance of Frege to the analytic movement; Truth and the Possibility of Knowledge (2000), in which he laid the foundations for his own ideas, The Nature and Future of Philosophy (2010), in which he gave a succinct account of his conception of his discipline.

Dummett was uncompromising in his commitment to the ideas with which he defended all that was precious to him in all his fields. His work was accordingly devoted to the interpretation and exposition of the ideas, and he will be remembered for his exegesis of Frege as he will for his own seminal contributions to analytic philosophy.

Dummett was a staunch advocate of ‘analytic’ philosophy, a movement within philosophy that focuses on the structure of the thoughts that we use to express our ideas. He was also an influential authority on logic and mathematics, and was remembered for his exegesis of Frege as he will for his own seminal contributions to analytic philosophy.

With his family. Lady Ann Dummett passed away in 2012. A joint memorial service was held in New College Chapel in June 2012.
I met Michael Dummett in 1960, when I elected to spend the first months of some leave at Oxford. That was the beginning of a friendship that lasted more than 50 years, and the news of his death was devastating. At the beginning we differed strongly in philosophy (I began my stay at Oxford by giving a lecture titled “Do True Sentences Correspond to Reality” that was about as far from Dummettian views as it is possible to go); later, when I was writing what became Reason, Truth and History, I came very much under his influence. There were still disagreements, but he respected that understatement. Still more recently our philosophical trajectories began to diverge again, and I am saddened that there won’t be more exchanges between us.

Apart from realism and antirealism, our discussions touched on many topics, including the importance of fighting racism, an area in which Michael was exemplary, not just as a thinker, but as a human being. In addition to our philosophical conversations, Michael’s living nature, and his total informality are what I best remember. Michael Dummett cared about ideas, he cared about people, he cared about society, and he rightly connected caring about any one of the three and caring about the other two.

I met Michael Dummett only once, though I don’t think he met me. I was in a pub in Oxford sometime in the 1980s, and Dummett came in and asked the barman for “40 Benson & Hedges, please,” in a real smoker’s voice. I recognized him, of course. I was a graduate student in philosophy and a real philosophy nerd.

But I also recognized him because when I was a child I used to attend the same church as he did. I was brought up Catholic and my family went to the Dominican priory (Blackfriars) in Oxford. Blackfriars was politically liberal but liturgically conservative, a combination which I think suited Dummett. I have memories of him as a rather frightening figure, with his huge head and white hair stained yellow at the front. What sticks in my mind is that on Good Friday, when there was the traditional “veneration” (kissing) of the cross, Dummett would take off his shoes before joining the procession. This intense, uncompromising seriousness is also manifest in his philosophical writing.

Those who know him say he had a jovial side too. When I saw him in that pub many years later, I was waiting to be served while the barman found Dummett his cigarettes. Dummett pointed to a sign on the bar that said “draught milk.” “Draught milk?” “Is that a joke?” he chuckled. I smiled enthusiastically, but was completely lost for words. It was only later that I learned the story of how Dummett had met Wittgenstein at Elizabeth Anscombe’s house in Oxford. Wittgenstein had only said one thing to him: “Do you know where the milk is?” Dummett did not know.

I like the fact that these two meetings over milk linked me to Dummett, and Dummett to Wittgenstein.

Smoke and Milk
Tim Crane
University of Cambridge

Wittgenstein once complained that Russell suffered from “loss of problems.” No one could say that about Michael Dummett. He identified new problems, and they were always deep. His treatment of the justification of deduction initiated discussions continuing to this day. Depth and intensity were also present in his philosophical conversation. He devoted the same energy to discussion with students as he did to his public engagements with his famous contemporaries Quine and Davidson. He was unstinting with his time. I sometimes appeared at his home expecting an hour’s supervision session, stayed for lunch, talked philosophy while Michael drove his wife to the station, and returned for more, leaving only at dusk.

His well-intentioned advice could be formidable. He told me, as a 22 year-old, at the start of a series of supervisions on Frege, on whose work he was then the world expert: “I know the literature, and I’ll assume you’ve read it too: so just write new stuff for me each week.” The gap between Michael’s theory and his practical life was a reliable source of pleasure to his friends. He published original contributions to the theory of voting; yet he designed a system for a Wardenship election in Oxford that permitted – and produced – massive tactical voting. He published a book on writing style in philosophy, an enterprise described by one philosopher as comparable to Aldis Hux producing a book on etiquette. But his anti-racism work, and efforts on behalf of immigrants, was effective and much admired.

I visited Michael in Oxford four years ago, and he told me that he had written his last book of philosophy. I took the opportunity to say he should be pleased about what he had written in his life. He replied, “Yes, I certainly am!”
Right on Q

Oxford Philosophy and the Philosophy of Psychiatry

by Bill (K.W.M.) Fulford

As we approach next year's centenary of the publication of Karl Jaspers' Allgemeine Psychopathologie it is fitting that we should celebrate the many contributions of Oxford philosophy to the rapidly expanding field of philosophy of psychiatry.

There is much to celebrate. At the time of writing no fewer than fifteen Faculty members are currently working in areas directly or indirectly relevant to psychiatry and its underpinning sciences; a successful DPhil Scholarship generously funded by the Laces Trust; the publication of relevant to psychiatry and its underpinning sciences. A successful DPhil Faculty members are currently working in areas directly or indirectly relevant.

There is much to celebrate also in our track record. As the timeline opposite indicates, present and past faculty members have played key roles at each stage in the progress of the new field. Brian Farrell, Jonathan Glover, R.M. Hare, Rom Harré, Bill Newton-Smith, Kathleen Wilkes and Mary and Geoffrey Warnock were all in at the start in the 1970s and 1980s with path-breaking seminars, in bringing together for the first time philosophers not only with neuroscientists and clinicians but also with service users, were a vital ‘proof of product’ for practice: and Faculty members have continued to play leading roles in the increasingly dynamic interplay between theory and practice by which the philosophy of psychiatry has come to be characterised.

All this has not come out of the blue. Martin Davies in his article in the 2011 edition of this magazine reminded us of Oxford philosophy’s century-long tradition of inter-disciplinary work between philosophy and psychology. It was natural therefore that if the philosophy of psychiatry were to emerge anywhere, Oxford would be in the thick of it. But given Jaspers’ strong lead, it is perhaps surprising that (Continental phenomenology aside) contact between philosophy and psychiatry for much of the 20th century was to say the least sporadic. So, the question is, why? Why Oxford and why in the 1970s/1980s?

Part at least of the answer is suggested by the recent work of two American sociologists, Brian Uzzi and Jarrett Spiro, on the psychological context of creativity. Most creativity research has focussed on the psychology of individual genius. Uzzi and Spiro showed that, important as individual genius undoubtedly is, creative individuals rarely flourish unless they are part of a social group with the appropriate amount of a property they christened ‘Q’.

No fewer than fifteen Faculty members are currently working in areas directly or indirectly relevant to psychiatry and its underpinning sciences.

Time Line

1913-2013: 100 Years of Philosophy of Psychiatry

1913 J. L. Austin points to psychopathology as a rich resource for philosophers

1957 Anti-psychiatrists challenge empiricist medical conceptions of mental disorder

1959 First national conference, The Atom in Mind, Rhodes House, Oxford

1960s Four psychiatrists (Fulford, Gillett, Hundert and Reznek) complete philosophy DPhils

1970s/80s First joint conference of clinicians, philosophers and service users (Dallas)

1990s Values-based Practice developed - Fulford, Woodbridge, Williamson (Sainsbury Centre, London)

1994: First issue of Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology (PPP)

1994 First International Conference (in Spain)

1995 First joint research (McDonnell-Pew Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience, Oxford)

2000 Department of Health take up Values-based Practice

2001 The Oxford Centre for Neuroethics established

2002 Oxford Textbook of Philosophy and Psychiatry published

2003 Several international seminars in philosophy of psychiatry held in Oxford

2004 Appointment of Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Philosophy of Psychiatry, Matthew Parrott

2006 First Laces DPhil Scholarship awarded

2007 John Campbell, Martin Davies and others start publishing on delusion

2008 First Academic Department and Chair (at Warwick University)

2009 Values-based Practice developed - Fulford, Woodbridge, Williamson (Sainsbury Centre, London)

2010 First Laces DPhil Scholarship awarded

2011 First joint conference of physicians, philosophers and service users (Dallas)

2012 The Oxford Centre for Neuroethics established

2013 First international Oxford Summer School in Philosophy and Psychiatry. Three workshops on philosophy of psychiatry in collaboration with the Mental Health Foundation.
Q is a measure of inter-connectedness or social intimacy: too little inter-connectedness and creativity falls apart; too much inter-connectedness and creativity disappears into a black hole of mutual self-validation. Q thus requires a Goldilocks balance of in-group connectedness and out-group openness.

Q certainly describes the best of Oxford philosophy. The Goldilocks balance was evident in the 1970s and 1980s in the openness shown by Faculty members to DPhil students from Psychiatry; institutionally there were strong links between Philosophy and Psychiatry. The inter-disciplinary McDonnell-Pew seminars, similarly, were co-hosted with Warwick University and the Institute of Psychiatry in London. The current Faculty is again good on Q with many individuals working out-group as well as in-group and with established institutional partners representing expertise both in core scientific areas and at the cutting edge of contemporary mental health policy and practice.

The appropriate level of Q also nicely explains the truly exponential expansion of the philosophy of psychiatry in the 1990s. As the time line indicates many and diverse groups and individuals around the world, working in-group but also out-group, were important here. The philosophy of psychiatry has indeed been remarkable (if in no other ways) for the extent to which instead of breaking up into tribal factions, it has held together as a corporate venture. Yet attention to Q also carries a warning. For the very success of philosophy of psychiatry, with its remarkable expansion into so many and disparate areas, renders it now vulnerable to falling apart from lack of cohesive inter-connectedness. Electronic networking may help to restore the Goldilocks balance. But one way or another, what is now needed, so Uzzi and Spiro’s model suggests, is a node, a centre, a hub. It is our hope and expectation that Oxford has the right amount of Q to be that place.

Q in Action

Seminar Series

Meaning and Mindedness: Encounters between Philosophy and Psychoanalysis

Tavistock Clinic, London

November 2012 - June 2013

Edward Harcourt
Fellow of Keble College

The seminar, which has been addressed by several Oxford philosophers including Anita Avramides and Hanna Pickard, aims to get them to say it in one another’s presence, in a language intelligible beyond their own professional constituency – and to try and make something usable by both philosophers and psychoanalysts.

To register your interest in this summer school please email conferences@conted.ox.ac.uk

Residential and non-residential options are available.

Summer School

Philosophy and Psychiatry: Mind, Value, and Mental Health

St Catherine’s College, Oxford

14 - 19 July 2013

Presented by the Faculty of Philosophy and the Department for Continuing Education, this event will explore the areas in which the philosophy of mind and ethics come into contact with issues concerning mental health.

The summer school will be led by members of Oxford’s Faculty of Philosophy: Martin Davies Bill Fulford Edward Harcourt

International guest speakers include: Chris Frith (UCL) George Graham (Georgia State University) Terence Irwin (University of Oxford) Giovanni Stanghellini (University of Chieti)

To register your interest in this summer school please email conferences@conted.ox.ac.uk

Residential and non-residential options are available.

Meaning and Mindedness: Encounters between Philosophy and Psychoanalysis will run at the Tavistock Clinic, part of the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, London, from November 2012-June 2013, usually on the last Friday of the month.

For further details see: www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/CPD15
Over the past few years, recent Oxford Philosophy DPhil and current Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Toby Ord, and current DPhil student Will Crouch have been at the forefront of two initiatives that combine philosophical reflection with their enthusiasm for promoting charitable giving.

**Giving What We Can**

Toby Ord

In Michaelmas of 2004 I stood apprehensively in the foyer to the Philosophy Faculty, reading through the list of BPhil examination questions that had just been pinned to the noticeboard. Amidst a group of very theoretical questions for the Ethics paper, was the following:

’Ought I to forego some luxury whenever I do so? Does this imply that we are morally required to have no luxuries in our lives? Phrased so, it seemed difficult to deny. However, I could see the connection to Peter Singer’s work on the ethics of global poverty. We in rich countries often spend money on luxuries that could instead be used to save people’s lives in poor countries. Is it wrong to do so? Does this imply that we are morally required to have no luxuries in our lives? I chose this as one of my two Ethics questions and as I answered it, I was drawn into the wider discussion on the ethics of global poverty. I also explored the academic research on the effectiveness of aid to see how strong the empirical premise was. It turns out that there are very wide discrepancies in the effectiveness of different aid interventions. Some interventions are ten times as effective as others. Some are ten times as effective as that. Some ten times as effective again, and the very best are ten times as effective as this. By donating to the most effective interventions, one’s money can achieve ten thousand times the benefit that it would achieve if spent on the less effective interventions, and more than ten thousand times as much benefit if spent on oneself.

I had always been interested in ethics for the purpose of finding out how to live my life and so this combination of philosophical and empirical research on poverty led me to change my behaviour. I decided to donate all of my income above a fixed threshold to help people living in developing countries. As I talked with my fellow students about this decision, several of them thought that this was the right response to the competing theoretical arguments and decided to join me in this endeavour.

I honed these ideas during my BPhil and DPhil, and founded an organization called Giving What We Can, dedicated to effectively fighting poverty. At its core is a society of members who have made a lifetime pledge to donate at least 10% of their income to wherever they each think it can do the most to help people in developing countries. Our volunteers also perform research on the ethics of poverty and on which charities are the most effective, sharing this with the public and advising governments and NGOs.

Two years later, Giving What We Can has more than 200 members, pledging to donate a combined £46 million over their careers. While our members and volunteers come from all walks of life, academic philosophy is very well represented, including particularly prominent members such as Peter Singer and Thomas Pogge, as well as a host of members and active volunteers from the JCRs, MCRs, and SCRs of Oxford. I think that Giving What We Can serves as an example of what philosophers can achieve when putting theory into practice, and I hope that many others will join in, or develop their own initiatives around other important philosophical ideas.

**80,000 Hours**

**High Impact Ethical Careers**

Will Crouch

“Make a Difference.” That’s a common slogan in the public discourse around ‘ethical’ careers. But it’s an odd slogan, in two ways. First, it doesn’t tell you to make a positive difference – literally speaking, one can make a difference by killing someone; but that doesn’t make murder ethical. (I should note, though, that the British army advertises itself with the slogan ‘make a difference’ – perhaps exploiting this loophole.) Second, and more importantly, the ‘a’ seems strange. When there are so many ways to ‘make a difference’ in the world, shouldn’t we focus on what’s best? I tried to take this question seriously, and asked myself: what careers enable one to make the most difference?

As part of my research at Oxford, I began giving lectures on the topic and wrote a paper addressing this question. What I had to say was somewhat controversial. Most ethical careers advice involves encouraging graduates to work for charities or environmentally-minded firms, through which one is directly helping others. In general, however, these are relatively low-paying jobs, in which one has little influence; and so one effect of this advice is that it’s the self-interested and ruthless that take positions of power and wealth – exactly those positions that aren’t normally regarded as ‘ethical’ – so that they have more power to do good.

I found that many students, as well as those at the Oxford Careers Service, got excited about this idea of a ‘high impact ethical career’. So I founded an organization, called 80,000 Hours (roughly the number of hours we typically spending working in life), in order to provide a community for those that wished to pursue such a career. The organization turned out to be far more successful than I had expected. There was a major launch in Oxford and a succession of events; I was interviewed by John Humphrys on the Today program and featured on BBC news on-line; and I was invited by Peter Singer to speak for his class on Practical Ethics at Princeton.

80,000 Hours now has over 80 members, all of whom are putting these ideas into practice. Some are entering the city or pursuing tech entrepreneurship, generally with a pledge to donate 50% or more of their earnings. Some are seeking positions of influence, such as within politics. Others are pursuing high value research.

A question I often get asked is: what about my path? Can philosophy be a high impact ethical career? Perhaps surprisingly, I think it can. We know very little about what the best ways of doing good in the world are. We know that we face many problems – climate change, global poverty, animal suffering – but very little work has been done on how to prioritise these problems in order to find what is most important; and even less has been done on how one can most effectively lead an altruistic life. As a philosopher one can address these questions and others of equal importance; and, especially at Oxford, one has the ability to spread these ideas among the brightest young minds in the country. It’s a powerful opportunity.
I
t is well-known that at the turn of the twentieth century, Oxford was awash in philosophical idealism. It is
well-known that the same was true of universities and colleges in the United States
in 1950, the historian Harry Stummmore called pragmatism "almost the official philosophy of America." He may have
been right about mid-century America, but for almost 250 years before that, America had an official philosophy.
It was idealism. And at the turn of the twentieth century in particular, idealism
was, as one well-placed observer put it, "in the ascendent everywhere." It was in 1913 that
Harvard's Josiah Royce came to Manchester College to deliver his Hibbert Lectures. He was
an absolute idealist entering friendly territory, and you might suppose that his time in Oxford
was a relief of sorts from pragmatist Harvard. It was, as one well-placed observer put it, "in the
ascendent at my own university of Harvard." In view of idealism's turn-of-the-
century predominance, it isn't surprising that at first, pragmatists on both sides of the Atlantic,
most notably Oxford's F.C.S. Schiller, put pragmatism forward as a form of idealism—what they called personal idealism.

My Hibbert lectures were an exploration of the idealist tradition in America, from
its beginnings in the early eighteenth century (in the unpublished papers of the young Jonathan
Edwards, a student at the parnion college in New Haven whose reaction to Locke's Essay
concerning Human Understanding was much the same as the reaction of the young George
Berkeley) to its petering out—almost within what was, by then, "professional" philosophy—
in the middle of the twentieth century. "Petering out" may not be the best description, because there was something glorious in its ending. The last of the idealists I talked about—"the idealist or body-
shattering consequences of the doctrine of continuous creation. Most of us first encounter
the doctrine as readers of Descartes. "A mind, a soul," Descartes wrote in the Thirteenth Meditation, "can be divided into countless parts, each completely independent of the other, so that it does not follow from the fact that I existed a little while ago that I must exist now, unless there is some cause which as it were creates me afresh at this moment—that is, which preserves me." Jonathan Edwards
was a fiercely imaginative metaphysician and the greatest English-language writer, before
T.H. Green's time absolute idealism has been decidedly in the ascendent at Oxford. It is
in the ascendent at my own university of Harvard. In view of idealism's turn-of-the-
century predominance, it isn't surprising that at first, pragmatists on both sides of the Atlantic,
most notably Oxford's F.C.S. Schiller, put pragmatism forward as a form of idealism—what they called personal idealism.

My Hibbert lectures were an exploration of the idealist tradition in America, from
its beginnings in the early eighteenth century (in the unpublished papers of the young Jonathan
Edwards, a student at the parnion college in New Haven whose reaction to Locke's Essay
concerning Human Understanding was much the same as the reaction of the young George
Berkeley) to its petering out—almost within what was, by then, "professional" philosophy—
in the middle of the twentieth century. "Petering out" may not be the best description, because there was something glorious in its ending. The last of the idealists I talked about—"the idealist or body-
shattering consequences of the doctrine of continuous creation. Most of us first encounter
the doctrine as readers of Descartes. "A mind, a soul," Descartes wrote in the Thirteenth Meditation, "can be divided into countless parts, each completely independent of the other, so that it does not follow from the fact that I existed a little while ago that I must exist now, unless there is some cause which as it were creates me afresh at this moment—that is, which preserves me." Jonathan Edwards
was a fiercely imaginative metaphysician and the greatest English-language writer, before
T.H. Green's time absolute idealism has been decidedly in the ascendent at Oxford. It is
in the ascendent at my own university of Harvard. In view of idealism's turn-of-the-
century predominance, it isn't surprising that at first, pragmatists on both sides of the Atlantic,
most notably Oxford's F.C.S. Schiller, put pragmatism forward as a form of idealism—what they called personal idealism.

My Hibbert lectures were an exploration of the idealist tradition in America, from
its beginnings in the early eighteenth century (in the unpublished papers of the young Jonathan
Edwards, a student at the parnion college in New Haven whose reaction to Locke's Essay
concerning Human Understanding was much the same as the reaction of the young George
Berkeley) to its petering out—almost within what was, by then, "professional" philosophy—
in the middle of the twentieth century. "Petering out" may not be the best description, because there was something glorious in its ending. The last of the idealists I talked about—"the idealist or body-
shattering consequences of the doctrine of continuous creation. Most of us first encounter
the doctrine as readers of Descartes. "A mind, a soul," Descartes wrote in the Thirteenth Meditation, "can be divided into countless parts, each completely independent of the other, so that it does not follow from the fact that I existed a little while ago that I must exist now, unless there is some cause which as it were creates me afresh at this moment—that is, which preserves me." Jonathan Edwards
was a fiercely imaginative metaphysician and the greatest English-language writer, before
T.H. Green's time absolute idealism has been decidedly in the ascendent at Oxford. It is
in the ascendent at my own university of Harvard. In view of idealism's turn-of-the-
century predominance, it isn't surprising that at first, pragmatists on both sides of the Atlantic,
most notably Oxford's F.C.S. Schiller, put pragmatism forward as a form of idealism—what they called personal idealism.

My Hibbert lectures were an exploration of the idealist tradition in America, from
its beginnings in the early eighteenth century (in the unpublished papers of the young Jonathan
Edwards, a student at the parnion college in New Haven whose reaction to Locke's Essay
concerning Human Understanding was much the same as the reaction of the young George
Berkeley) to its petering out—almost within what was, by then, "professional" philosophy—
in the middle of the twentieth century. "Petering out" may not be the best description, because there was something glorious in its ending. The last of the idealists I talked about—"the idealist or body-
shattering consequences of the doctrine of continuous creation. Most of us first encounter
the doctrine as readers of Descartes. "A mind, a soul," Descartes wrote in the Thirteenth Meditation, "can be divided into countless parts, each completely independent of the other, so that it does not follow from the fact that I existed a little while ago that I must exist now, unless there is some cause which as it were creates me afresh at this moment—that is, which preserves me." Jonathan Edwards
was a fiercely imaginative metaphysician and the greatest English-language writer, before
T.H. Green's time absolute idealism has been decidedly in the ascendent at Oxford. It is
in the ascendent at my own university of Harvard. In view of idealism's turn-of-the-
century predominance, it isn't surprising that at first, pragmatists on both sides of the Atlantic,
most notably Oxford's F.C.S. Schiller, put pragmatism forward as a form of idealism—what they called personal idealism.

My Hibbert lectures were an exploration of the idealist tradition in America, from
its beginnings in the early eighteenth century (in the unpublished papers of the young Jonathan
Edwards, a student at the parnion college in New Haven whose reaction to Locke's Essay
concerning Human Understanding was much the same as the reaction of the young George
Berkeley) to its petering out—almost within what was, by then, "professional" philosophy—
in the middle of the twentieth century. "Petering out" may not be the best description, because there was something glorious in its ending. The last of the idealists I talked about—"the idealist or body-
shattering consequences of the doctrine of continuous creation. Most of us first encounter
the doctrine as readers of Descartes. "A mind, a soul," Descartes wrote in the Thirteenth Meditation, "can be divided into countless parts, each completely independent of the other, so that it does not follow from the fact that I existed a little while ago that I must exist now, unless there is some cause which as it were creates me afresh at this moment—that is, which preserves me." Jonathan Edwards
was a fiercely imaginative metaphysician and the greatest English-language writer, before
T.H. Green's time absolute idealism has been decidedly in the ascendent at Oxford. It is
in the ascendent at my own university of Harvard. In view of idealism's turn-of-the-
century predominance, it isn't surprising that at first, pragmatists on both sides of the Atlantic,
most notably Oxford's F.C.S. Schiller, put pragmatism forward as a form of idealism—what they called personal idealism.

My Hibbert lectures were an exploration of the idealist tradition in America, from
its beginnings in the early eighteenth century (in the unpublished papers of the young Jonathan
Edwards, a student at the parnion college in New Haven whose reaction to Locke's Essay
concerning Human Understanding was much the same as the reaction of the young George
Berkeley) to its petering out—almost within what was, by then, "professional" philosophy—
in the middle of the twentieth century. "Petering out" may not be the best description, because there was something glorious in its ending. The last of the idealists I talked about—"the idealist or body-
shattering consequences of the doctrine of continuous creation. Most of us first encounter
the doctrine as readers of Descartes. "A mind, a soul," Descartes wrote in the Thirteenth Meditation, "can be divided into countless parts, each completely independent of the other, so that it does not follow from the fact that I existed a little while ago that I must exist now, unless there is some cause which as it were creates me afresh at this moment—that is, which preserves me." Jonathan Edwards
was a fiercely imaginative metaphysician and the greatest English-language writer, before
T.H. Green's time absolute idealism has been decidedly in the ascendent at Oxford. It is
in the ascendent at my own university of Harvard. In view of idealism's turn-of-the-
century predominance, it isn't surprising that at first, pragmatists on both sides of the Atlantic,
most notably Oxford's F.C.S. Schiller, put pragmatism forward as a form of idealism—what they called personal idealism.

My Hibbert lectures were an exploration of the idealist tradition in America, from
its beginnings in the early eighteenth century (in the unpublished papers of the young Jonathan
Edwards, a student at the parnion college in New Haven whose reaction to Locke's Essay
concerning Human Understanding was much the same as the reaction of the young George
Berkeley) to its petering out—almost within what was, by then, "professional" philosophy—
in the middle of the twentieth century. "Petering out" may not be the best description, because there was something glorious in its ending. The last of the idealists I talked about—"the idealist or body-
shattering consequences of the doctrine of continuous creation. Most of us first encounter
the doctrine as readers of Descartes. "A mind, a soul," Descartes wrote in the Thirteenth Meditation, "can be divided into countless parts, each completely independent of the other, so that it does not follow from the fact that I existed a little while ago that I must exist now, unless there is some cause which as it were creates me afresh at this moment—that is, which preserves me." Jonathan Edwards
was a fiercely imaginative metaphysician and the greatest English-language writer, before
T.H. Green's time absolute idealism has been decidedly in the ascendent at Oxford. It is
in the ascendent at my own university of Harvard. In view of idealism's turn-of-the-
century predominance, it isn't surprising that at first, pragmatists on both sides of the Atlantic,
most notably Oxford's F.C.S. Schiller, put pragmatism forward as a form of idealism—what they called personal idealism.
Student Life

A Year in the Mist

DPhil student, Andrew Stephenson, writes about studying at the Stiftung Maximilaneum in Munich, Germany.

In October 2010 I arrived in Munich as a visiting student at the Stiftung Maximilaneum in association with Ludwig Maximilians University. And here, speaking both academically and personally, I spent one of the most rewarding and transformative years of my life.

Spending time on the continent during graduate school is not something that is particularly common among philosophy students at Oxford. Perhaps this is because so many of us come from abroad anyway, perhaps it is because analytic philosophy is still seen as primarily an Anglophone discipline. Whatever the reason, bucking this trend offers clear attractions. What initially attracted me was the opportunity it provided for learning a foreign language. In my case I had a curricular motivation for doing so, namely my interest in Kant. I had some German from school and from weekly classes with the Oxford University Language Centre. Enough to understand basic translational and etymological issues concerning Kant’s technical vocabulary, by no means enough to read his works in the original or to partake actively in philosophical conversation. And yet I had already discovered one highly significant instance of the dangers of approaching the history of philosophy in translation. The most central term of art in the Critical system, ‘Erkenntnis’, has traditionally been rendered into English as ‘knowledge’. But unlike knowledge, Erkenntnis is not necessarily factive. I needed to know more.

And of course it almost goes without saying – almost though not quite, since native English speakers are notoriously guilty of forgetting it – that learning a foreign language is enormously valuable regardless of such specific applications. The amount one learns about one’s own language. The intellectual gratification to be found in grasping grammatical rules or developing a feel for the flexible conventions of syntax. The sheer freshness of doing something so entirely different from philosophy – hard thinking is minimal in the day-to-day practice of language learning and answers abound that enjoy universal consensus. Above all, the joy of becoming acquainted with another culture, so similar and yet so different from one’s own.

In Bavaria this involves exactly what is advertised: beer, sausages, Lederhosen (I honestly own a pair), and mountains. But it also involves much more: music, comedy, architecture, and the German university system. It is very different from ours. One example of this is the organization of departments into Lehrstühle – subject-specific chairs. This ensures that those working in similar areas within a given department are not only aware of each other’s existence but often share the same work space. In my experience things are rather more haphazard in Oxford. This is not to say that collective research doesn’t occur here. Of course it does and there are many fantastic examples. But it is not something that is built in to the very structure of the Faculty, and while some areas do not suffer from this, some, including mine, do. It is a great regret that it was all too slowly that I became aware of the rich wealth of interest in and knowledge of Kant that is on offer in the Oxford philosophical community, with the result that only very recently have I managed to contrive a situation in which we come together on a regular basis. Arriving at LMU this kind of integration, which can be so fruitful, stimulating and pleasurable, occurred more or less immediately and automatically.

Another notable difference, though one I am much more ambivalent about, is the requirement in the German system that immediately after the doctoral thesis, if one is to become eligible to apply for any permanent position, one must complete what is in effect a second thesis – the Habilitation, slightly longer and on a different topic. This seems like the very antithesis of analytic philosophy’s move towards specialization and the article-based dissemination of research, not to mention how detrimental such a requirement must surely be to the importing of young talent from other countries.

So, with both similarities and differences along the way, I had a great time and I significantly improved my language skills and the breadth and depth of my philosophical understanding. With both similarities and differences along the way, I had a great time and I significantly improved my language skills and the breadth and depth of my philosophical understanding. More concretely, my time in Germany and the interests I developed while there led quite directly to the position I now hold, which is Laming Junior Fellow at The Queen’s College. This is a JRF-type position reserved for those whose studies are somehow connected to a living foreign language. It is not normally given to philosophers. With the job market as it is now and the astronomically competitive conditions at the level of permanent positions inevitably trickling down to infect the post-doctoral level positions, any widenings of eligibility can be enormously valuable. It certainly was for me.

However, having said all this by way of extolling the virtues of spending a year abroad – and I really cannot say enough in this vein – I feel I must briefly draw attention to one potential pitfall, which is that of becoming distant from one’s supervisor. This happened to me and it takes time and effort to set right. To a certain extent it is inevitable. To a certain extent it can be offset by all the new people there are to talk to. But no one other than yourself knows your thesis like your supervisor and the more they have to say about it the better it will be.
Recent scholarship from Oxford philosophers

David Wallace
The Emergent Multiverse: Quantum Interpretation (OUP, 2012)

Bill Mander has written the first ever synoptic history of British Idealism, the philosophical school which dominated English-language philosophy from the 1860s through to the early years of the following century. Offering detailed examination of the origins, growth, development, and decline of this mode of thinking, Bill restores to its proper place this now almost wholly forgotten period of philosophical history, and provides a full-length history of this vital school for those wishing to fill a gap in their knowledge of the history of British Philosophy.

Frank Artzenius
Space, Time and Stuff (OUP, 2012)

Frank Artzenius presents a series of radical new ideas about the structure of space and time. Along the way, he examines some non-standard views about the structure of spacetime and its inhabitants, including the idea that space and time are pointless, the idea that quantum mechanics is a completely local theory, the idea that antimatter are just particles travelling back in time, and the idea that time has no structure whatsoever. The main thrust of the book, however, is that there are good reasons to believe that spaces other than spacetime exist, and that it is the existence of these additional spaces that allows one to reduce all of physics to geometry.

Volkmar Hallbach
Axiomatic Theories of Truth (CUP, 2011)

All the centre of the traditional discussion of truth is the question of how truth is defined. Recent research, especially with the development of definitional accounts of truth, has tended to take truth as an undefined primitive notion governed by axioms, while the liar paradox and cognate paradoxes pose problems for certain seemingly natural axioms for truth. Volkmar Hallbach examines the most important axiomatizations of truth, explores their properties and shows how the logical results impinge on the philosophical topics related to truth.

A. W. Moore

In this book Adrian Moore is concerned with the history of metaphysics since Descartes. Taking as its definition of metaphysics ‘the most general attempt to make sense of things’, it charts the evolution of this enterprise through various compelling conceptions of its possibility, scope and limits. Adrian’s study refutes the tired old cliché that there is some unbridgeable gulf between analytic philosophy and philosophy of other kinds. It also advances its own distinctive and compelling conception of what metaphysics is and why it matters, exploring how it can help us to cope with continually changing demands on our humanity.

Back to School

In addition to their more scholarly works, Oxford philosophers often write more accessible books. Readers may enjoy brushing up their philosophy with some recent offerings.

T. J. Mawson

How can we be free if everything is determined by factors beyond our control, stretching back in time to the Big Bang? The only alternative to determinism seems to be indeterminism, but isn’t this to admit a randomness that hinders us from being the authors of our actions? Tim Mawson’s introductory book looks at how much of the structure of our everyday judgments can survive the arguments behind such thoughts, including an up-to-date overview of the contemporary debates.

Katherine Morris
Starting with Merleau-Ponty (Continuum, 2011)

Katherine Morris leads the reader through an overview of the development of the thought of Merleau-Ponty, one of the most important philosophers of the 20th century. With coverage of the full range of Merleau-Ponty’s ideas and his relationship to major influences such as Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre, the book explores his contributions to phenomenology, existentialism, empiricism, objective thought and his vision of human reality and the crucial concept of the lived-body.

Marianna Talbot
Bioethics: An Introduction (CUP, 2012)

An introductory text which clearly explains bioethical theories and their philosophical foundations. Over 250 activities introduce topics for personal reflection, and discussion points encourage students to think for themselves. Each chapter features boxes providing factual information and outlining the philosophical background, along with detailed case studies. Accompanying podcasts by the author, along with a range of extra resources for students and instructors, are available at www.cambridge.org/bioethics.