OXFORD PHILOSOPHY

2013

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WELCOME

Christopher Shields
Professor of Classical Philosophy and Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall

'The empires of the future,' contended Churchill, 'are the empires of the mind.' Offered in a different time and context at a different university, Harvard at the end of the Second World War, Churchill's remark remains apposite. Indeed, it finds a certain urgency of application in Oxford these many years later, and most acutely here, now in the Faculty of Philosophy. In these days of galloping demands for outcomes and assessments, for relevancy metrics and impact statements, we are called upon to justify our continued academic existence by extending our fingers and pointing to what it is that we actually produce.

Such demands are in one way fair and appropriate and in another way not. We find ourselves struggling on an uneven playing field, to be sure, if we allow ourselves to be shackled with an unduly constrained conception of production. Philosophy is, after all, at least in part a theoretical discipline seeking to understand and assess, to reflect in a general way on the underpinnings of our policies and practices, to elicit and probe tacit governing assumptions, and to lay bare patterns of thought for inspection and critical scrutiny. None of this, it must be said, produces anything approaching a tangible, graspable object. Why, then, is this activity worth the support it seeks? Where, when requested, can Oxford Philosophy point?

Some philosophers like to think that philosophical activity is worthwhile simply because it is. They agree with Aristotle, who observed already in antiquity that it falls first and foremost to the philosopher to seek theoretical knowledge of the most general and elevated sort, the kind of knowledge sought simply because its is worth knowing, because higher learning is our highest human attainment. They thus regard such requests as misguided: philosophical knowledge is revealed to be good not in view of its subordination to some further end beyond itself, as justified by the role it plays in the conduct of life or in the production of some otherwise useful, readily countable widget; it is good by dint of its own intrinsic character and in no other way.

Other philosophers, including Aristotle himself in another mode, are not so sanguine. Either because they despair of such knowledge, or simply because their interests and inclinations lead them in the direction of practice and policy, they glide naturally into interaction with disciplines where value decisions find immediate application with undeniable consequences: medicine, climate change, law, politics, economics, cognitive ethology, resource management, in the direction, generally, of practical and professional ethics. Others not so engaged by normative questions move instead to ally themselves with fields where the discipline and critical rigor of philosophy has a special contribution to make: psychology, physics, theology, mathematics, computer science, cognitive science, decision theory, theoretical biology, all of whose theoretical underpinnings, philosophers like to believe, are continuous with the traditional preoccupations of philosophical inquiry.

As one sees so richly attested in these pages, Oxford Philosophy comprises all these activities, some purely theoretical and others engaged, some thoroughly normative, others less so, and still others not at all, some outward-looking and many others, as is the way of philosophy, more intensely self-reflexive and self-scrutinizing.

One has the sense, in surveying this marvelous range of activity, that Oxford Philosophy today would be in some ways unrecognizable to the Oxford philosophers of Churchill's day. In another way, though, it seems likely that our forebears would find something reassuringly familiar in the current scene: Oxford Philosophy now, as Oxford Philosophy then, recognizes, as Churchill intimated, that the empires we build are invariably rooted in the empires we are minded to build. Oxford Philosophy produces many things, in fact, but core among them is the kind of emancipated mind best suited to discern which empires are worth building and why.

NEWS

Professor John Hawthorne Elected FBA

We are delighted to announce that John Hawthorne (Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy and Fellow of Magdalen College) has been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy.

John was one of the new fellows elected in July, each of them a highly distinguished academic, recognised for their outstanding research and work across the humanities and social sciences. Fellows play a vital role in sustaining the Academy's activities – helping select researchers and research projects for funding support, contributing to policy reports and speaking at the Academy's public events. John's work spans a variety of areas of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of language. He is author of numerous important articles in journals and edited volumes, and two very highly regarded books, *Metaphysical Essays* (2006) and *Knowledge and Lotteries* (2004).

Oxford Philosophers On Air In France

In June 2013 four Oxford philosophers appeared in conversation with Adèle Van Reeth on *Les Nouveaux chemins de la connaissance*, which is broadcast by the radio station France Culture.

Cécile Fabre discussed moral and political philosophy, Timothy Williamson philosophy of language, Peter Hacker philosophy of mind, and Anita Avramides talked about Locke's theory of knowledge.

Podcasts of the broadcasts (in French) are available at **www.franceculture.fr/emission-les-nouveaux-chemins-de-la-connaissance-12-13**

IN MEMORIAM

We are very saddened to report the death of Acer Nethercott, former Oxford Philosophy student and member of the British Olympic Rowing team.

Acer studied Physics and Philosophy at University College and, after taking the BPhil, went on to complete a DPhil in the philosophy of language on the semantics of complex demonstratives. Whilst at Oxford he coxed the University men's rowing eight to two Boat Race victories and won a silver medal at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, when his crew finished narrowly behind the reigning champions, Canada. He lost his fight against glioblastoma multiforme, an aggressive form of brain cancer, in January of this year.

Acer Nethercott
(1977 – 2013)

Oxford Philosophy Trials Gender Equality Charter Mark

Oxford Philosoophy is one of 23 Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences departments that are taking part in a trial of the The Gender Equality Charter Mark, a scheme run by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU).

The scheme aims to address gender inequalities and imbalance, in particular the underrepresentation of women in senior roles. The Faculty's involvement is part of our broader effort to respond to an increased awareness among philosophers of the particular difficulties that face women in the profession.

A self-assessment team consisting of six faculty members will work to produce a submission to the ECU in April in anticipation of receiving bronze level accreditation. In future we hope to progress to silver and gold awards, which are acheived through demonstration of sustained progress and innovation over a period of years.

Conference: Feminism In/And Philosophy

Oxford Philosophy is proud to be hosting, in conjunction with All Souls College, Feminism In/And Philosophy, a Society for Women in Philosophy UK conference.

Organized by four members of the Faculty, the conference, which will take place **March 27-29 2014**, will explore a range of contemporary approaches to the often difficult relationship betweem feminism and philosophy. Keynote speakers include leading philosophers **Michèle Le Doeuff, Rae Langton** and **Jennifer Saul.** A number of additional speakers will be selected via a call for papers. Interest in the conference has already exceeded expectations, with a waiting list in operation for those wishing to attend.

For more details, see **http://oxfordswip2014.tumblr.com**

Anger and Forgiveness: John Locke Lectures 2014

We are delighted to announce that Martha Nussbaum, Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, will give the John Locke Lectures in Trinity Term 2014 on the topic *Anger and Forgiveness.*

The lectures will take place at 5pm on Wednesdays May 7, 14, 21 and 28, and June 4 and 11 in the Grove Auditorium at Magdalen College. They are free and all are welcome.

Professor Nussbaum is famous for her work in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, political philosophy, feminism, and ethics, including animal rights. Her publications include *The Fragility of Goodness* (1986), *Sex and Social Justice* (1998), *The Sleep of Reason* (2002), *Hiding From Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (2004), *Animal Rights* (2004, ed. with Cass Sunstein), and *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (2006).

NEW PEOPLE

We are delighted to announce the arrival in
Michaelmas Term 2013 of six new tutorial fellows

Philipp Koralus
St. Catherine's

Phillip joins us as the first Fulford-Clarendon University Lecturer in Philosophy of Mind from Washington University in St Louis where he was James S. McDonnell Postdoctoral Fellow in the Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology Program. After studying philosophy and a host of other subjects at Pomona College in sunny Southern California, he completed a PhD in Philosophy and Neuroscience at Princeton University. His research focuses on the role questions play in cognition, particularly in attention, reasoning and decision making.
For more information, see: www.koralus.net

Tom Sinclair
Wadham

Tom joins us from a lectureship at the University of Manchester, prior to which he was a college lecturer at LMH. He read Philosophy and French at New College, after which he went to University College London to study for an MPhil and then a PhD in Philosophy. His primary research focus is on political philosophy (particularly the nature of justice and the philosophical foundations of the state), although he has written on topics in ethics, and has interests in the philosophy of mind, aesthetics, and metaphysics.

Ian Phillips
St Anne's

Ian joins us from a lectureship at University College, London. However, he has been closely connected to Oxford for a long time, first as an undergraduate and BPhil student at Magdalen (before leaving to do his PhD at UCL), and later as an Examination Fellow at All Souls (before returning to UCL as a Lecturer). His research is focused on philosophy of mind and cognitive science.

James Grant
Exeter

Jim joins us from a lectureship at Birkbeck, prior to which he spent two years as a Departmental Lecturer in Oxford and Fellow at The Queen's College. He did his BA in Philosophy and English at Queen's University in Ontario, before doing the BPhil and DPhil at Balliol. His research has focused on questions in aesthetics and the philosophy of language about metaphor, art criticism, and imagination, all of which are treated in his new book, *The Critical Imagination* (OUP, 2013). Other interests include ethics, Greek philosophy, and early modern philosophy.

James Studd
Lady Margaret Hall

James grew up in Brighton. Since coming up to Merton to read for a BA in Mathematics and Philosophy, he has lived in Oxford, and studied and taught philosophy here, for eleven of the last twelve years. He moved to Corpus Christi to undertake the BPhil and DPhil, focusing on issues in logic and the philosophy of mathematics surrounding "absolute generality". More recently, he was part of a major AHRC-funded project, run by Volker Halbach.

Karen Margrethe Nielsen
Somerville

After spending a decade as a student and teacher of philosophy in her home town Trondheim, Norway, Karen Margrethe left for Ithaca, New York on a Fulbright Fellowship where she completed her PhD in ancient philosophy at Cornell University five years later. She then taught at the University of Western Ontario, Canada, as Assistant and Associate Professor of Philosophy, but has also held appointments at Trinity College and the Faculty of Philosophy, Cambridge, and most recently at St Catherine's College, Oxford. Karen Margrethe's research is in ancient philosophy where she has focused on topics in Aristotle's theory of decision and practical deliberation. She also has a particular interest in the reception of Aristotle's ethics in Hellenistic thought.

PHILOSOPHY & PSYCHIATRY
Mind, Value and Mental Health

As featured in *Oxford Philosophy* 2012, the Faculty, in conjunction with Oxford's Department for Continuing Education, recently hosted its first Philosophy and Psychiatry summer school. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow **Matthew Parrott** was the Academic Coordinator.

THE 2012 summer school Philosophy and Psychiatry: Mind, Value, and Mental Health explored a wide range of philosophical questions surrounding mental health. The program drew over thirty participants from around the globe, from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds. Sessions, which ranged from two to three hours, were led by combinations of Oxford philosophers and academic psychiatrists.

The tone for the summer school was clearly set by its opening speaker, Anita Avramides. Anita stressed the importance of philosophers and clinicians not talking past one another and heartily encouraged participants to seriously engage with each other and with the course instructors in order to learn from the various disciplines represented at the summer school. The value of collaboration was further emphasized by Peter Hobson, one of the other instructors for the opening session on 'Self and Other'. Hobson forcefully argued that both philosophy and psychiatry might easily be led down 'dead ends' if they ignored the insights of the other, a consequence he believed the summer school was designed to avoid. This sort of enthusiasm for well-integrated, truly interdisciplinary work was sustained throughout the entire week, which made the summer school a rather unique success. Some highlights of the program that seem to have been especially enjoyed by the students included: Hanna Pickard (Oxford) and Anna

Motz (Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust) on 'Self-Harm'; Joseph Schear (Oxford), Katherine Morris (Oxford), and Gareth Owen (Institute of Psychiatry) on 'Phenomenology and Mental Health'; and Tom Douglas (Oxford) and Guy Kahane (Oxford) on 'Morality, the Brain, and Enhancement'. In addition to the instructional sessions, however, students and faculty were treated to four keynote lectures from Terry Irwin, Chris Frith, Giovanni Stanghellini and George Graham. The summer school also hosted a book launch for the recently published *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Psychiatry*, an impressive collection of over 70 chapters, many written by Oxford philosophers.

It was very difficult not to feel a genuine sense of excitement throughout the week. Students coming from philosophical backgrounds were thrilled to hear clinical practitioners share various stories about their firsthand experiences with psychiatric patients and to learn about cutting edge research in psychiatry. Similarly, those coming from a more clinical background repeatedly expressed joy at having a chance to reflect more philosophically on their work, something they rarely have an opportunity to do. All parties involved felt that it was a very special week, a feeling nicely expressed by students from Australia and the US when they were asked whether they would make the rather long trip to Oxford again — they replied that there is nothing else like this in the world.

PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVE
Dr David Hines
Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne

I HAVE been working as a psychiatrist for two decades with children, adolescents and adults in both the public and private health sector in Australia. I have long been aware that I deal daily with complex — sometimes intractable — ethical and conceptual conundrums in my work, and with considerable uncertainty; and that I attempt to negotiate my way as best I can drawing on experience, thoughtful deliberation, intuition, and discussion with others. I have at times found it difficult to clearly articulate and explain important aspects of my practice in the field in which I am immersed. When a colleague last year mentioned that the summer school was being planned, I thought perhaps I would attend in order to see if a philosophical approach might be enlightening.

In the event, we were treated to a feast of philosophical perspectives presented by both philosophers and clinician-philosophers, ranging from encounters with the ideas of the ancients to modern phenomenology and the analytical traditions. This gathering and juxtaposition of diverse philosophical elements turned out to be fruitful and illuminating. An example which comes to mind is Professor Terry Irwin's lecture — on the first day — about Plato and Aristotle on moral virtue. At the time of its delivery I found myself questioning whether such an apparently arcane subject could be relevant. During the week, however, I found subsequent viewpoints and perspectives frequently

evoking the ideas Professor Irwin had carefully discussed in his lecture, as if a kind of resonant counterpoint with the ancient ideas had been established in my mind.

I completed the summer school with the sense of taking away with me a rich storehouse of ideas and impressions, as well as references, books and connections with fellow-participants for future study and elaboration. A feature that I particularly enjoyed was the meeting of clinical and non-clinical minds both in the teaching staff and participants, which I found thought-provoking and illuminating. Despite the all too brief time available, the presenters nonetheless were able to convey their deep and committed engagement with their subject matter. This invariably resulted in lively discussions after the formal presentations, which allowed for the further elaboration of layers and interconnections of meaning.

The summer school was an intense and rewarding shared experience. During that one short week we all became familiar faces, and it seemed that we had developed a collective identity. On the Friday there was a manifest sense of gratitude, but also a sadness that it was time for us to go our separate ways.

Streetwise about
CHARITY

Nick Martlew (PPE, 2002) responds to Will Crouch's article '80,000 Hours: High Impact Ethical Careers,' from *Oxford Philosophy* 2012.

WORKING in the aid sector gives you an unsaintly halo. Many of my friends (half) joke that I make my living handing out rice to starving Ethiopians. Doing what I do (or really the idea of what I do) gives them another reason to think of campaigning, fundraising, or just opting for fair trade bananas. My job has a halo effect. This isn't why I made the career choice I did, but it's a happy bonus to what I've generally thought was a good decision. Given this choice of profession, Will Crouch's piece in the last edition of Oxford Philosophy gave me some pause for thought, raising the fear that I might not have made the best choice, that there was another path that would have allowed me to make more of a (positive) difference.

Crouch argues that we should encourage graduates seeking an ethical career to become professional philanthropists, i.e., pursue lucrative employment, such as that found in the City, and then donate a substantial amount to support charitable work. In doing so, they would leave open a job in the charity sector that

would readily be filled by other good-minded people, could fund that very job and perhaps a few others with their donations, and fill a lucrative job that would most likely have gone to someone less charitable. Overall then, more of a positive difference would have accrued in international development if I'd decided not to join it.

Interesting as Crouch's argument is, I want to raise a number of considerations that would-be adherents might bear in mind when making their career choices.

The starkest version of Crouch's argument seems to rely on a number of questionable assumptions:

Firstly, it assumes there are roughly 'value neutral' jobs, careers that pay very well and that have no, or very little, negative impact on the world; let's say, for the sake of argument, speculating on Yen to Dollar exchange rate fluctuations.

A second assumption seems to be that the brightest ethically-minded people are likely to be successful in their ethically

questionable (or at best ethically neutral) careers. If you're deep down a do-gooder, engaged in a career for merely instrumental reasons, is that really likely to be the case? It's worth remembering that one contemporary professional philanthropist, Bill Gates, didn't set out to establish a multi-billion dollar foundation: he got there as an unplanned consequence of his passion and skill as a computer programmer. One's motivation affects one's success, and is likely to impact on the outcome of a decision to be a professional philanthropist.

A counter-example might seem to be Oscar Schindler, who set up reliably ineffective arms factories to employ thousands of people — and thereby save thousands of lives during the Holocaust. However, if we focus on Schindler we run the risk of making an exception into a rule. If Schindler had operated in a normally-functioning market, then his altruistic motivation would have been his undoing: producing non-functioning munitions would have been the end of his business, and so the end of his unquestionably good mission.

Finally, it seems to me that the case for professional philanthropy may rest on an outdated understanding of what 'charities' are about. Charities, as non-government organisations (NGOs) like Save the Children and Oxfam are known, are not about charity; we are about rights. Cash is essential, and NGOs rely on the philanthropy, if you want to call it that, of millions of people giving £2 a month or £2 million over dinner. But whether you're a management consultant or a Marxist (or even both), you'll know that development can't be achieved by money alone. Policies and practice matter and in order to maximize the impact of these the 'do gooder' sector needs the best brains.

Here are some real-life, life-saving, examples where best outcomes in international development are largely a function of how skilled the people are that are employed in that sector, rather than simply funds available or sheer number of employees in the sector.

1) Famines can be prevented with the benefit of early warning systems. But these require

substantial technical expertise to develop at national scale and they require people with astute judgement to respond to the warning signs appropriately.

2) Developing country governments need to negotiate with companies to make sure the firms pay their dues and the government can pay for public goods like health and education without international aid. But governments can only equal the legal teams of international companies if they have access to legal expertise themselves.

3) Where (say) a philanthropist has bought food, getting it to people engulfed by conflict is a dangerous and complex business. Using more cash — bribery — only makes it more so. Extremely smart and creative negotiators are needed if the food is going to get to those who need it.

So aid agencies need the best and the brightest to make aid money as effective as possible. Perhaps the retort would be that you can buy all that expertise, so the amount of money is really what matters. Absolutely, the money matters,

but you need smart ethical heads with specific skills to do the job so that famines can be prevented, healthcare paid for sustainably, and food (yes, sometimes rice) delivered.

If you are in a mega-bucks career and you can do your job in a more morally positive way than others might, good luck to you. If you're deciding on what career would do the 'most good' (we can leave defining 'good' to another day) given your skills and expertise, remember there are a lot of injustices out there. If that angers you, if that forms a part of your motivation, I hope you can find the role where you and your skills can make the most difference to turning those injustices round, wherever that role may be. As you make your ethical calculations, it's worth bearing in mind that, with those kinds of motivations in your head, you might not make the world's best currency speculator anyway.

Nick Martlew works for Save the Children as Senior Conflict and Humanitarian Advocacy Adviser. He has previously worked for Oxfam in Ethiopia and Democratic Republic of Congo. After graduating with a First in PPE from Somerville in 2005 he completed a Master's course in international politics at Sheffield.

Philosophy of Religion at Oxford

Recent years have seen a renewed interest in philosophy of religion at Oxford. In the pages that follow, **Charity Anderson** tells us about a major research project based in the Faculty, **Pamela Sue Anderson** discusses her work on feminist philosophy of religion, and we introduce British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow **Helen De Cruz**.

NEW INSIGHTS
and Directions for Religious Epistemology

Charity Anderson introduces the work of one of Oxford Philosophy's major research projects, funded by the John Templeton Foundation.

THE New Insights and Directions for Religious Epistemology Project, directed by John Hawthorne (Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy and Fellow of Magdalen College) and funded by a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation, is a three-year research project that aims to bring recent developments in epistemology to bear on topics in philosophy of religion. Topics of research include, but are not limited to, the following: the epistemology of religious disagreement, and the role of testimony as a source of religious belief, and the evidential significance of the fine-tuning of the universe for life.

There are currently four postdoctoral researchers involved in the project in addition to me, Matthew Benton, Brian Hedden, Dani Rabinowitz, and recent arrival Billy Dunaway. I am a graduate of Saint Louis University, and have research interests in epistemology, philosophy of language, and

philosophy of religion. A central topic of my PhD dissertation was the defence of stable fallibilism. Stable fallibilists affirm that knowledge is compatible with a chance of error; they also maintain that knowledge is stable — according to stable fallibilism pragmatic factors, such as the cost of being wrong, cannot affect whether a subject has knowledge. My current work concerns the consequences for religious belief of allowing pragmatic factors to influence whether or not one knows, and the role of testimony in Hume's essay on miracles. Matthew Benton joined the team from Rutgers University, where he completed his PhD dissertation on the knowledge norm of assertion. His research interests are primarily in 'social epistemology', focusing on questions concerning how knowledge and assertion are related, how knowledge gets passed on to others by testimony, and knowledge of persons. Brian Hedden, from MIT, studies rationality, specifically what it takes to have rational beliefs and to behave in a

rational way. He is currently exploring whether there are any norms for how one rationally ought to be over extended periods of time, as opposed to just norms for how to be at particular times. Dani Rabinowitz hails from Oxford University, where he completed a DPhil thesis on the topic of the safety condition for knowledge — a modal condition concerning how 'safe' one's belief must be from error to count as knowledge. His current research interests include the relationship of the safety condition to prophetic knowledge, whether one can gain knowledge based on inference from other false beliefs, and a variety of topics in the philosophy of Judaism. The project recently welcomed Billy Dunaway, from the University of Michigan. Billy works on topics spanning the areas of ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of language, and epistemology. Some of his projects include: an explanation and defence of a realist view about ethics, an analysis of what makes things possible (or impossible), the relevance of

untrained "folk" judgments to philosophy, and the relationship between findings in cognitive science and the notion of knowledge.

A number of internal and external visitors are involved in the Project each academic year. The 2012-2013 visitors included Julien Dutant (Geneva), Chris Tucker (Auckland), Sara Kier Praem (Aarhus), Jeffrey Russell (Oxford), Ralph Walker (Oxford), Tim Mawson (Oxford), Jacob Busch (Aarhus), Declan Smithies (Ohio State), Steve Porter (Biola), and Miriam Schoenfield (UT Austin). Emil Moeller, a DPhil student at Oxford who is writing a thesis on semantic theories about the word 'know' under the direction of John Hawthorne, has a DPhil scholarship funded by the Project; and Angus Ritchie, who is the Director of the Contextual Theology Centre in East London, is a consultant to the project and works to disseminate the research of the project to Christian communities across the UK. The CTC

The postdoctoral researchers in July 2013: Dani Rabinowitz, Matthew Benton, Brian Hedden, and Charity Anderson

helps churches engage with the wider community through both reflection and action.

This sizable group collaborates on independent research projects, meeting regularly during term to read and critique work by project members. The Project hosts a large number of events, most of which are primarily aimed at academics, but also include public lectures and roundtables.

The Project hosts two workshops in Oxford each academic year. The first workshop, on Pragmatic Encroachment, Contextualism, and Religious Epistemology, was held in March. Speakers and commentators included Jeremy Fantl (Calgary), Matthew McGrath (Missouri), John Hawthorne (Oxford), and Sandy Goldberg (Northwestern), among others. The two-day workshop attracted a large number of participants and was a huge success. The format of the workshop was pre-read: papers were distributed and read in advance by all participants, allowing for over an hour of fruitful discussion for each paper. A main issue under discussion at the workshop was whether Pragmatic Encroachment — again the view that pragmatic factors, such as the cost of being wrong, can affect whether or not a subject knows — results in particularly demanding epistemic standards for knowledge with respect to religious domains. A specific question that was addressed was whether the 'stakes' for the theist and the 'stakes' for the atheist match with respect to the proposition "God exists." That is, whether the cost of being wrong is the same for each group. To make progress on this question, the issue of what constitutes 'high stakes' and 'low stakes' scenarios is crucial. As it turns out, despite the regular reference to and reliance on these bits of terminology in the literature, it is quite difficult to offer an adequate account of what it is to be in a high or low stakes decision setting. One result of the workshop was identification of these areas as fruitful for future research.

A further issue raised at the workshop was whether pragmatic encroachment faces a skeptical worry due to the following potential problem: if subjects face some 'high stakes' decision on a continual basis, and high stakes contexts make it harder to know — high enough to deprive a subject of knowledge — then a kind of semi-skepticism threatens to result. Fantl and McGrath defended pragmatic encroachment from this skeptical threat, arguing that for most of what we know we possess a degree of warrant sufficient to meet the demanding standards that 'high stakes' scenarios require.

The theme of the Project's second workshop, held in Oxford on 12-13 June, was the Safety condition and Religious Knowledge. Duncan Pritchard (Edinburgh) and Timothy Williamson (Oxford) were the keynote speakers. Other presenters included Amia Srinivasan (Oxford) and Julien Dutant (Geneva). Topics of discussion included: whether atheists can have knowledge that God does not exist, if atheism is true; prophecy as a means of religious knowledge; and skeptical theism. The latter topic concerns whether a kind of moral skepticism results from certain common responses to the problem of evil. For those interested, audio recordings of the both events are now available from the Project website (http://www.newinsights.ox.ac.uk/podcast).

Next year's workshops will focus on issues relating religious epistemology to the phenomenon of epistemic defeat — the conditions under which one's knowledge or justification is 'defeated' or lost — and knowledge based on the testimony of others. Keynote speakers include Maria Lasonen-Aarnio (Michigan), Michael Bergmann (Purdue), Lara Buchak (Berkeley), Trent Dougherty (Baylor), John Greco (Saint Louis University), Lizzie Fricker (Oxford), Jennifer Lackey (Northwestern), and Paulina Silwa (Cambridge).

www.newinsights.ox.ac.uk
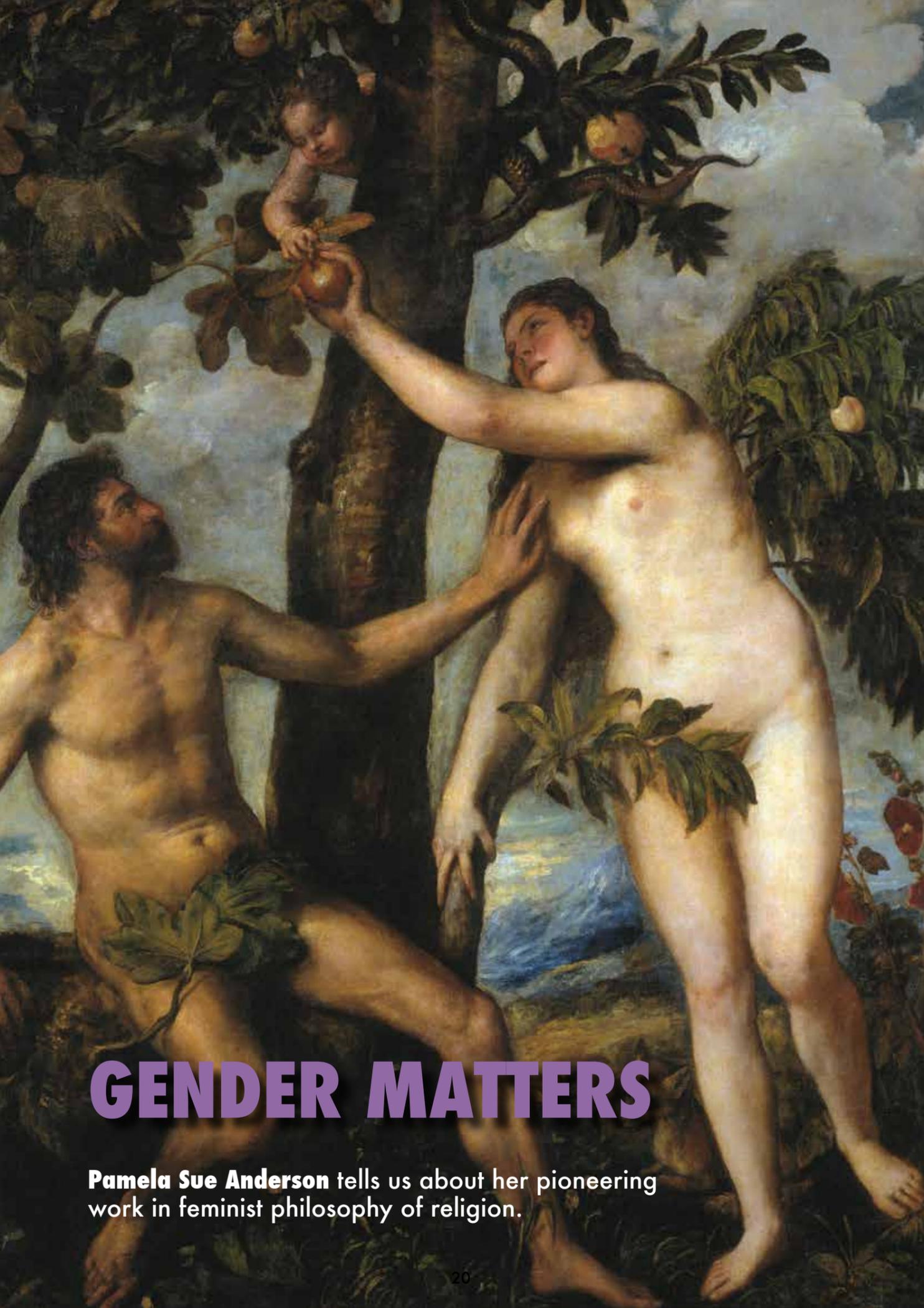
GENDER MATTERS

Pamela Sue Anderson tells us about her pioneering work in feminist philosophy of religion.

HOW many philosophy students are still inducted into the discipline with questions such as 'Can God create a stone too heavy for him to lift?' Thinking about the answer might help the student develop her logical and analytical skills, but does it also contribute to her development as a philosopher in less positive ways?

My project for 'feminist philosophy of religion' over the past two decades has endeavoured to demonstrate that gender matters in Anglo-American philosophy, particularly in philosophy of religion. Omnipotence, for example, is not merely a concept which philosophy students analyse for its coherence as an attribute of an omni-perfect being: power can have normative connotations, especially in its relation to knowledge and gender. Philosophers of religion have had no problem assuming God is an all-powerful, personal being without a body, while also assuming that God has 'no gender', despite persistently referring to God as He. In contrast, feminist philosophy of religion is characterized by its critical reflection on some of the most traditional and still central concepts in philosophy, with the insights of feminist theory. Feminist insights concerning gender's intersection with other social mechanisms of oppression include those religious concepts and norms which have been treated as natural concerning men and women; this naturalising has been harmful insofar as it has devalued non-privileged men and women in philosophy. Most serious

today is the implicit bias that naturalises heterosexual roles in religion(s) to the exclusion of homosexual, bisexual and transgender relations; such bias in gender's intersection with sexuality and divinity continues to do untold damage to our humanity and to the hope for philosophy as a humanistic discipline.

In my own work I have tried to demonstrate not only that gender matters to philosophy of religion, but also that 'a feminist philosophy of religion' can help expose implicit gender bias in theistic concepts which continue to permeate other branches of philosophy, most frequently epistemology and ethics.

Insofar as philosophers assume idealizations — such as 'the God's eye point of view' — to justify claims to objectivity and/ or truth they run the risk of pernicious bias. Idealisations might be useful. Yet, as Onora O'Neill has argued, practical reasoning that 'assumes "ideal" predicates are satisfied will not reach conclusions safely and soundly for actual cases where they are not satisfied' (*Towards Justice and Virtue*, 41). Claiming perfect knowledge, with 'the God trick', has re-enforced unsound and unsafe justifications of beliefs. Gender injustice in philosophy has continued to arise from pernicious idealizations of divine-human power and absolute knowledge, as well as objectivity in ethics. In my recent book, *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion: Reason, Love and Epistemic Locatedness*, I argue that gender intersects with other social and material mechanisms

of oppression, including religion, race and sexual orientation. And then, when it comes to actual cases of diversity and inequality, the rational justification of what is believed to be, say, 'all-loving' or 'gender-neutral' is often unsafe. To a large degree, this is the case because claims about what it is to love, or to be neutral (unbiased), have ignored the concrete difference that (our) gender's intersection with religion and sexuality makes for ideals such as perfect love and gender neutrality.

It might be helpful for understanding 'feminist philosophy of religion' to extend Bernard Williams's claim that 'reflection can destroy knowledge' in ethics to philosophy of religion. Williams explains that ethical reflection might drive certain 'thick ethical concepts' from use; these concepts would, then, no longer be available to guide action within a social world. Similarly, feminist philosophical reflection can destroy knowledge of the theistic ideal, informing practices in a hyper-traditional society. Such reflection might drive a thick theistic concept, say, omni-benevolence from use: 'omni-benevolence' would, then, no longer guide the action of those people who once had beliefs of a certain theistic kind. So, those women and men would cease to use that concept, essential to the kind of beliefs which were pieces of theistic knowledge. In this way, feminist reflection, like ethical reflection, becomes part of the philosophical practice it considers and inherently modifies it.

Michèle Le Doeuff's reflections on 'the philosophical imaginary' elucidate how philosophers think, how we have been living, and how we have been led to imagine ourselves. The philosophical imaginary has determined the prerogative of male philosophers by excluding content related to women and gender from the most general thinking about minds, bodies, lives, world and our corporeal relations in that world. For one thing, unjust exclusions of particular knowers have been supported by reason's use of imagery from ancient myths in philosophical texts. Even wise and just philosophers, relying on myths about women and men, can re-assess their implicit gendering of human nature. For another thing, myth's power to naturalise gender roles, when it comes to philosophical knowledge, re-enforces categories of sexual inequalities, while privileging/ naturalising unequal relations between men and women in private as much as public life. A feminist philosopher challenges the naturalising of what we know that is not part of nature. As a feminist philosopher of religion, I argue that reflection can, in a positive sense for gender justice, render old philosophical concepts redundant, and that this opens up possibilities, to both women and men, for creating new concepts.

Feminists in analytic philosophy have also gained from interdisciplinary research on the construction of gender, but equally on so-called 'naturalised' social categories such as race, along with sexuality and divinity. Research in sociology, anthropology, history and literature has unearthed various mechanisms by which naturalised categories are enforced. Research in psychology and biology has worked to free body types from social (including religious) roles. Understanding the power of naturalising myths, feminist philosophers of religion are cautious of any concept that is called 'natural', or any claim that what's 'natural' should dictate how we organize ourselves and relate to one another.

Feminist critiques, like the above, of idealised and naturalised gender led to *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy,* as a sustained reflection on philosophical concepts from a new critical direction informed by women-philosophers, and not only by certain privileged men in the field. In brief, feminist philosophy of religion has claimed that the very act of naming God and 'his' attributes reflects the absolute nature of a male prerogative in philosophy. In moving forward feminist philosophers endeavour to create new concepts for a less patriarchal way of thinking about the future for relations between women and men in philosophy.

Personally I have no great interest in philosophical debates for or against the existence of God; and my feminist writings in philosophy of religion have not given any discussion to alternative conceptions of God. Other philosophers may have new things to say about 'him'. Yet whatever the case, my argument is that gender matters when it comes to philosophical assumptions about how we live, how we think and how we might come to think that we ought to live together. Philosophy (of religion) as a feminist-humanistic discipline can become more aware of gender constraints. A feminist critique of philosophy of religion considers both how some of our philosophical concepts have trapped women (and men) in patterns of thinking and living, and why these can no longer be sustained, if we are to tackle exclusions of women from philosophy.

Pamela Sue Anderson is Reader in Philosophy of Religion, and Fellow of Regent's Park College. Her publications include: *A Feminist Philosophy of Religion: The Rationality and Myths of Religious Belief* (1998); *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion: Reason, Love and Epistemic Locatedness* (2012); and *In Dialogue with Michèle Le Doeuff* (forthcoming).

FOCUS

Helen De Cruz
British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow

Helen De Cruz is a philosopher of religion and cognitive science. She obtained her PhD in Philosophy in 2011 (Groningen, under the supervision of Igor Douven), and has an earlier PhD in Archaeology (2007, Brussels). Her research is concerned with the question of how embodied, cognitively limited human beings can acquire knowledge, especially in domains that seem far removed from everyday experience, such as mathematics and religion.

During her BA fellowship at Oxford, Helen will be examining implications of social epistemology for the rationality of religious beliefs. Many philosophers assume that the rationality of religious belief is a matter of individual critical thinking, reasoning and argument. However, recent work in social epistemology prompts us to reassess this individualistic view. As religious beliefs are acquired mainly socially, questions about their reasonableness should take into account what others believe, and how this relates to our own beliefs.

THE PROJECT Helen's project relies on conceptual analysis as well as empirical methods to look at the following research questions:

1
Does the prevalence of a belief (such as belief in God) provide evidence for that belief, and if so, under what conditions?

2
What is the epistemic significance of religious self-identification? To what extent can a person's religious beliefs be constituted by her external environment?

3
What are epistemic peers in the religious domain, and how should we respond if we are confronted with an epistemic peer who disagrees with us?

A CURE FOR
CRIME?

TOM DOUGLAS investigates whether medical interventions should be used as criminal remedies.

THE area of intersection between neuroscience and criminal law has provided fertile ground for philosophers in recent years. Lively debates have emerged concerning the extent to which findings in neuroscience might undermine attributions of criminal responsibility and the ethics of using neuroscientific evidence, such as brain scan results, in criminal trials.

Much less attention has been paid to the ways in which neuroscientific technologies may be used in the criminal justice process after an offender has been convicted. But they could play an important role here. For example, they might be deployed as part of programmes to prevent recidivism. Drugs that attenuate sexual desire are already sometimes used to prevent recidivism in sex offenders, frequently at the direction of criminal justice authorities. In a number of European and North American jurisdictions, offenders may be required to receive regular injections of such medications following release from prison. We might expect that neuroscientific developments will yield further brain-active medical interventions that could be used in similar ways. For example, recent developments suggest that

we may ultimately have a range of drugs capable of suppressing violent aggression at our disposal, and it is not difficult to imagine circumstances in which criminal justice authorities might wish to administer such drugs to offenders.

But should such medical interventions be used in this way? For example, may the state ever permissibly impose medical interventions as part of a criminal sentence?

There is certainly something to be said in favour of its doing so. It is widely thought that preventing recidivism is one of the aims of criminal justice, and that incarceration is justified in part by its contribution to realising this aim. But we might expect there to be cases in which imposing a medical intervention would be more effective at preventing recidivism than incarceration. In many cases it might also be a safer and cheaper means of realising this goal.

Nevertheless, many have argued that medical interventions ought not be used as criminal remedies. Perhaps the dominant position holds that such interventions should only be provided

with the free consent of the recipient, and that, when medical interventions are imposed as part of a criminal sentence, there is no possibility of obtaining such consent.

This position is puzzling, however. Almost all interventions imposed by our criminal justice systems are imposed without the free consent of the offender, despite being interventions of the kind that would ordinarily require such consent. Outside the context of criminal justice, it would be grossly wrong to incarcerate someone without that person's free consent; but within the context of criminal justice it is sometimes permissible to do so. Committing a crime, it seems, can make one morally liable to nonconsensual incarceration. We might wonder whether it could also make one morally liable to nonconsensual medical intervention.

Is there anything that sets medical interventions apart from incarceration, morally speaking? And if so, is the moral difference significant enough that, even though it is sometimes permissible to incarcerate offenders, it is never permissible to impose medical interventions on them?

One suggestion might be that, though medical interventions might be at least as effective as incarceration at realising one goal of criminal justice — the prevention of recidivism — they would be less effective at realising other goals. Other objectives commonly attributed to criminal justice include the meting out of deserved suffering and the deterrence of offending by others. Safe medical interventions would, it might be thought, be insufficiently harmful to realise these deterrent and retributive goals. On the other hand, unsafe medical interventions, those with serious adverse physical or mental effects, might be thought objectionable for other reasons.

This line of argument seems unpromising however. After all, medical interventions needn't be used as the sole criminal remedy — they could be supplemented with other remedies intended to fulfil other purposes of criminal justice. A medical intervention might be used to achieve the anti-recidivist objectives of criminal punishment, while a financial penalty or period of community service would seek to fulfil the deterrent and retributive objectives.

Another suggestion might be that imposing medical interventions is more problematic than incarceration because it involves bodily and mental interference in a way that incarceration does not. Arguably, we all enjoy rights against intereference with our bodies and certain kinds of interference with our minds; it is because we possess such rights that nonconsensual medical intervention is normally wrong. Perhaps these rights protect criminal offenders against the imposition of medical interventions, though not against incarceration.

This suggestion also faces difficulties, however. First, we might wonder whether rights against bodily and mental interference retain their normal protective force following the commission of a crime. Most of us enjoy rights to free movement and association that protect us against nonconsensual incarceration. But somehow or other, these rights lose their normal protective force when one commits a criminal offence. Perhaps criminal offending also diminishes the protection offered by rights against bodily and mental interference.

Second, even if rights against bodily and mental intereference retain their full protective force following criminal offending, this may not allow us to morally distinguish incarceration from the imposition of medical interventions. Incarceration itself fairly reliably has negative effects on the body and mind. It also involves an implicit physical threat of the form 'if you attempt to escape, we will use physical force on your body to prevent you from doing so'. For these reasons, it might be argued that incarceration, like medical intervention, involves a rights-violating form of bodily and mental interference.

In a Wellcome Trust-funded project which began in October of this year, three postdoctoral researchers and I are assessing these and other arguments with the aim of answering the over-arching question 'when, if ever, may the state force medical interventions on criminal offenders?' We will also consider a related question: may the state offer medical interventions to offenders as an optional alternative to more traditional remedies, such as incarceration? This question connects to ongoing debates about whether and when increasing the number of options open to someone can be coercive, exploitative or otherwise morally problematic. Finally, we'll examine how our answers to these questions bear on the use of medical interventions to prevent offending in individuals who have not previously offended, but are thought to be at high risk of doing so.

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PHILOSOPHY

Servant of the arts, or slave to the sciences?

Roger Scruton

UNIVERSITY departments and the people who teach in them are increasingly assessed on their output of 'research'. Pressed to justify their existence, therefore, the humanities begin to look to the sciences to provide them with 'research methods', and the promise of 'results'. To suggest that their principal concern is the transmission of 'culture' is to condemn the humanities to second-class status. Culture has no method, while research proceeds by conjecture and evidence. Moreover, while culture means the past; research means the future.

History of art offers an interesting illustration. Generations of students have been drawn to this subject, in the hope of acquiring knowledge of the masterpieces of the past. The field of study emerged during the 19th-century in German universities, under the influence of Burkhardt, Wölfflin and others, to become a paradigm of objective study in the humanities. The Hegelian theory of the Zeitgeist, put to astute use by Wölfflin, divided everything into neatly circumscribed periods – Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, neo-classical and so on – and the 'comparative' method, in which images were shown side by side and their differences assigned to the distinguishing mental frameworks of their creators, proved endlessly fertile in critical judgments. Look at the works of Wittkower, Panofsky, Gombrich and the other products of this school of thought, and you will surely conclude that there has seldom been a more creative and worthwhile addition to the curriculum.

The task of philosophy is to show the place of humane education in the wider self-consciousness of human kind.

But the very success of art history as a form of learning casts doubt on its future. Is there any more 'research' to be done on the art of Michelangelo, or the architecture of Palladio? Is there anything to be added to the study of the Gothic cathedral after Ruskin, von Simson, Pevsner and Sedlmayer? And how do we confront the complaint that this whole subject seems to be focused on a narrow range of dead white European males, who spoke clearly for their times, but who have no great relevance to ours? All in all the subject of Art History has been condemned by its own success to a corner of the academy, there to be starved of funds and graduate students – unless, that is, it can be re-branded as 'research'.

In 1986 Patricia Churchland published Neurophilosophy, arguing that the questions that had been discussed to no effect by philosophers over many centuries would be solved, once they were rephrased as questions of neuroscience. This was the first major outbreak of an academic disease which one might call 'neuro-envy'. If philosophy could be replaced by neuroscience, why not the rest of the humanities, which had been wallowing in a methodless swamp for far too long? Old disciplines that relied on critical judgement and cultural immersion could be given a scientific gloss when rebranded as 'neuroethics', 'neuroaesthetics', 'neuro-musicology', 'neuro-theology'. Hence art history has sought to rescue itself as 'neuroarthistory' (the subject of a book by John Onians: *Neuroarthistory: From Aristotle and Pliny to Baxandall and Zeki*).

In opposition I would maintain that the humanities are real disciplines, but not sciences. Rebrand them as branches of neuroscience and you don't necessarily increase knowledge: in fact you might lose it. Brain imaging won't help you to analyse Bach's Art of Fugue or to interpret King Lear any more than it will unravel the concept of legal responsibility or deliver a proof of Goldbach's conjecture; it won't help you to understand the concept of God or to evaluate the proofs for His existence, nor will it show you why justice is a virtue and cowardice a vice. And it cannot fail to encourage the superstition that I am not a whole human being with mental and physical powers, but merely a brain in a box.

Locke saw philosophy as 'handmaiden to the sciences'. At the time there was much to be said for that idea: the scientific revolution was in its infancy and the fields of scientific enquiry were uncertainly defined. The task identified by Locke endures today. In areas like the philosophy of mathematics and the philosophy of language our discipline continues to contribute to scientific advance, and absorbs from the associated sciences a distinct intellectual polish. However, there is another and more important task for the philosopher, which is to distinguish genuine science from mere scientism. Philosophy is, and ought especially to be, a handmaiden to the humanities. It should be active in resisting neurononsense of the kind put about by Samir Zeki and John Onians. It should use its best endeavours to show why the attempts to rewrite

musicology, architectural theory, literary criticism and the rest as branches of evolutionary psychology are destined to fail. It should be intent on distinguishing the human world from the order of nature, and the concepts through which we understand appearances from those used in explaining them. It is for this reason that I believe aesthetics to be the core of philosophy, far more important today than any other branch of the subject, even if dependent on those other branches for its central discipline.

How do we combat scientism? A start is made if we give up the fantasy that the humanities are really fields of 'research'. As I see it, the task of philosophy is to show the place of humane education in the wider self-consciousness of human kind. When I give a scientific account of the world I am describing objects and the causal laws that explain them. This description is given from no particular perspective. It does not contain words like 'here', 'now' and 'I'; and while it is meant to explain the way things seem, it does so by giving a theory of how they are. I, however, am not an object only; I am also a subject, one with a distinctive point of view. The subject is in principle unobservable to science, not because it exists in another realm but because it is not part of the empirical world. It lies on the edge of things, like a horizon, and could never be grasped 'from the other side', the side of subjectivity itself. If I look for it in the world of objects I shall never find it. But without my nature as a subject nothing for me is real.

If I am to care for my world, then I must first care for this thing, without which I have no world — the perspective from which my world is seen. That is the message of art, or at least of the art that matters. And that is why philosophy is fundamental to humane education. Philosophy shows what self-consciousness is, and explores the many ways in which the point of view of the subject shapes and is shaped by the human world. The Germans are right to refer to the humanities as Geisteswissenschaften: for Geist, self-consciousness, is what they are all about.

Roger Scruton is a Senior Research Fellow at Blackfriars Hall and Visiting Professor at Oxford. He is the author of many books, including *The Aesthetics of Music* and *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*, both published by Oxford University Press. His Stanton Lectures at the University of Cambridge will be published next year as *The Soul of the World*, by Princeton University Press, and his novel *Underground Notes* is shortly to appear from Beaufort Books, New York.

The Many Worlds of
Quantum
Philosophy

Harvey Brown tells us about the remarkable contributions made by Oxford's philosophers of physics in the development of new approaches to our understanding of quantum reality.

WHEN I studied the philosophy of quantum mechanics in London in the 1970s, the subject of my PhD thesis was the so-called problem of measurement. This was regarded as the deepest conceptual conundrum in quantum theory (closely related to the Schrödinger cat paradox) and it still is. If anything like a satisfactory solution has appeared to this problem, I would say it is one provided within an interpretation of quantum theory that was barely mentioned when I was a student. I have Oxford colleagues to thank for bringing me round to this view.

The orthodox position ever since the 1930s has been the "Copenhagen" interpretation, so called because of the dominant input of the Danish quantum pioneer Niels Bohr. Albert Einstein memorably called the interpretation an "epistemology-soaked orgy"; he was disturbed principally by its instrumentalist overtones and its apparent non-locality (appeal to action-at-a-distance). In 1957, two years after Einstein's death, a startling picture of quantum reality was proposed by the young American physicist Hugh Everett III. To this day it is the only interpretation of quantum mechanics that satisfies Einstein's three desiderata: it is realist, local and essentially deterministic. (Of course there is a sense in which God plays dice in quantum mechanics, but here it turns out not to be fundamental.) And unlike the Copenhagen interpretation, it is consistent with the possibility of a genuinely quantum mechanical picture of the entire universe.

As with virtually all ground-breaking work, Everett's vision was somewhat rough and incomplete; it was not difficult to spot some technical weaknesses in his analysis. More to the point, the ontology of 'many worlds' that
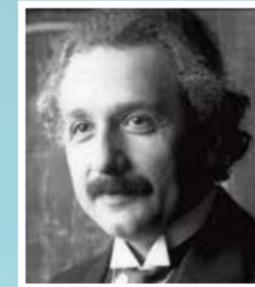
In 1957 a startling picture of quantum reality was proposed by the young American physicist Hugh Everett III.

Niels Bohr
Albert Einstein
Hugh Everett III
David Deutsch

Everett suggested must have seemed bizarre. The theory was met with a barrage of near-silence and lay fallow for several decades, largely ignored by both physicists (with a few notable exceptions) and philosophers.

Today, interest in the Everett interpretation is growing. Within physics its adherents are to be found largely within the quantum cosmology community. Within the philosophical community, current interest is due not so much to the increasing awareness of weaknesses in rival interpretations as to recent advances in the articulation of the Everett program. These advances have shown how such traditional issues in philosophy as emergence, counterfactuals, personal identity and the meaning of probability are given new life in modern physics. When a systematic history of the development of the Everett picture comes to be written, the role of Oxford philosophers should figure prominently in it.

Michael Lockwood's 1989 book *Mind, Brain and the Quantum: The Compound 'I'* presented what was probably the first sustained defence of Everett by a philosopher. Part of the inspiration behind Lockwood's courageous book were the writings of an Oxford-based physicist, David Deutsch, one of the founders of the field of quantum computation, who went on to promote the Everett picture in his first popular book *The Fabric of Reality*. But arguably neither Deutsch nor Lockwood, despite their insights, provided a completely satisfactory account of the precise nature of the Everettian ontology, that is to say, what the "worlds" or "branches" within the evolving Everettian universe are and how they emerge naturally from the formalism. It was not clear that they solved what is referred to in

the literature as the "preferred basis problem". Nor was the pressing issue of the meaning of probability clearly settled in the work of Deutsch and Lockwood.

The breakthrough came in 1993 with the work of Simon Saunders. He was interested in the development taking place in physics at the time in understanding how quantum mechanical systems apparently lose their quantum properties when they take on macroscopic dimensions, or when they interact with an environment that itself has sufficient complexity. This phenomenon of 'decoherence', which occurs naturally in quantum mechanics, was the key to understanding the emergence of Everettian branches, Saunders realized. It suggested a solution to the preferred basis problem which, unlike that of Lockwood and to some extent Deutsch, placed no special emphasis on the role of consciousness. Saunders also made notable progress, in papers published between 1998 and 2005, in addressing the delicate conceptual question: What can probability properly mean in a universe in which everything that can happen in chance events does happen?

David Wallace, who did his DPhil in Philosophy under Saunders' supervision, was to develop these insights in new and creative ways starting in 2002. His illuminating technical and conceptual analysis of the role of decoherence in the Everettian picture emphasized the emergent and non-fundamental nature of branches, applying to great effect Daniel Dennett's philosophy of real emergent patterns. He was also to improve a decision-theoretic derivation within the Everett picture, due to David Deutsch in 1999, of the accepted rule for calculating probabilities in quantum mechanics, leading to what is now widely known as the Deutsch-Wallace theorem. He

> What can probability properly mean in a universe in which everything that can happen in chance events does happen?

and Saunders argued forcefully that as a consequence of this theorem, probability in quantum mechanics can actually shed light on some of the traditional mysteries in the literature on the philosophy of chance and probability, particularly the work of David Lewis. They also collaborated on an attempt to elucidate the semantics of many-worlds ontology in 2008. Between 2004 and 2010, Hilary Greaves also made important contributions to the understanding of probability and the role of confirmation theory in the Everett interpretation, partly in collaboration with the Canadian philosopher Wayne Myrvold.

In 2007, Saunders organized an international conference in Oxford on Everett's work. The proceedings of this and a related 2007 conference in Canada organized by Wallace and (then) Cambridge colleagues Jonathan Barrett and Adrian Kent, were published as *Many Worlds? Everett, Quantum Theory, & Reality* in 2010. With chapters by friends and foes of the Everettian stance, it is the definitive reference for debate on the subject. In 2012, Wallace published his own much-anticipated book, *The Emergent Multiverse: Quantum Theory according to the Everett Interpretation*.

As it happens, the rival Copenhagen interpretation, or something like it, has also seen a new lease of life in recent years. This is largely because of the rise of quantum information theory, which seeks to use the resources of quantum physics to find new and efficient ways of generating and transmitting information. Many workers in this important field take a somewhat instrumentalist line towards quantum mechanics. With echoes of the Copenhagen interpretation, the theory is widely seen as a formal tool for predicting the results of measurements in the laboratory, with

Simon Saunders
David Wallace
Hilary Greaves

little to say about micro-ontology. If any picture of observer-independent reality has emerged in this field, it is the top-down view that information itself is the fundamental building block of nature, and that information processing is ultimately what the deepest laws of physics are about.

The awkward fact that the notion of information does not actually appear explicitly in the deepest laws has not deterred a rising tide of support for this view. Philosophers of physics tend to be skeptical, and probably no one has done more to critically explore the mantra that "information is physical" than Christopher Timpson. His 2013 book *Quantum Information Theory and the Foundations of Quantum Mechanics* is a timely consolidation of arguments he has been developing over some years demystifying the role information plays in quantum theory. Timpson does not claim that the notion of information is ill-defined (as some argue). In showing exactly what its technical meaning is, he demonstrates that quantum information is not different in kind from classical information, and nor does it flow like a fluid from transmitter to receiver – putting a sobering gloss on the much-publicized phenomenon of quantum teleportation. Amongst other things, Timpson's book contains an insightful discussion of the implications of the possibility of a quantum computer for the Church-Turing thesis.

If information is not the stuff of physics, what is? There are (naturally) a number of competing, fundamental quantum ontologies, and a relatively new addition to the list is the 'spacetime state realism' view developed by Wallace and Timpson in 2009. In this picture, which is increasingly catching the attention of the philosophy of physics community, every region of space-time is equipped

> The stakes are high. It is the very bedrock of physical reality that is up for grabs.


Christopher Timpson
Frank Arntzenius

with a real quantum property (the 'density operator'), but the goings-on in unions of separate regions of space-time are often not wholly described by the properties associated with the individual regions ('non-separability', a notion subtly different from Einstein's anathema, action-at-a-distance, and, remarkably, consistent with relativity theory). An admiring dissident is another Oxford philosopher, Frank Arntzenius, who devotes a chapter of his 2012 book *Space, Time and Stuff*, to a critical analysis of the competing quantum ontologies. Arntzenius favours the competing, separable ontology developed by Deutsch and Hayden in 2000, involving a very different mathematical structure. There is much technical detail that needs grasping if one is to hope to adjudicate in this debate. But the stakes are high. It is the very bedrock of physical reality that is up for grabs.

Such issues will probably not find consensus in the near future. But the combined contribution to our understanding of the nature of quantum reality by the Oxford philosophers I have mentioned is, in my opinion, truly remarkable and worth celebrating.

Harvey Brown FBA is Professor of Philosophy of Physics and Fellow of Wolfson College. He is a past President of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science and his many publications include the book *Physical Relativity* (2005) for which he won the Lakatos Prize.
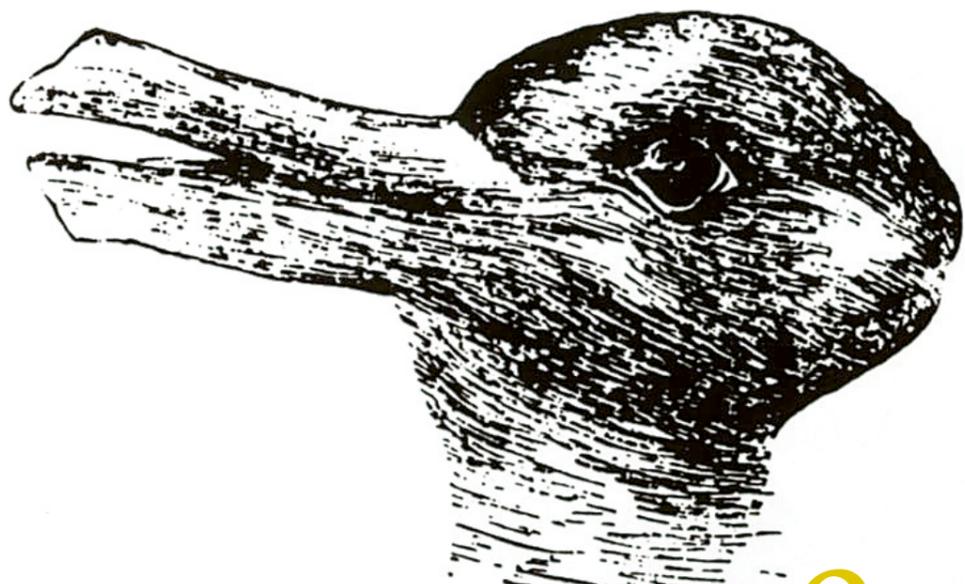
ATTENTION & PERCEPTION

Ned Block discusses the methodological and substantive claims about consciousness at the heart of his 2013 John Locke Lectures.

MY 2013 Locke Lectures had two main points, one methodological, one substantive. The methodological point was that the philosophy of mind, and especially the philosophy of perception must combine standard philosophical methods with attention to empirical results in psychology and neuroscience. But there is one kind of combination that I do not have in mind. Patricia Churchland famously said "The history of science can be seen as a gradual process whereby speculative philosophy cedes intellectual space to increasingly well grounded experimental disciplines — first astronomy, but followed by physics, chemistry, geology, biology, archaeology, and more recently, ethology, psychology, and neuroscience. ... The mind's turn has now come." This is not the view I am arguing for. My view is better captured in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's statement that "Psychology is always an implicit, beginning philosophy and philosophy has never finished its contact with facts." Rather than philosophy as speculative pre-experimental science as Churchland advocates, I argue that the sciences of the mind involve philosophical presuppositions; and philosophy of mind cannot proceed in isolation from the sciences of mind.

That was the methodological point; the substantive point depends on the distinction between conceptual analysis and scientific analysis. A familiar conceptual analysis of knowledge often ascribed to Plato analyzes knowledge as true justified belief. This analysis runs into trouble though with a case mentioned by Bertrand Russell: Suppose I look at a clock that I have consulted regularly for years and always found to be reliable. The clock says 2:00 PM so I come to believe it is 2:00 PM. In fact it is true that it is 2:00 PM, I believe it, and my belief is justified by my past history with that clock, yet I don't actually know it is 2:00 PM because the clock happened to have stopped at 2:00 PM the previous afternoon, and so shows the right time only coincidentally. Philosophers have reacted to examples like this by complicating their definition of knowledge to require not just truth, belief and justification, but an additional factor. This is an a priori enterprise, supposedly leading eventually to an account of what knowledge is.

Compare that procedure with the way we find out what temperature is: we explore a number of heat phenomena, finding that we can explain those phenomena if we assume that temperature is the average kinetic energy of the molecules that make up the substances in which the phenomena occur. This assumption leads to predictions which are verified. This is a scientific analysis. In these terms then, my lectures argue for a scientific analysis in terms of the neural basis of mental states and against a number of conceptual analyses of conscious perception.

Many of the views of perception that I argue against fit in the category of cognitive theories of consciousness in which a conscious experience is a matter of cognitive access to the content of that experience.

Cognitive theories of consciousness are incompatible with what is sometimes called the "explanatory gap". Even if we were told what the neural basis is of the consciousness experience of red in the brain, that would not be enough to know why it is the neural basis of that experience rather than some other experience or none at all. Some philosophers think that explanatory gap can never be closed, but I take the view that our current inability to close it reflects the fact that we are missing many of the concepts needed to understand the relation between mind and body. To use an example due to my colleague Thomas Nagel, we are like a pre-Socratic philosopher who is told that matter is energy but does not have the conceptual apparatus needed to understand how that is possible. If consciousness was just a matter of cognitive access, then there would be no explanatory gap, since the explanation of why the neural basis of the experience of red is the neural basis of that experience as opposed to another would just be that that neural basis underlies our cognitive access to the content representing red.

Let me give an example of how philosophical and empirical methods can be combined. The late Gareth Evans (Wilde Reader in Mental Philosophy at Oxford) introduced the idea of nonconceptual content into philosophy. If you and a mouse are both looking at the same bicycle, there may be an aspect of the conscious state that you and the mouse share: what colors and textures and shapes are consciously represented at certain locations. But your experience may also include a conscious perceptual judgment that that is a bicycle. That is
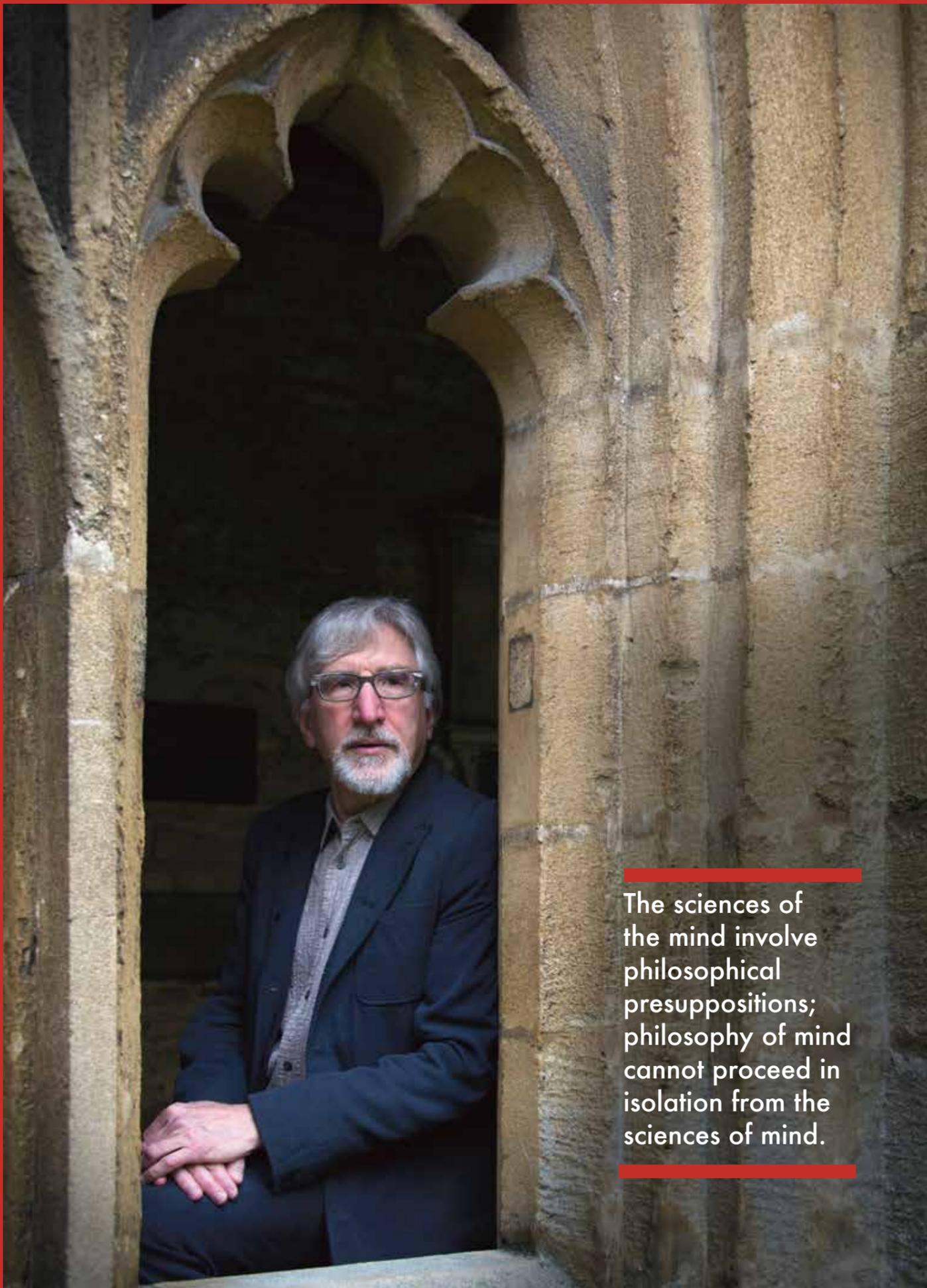
what the mouse will not be able to have, if it lacks the concept of a bicycle. The non-conceptual content of an experience — what you and the mouse share — is purely perceptual, but the judgment is conceptual. One of the characteristics of percepts as compared to concepts is a matter of format: percepts are iconic whereas the judgments in which concepts participate have a structure that can mirror the structure of a sentence. Another difference is in computational role: percepts are modularized within the visual system whereas concepts can play an "inferentially promiscuous" role in reasoning and control of action.

I mentioned that one approach to consciousness that I am opposed to is the cognitive theory of consciousness according to which a conscious perception is a matter of cognitive access to the content of the perception. Cognitive access involves the content playing a role in thought and judgment and so involves conceptualized perceptual experiences. But the kind of conscious content that we share with a mouse — pure perceptual content — does not involve conceptualization and can exist independently of judgment.

A perception can be unconscious as well as conscious. Indeed there are standard methods for producing unconscious perceptions. One of the most effective methods takes advantage of what is called binocular rivalry. If sufficiently different arrays of roughly equal contrast are presented to a person's two eyes, the effect will be that the scene presented to one eye will dominate, and then after a few seconds, the input from that eye will be suppressed and the other will dominate. The switch is inevitable and the duration of one dominance period does not predict the next duration. You can do this at home using the cardboard tube from a roll of paper towels for one eye, pointing the eye at something different from what the other eye is pointed at. Here is the interest of binocular rivalry for my lectures: the input from the suppressed eye can be shown to have been perceived unconsciously! This has been shown both from brain imaging data and behavioral experiments.

If we want to know the nature of conscious perception as opposed to unconscious perception we must in the end rely on the person making a perceptual judgment that is reported or otherwise reveals itself in reasoning and control of action. Thus our information about a person's conscious perceptions is always mediated by the perceptual judgments that we the experimenters need in order to count the state reported as conscious. And the inevitable effect is that there is a danger that our theories of conscious perception will instead be theories of conscious perceptual judgment.

My lectures were partly concerned with articulating this problem and exploring ways to avoid it. One way around it is to focus on phenomena that can be independently verified to be fundamentally perceptual. One such phenomenon that has been known for hundreds of years is "iconic memory" in which a brief presentation yields a long lasting mental image. I argued that the informational capacity of these images goes beyond the informational capacity of perceptual judgment, showing that the phenomenology of perception cannot be just a matter of cognition. Another way of dealing with the problem is to focus on experiments in which the subject conceptualizes the conscious experience from memory well after the conscious experience has occurred. And in the lectures I discussed why in my view such approaches count against philosophical analyses in terms of cognition and why they open the door to an account of consciousness in terms of the underlying neural state.

> The sciences of the mind involve philosophical presuppositions; philosophy of mind cannot proceed in isolation from the sciences of mind.

Ned Block is Silver Professor of Philosophy, Psychology, and Neural Science at NYU. He is the author of numerous articles and editor of several books, including *Readings in the Philosophy of Psychology* (2 vols.) and *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates* (with O. Flanagan and G. Guzeldere). The first volume of his collected papers, *Functionalism, Consciousness and Representation*, appeared with MIT Press in 2007.

NEW BOOKS

A selection of the books published by members of the Oxford Philosophy Faculty over the last year.

The Self and its Shadows: A Book of Essays on Individuality as Negation in Philosophy and the Arts
Stephen Mulhall (OUP, 2013)

This book is a series of multiply interrelated essays which together make up an original study of selfhood (subjectivity or personal identity). Mulhall explores a variety of articulations (in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and the arts) of the idea that selfhood is best conceived as a matter of non-self-identity — for example, as becoming or self-overcoming, or as being what one is not and not being what one is, or as being doubled or divided. His discussions draw extensively on texts usually associated with 'Continental' philosophical traditions, literature, and film primarily in order to test the feasibility of a non-elitist form of moral perfectionism.

Self, Reason, and Freedom: A New Light on Descartes' Metaphysics
Andrea Christofidou (Routledge, 2013)

Christofidou offers a new understanding of Descartes' philosophy, arguing that his primary question is 'what is real and true?' – not 'how can I be certain?' – an inquiry that requires both reason's authority and freedom's autonomy. She claims that it is only when we grasp the role of freedom in his *Meditations* that we can understand what motivates key parts of his metaphysics and presents Descartes' distinctive metaphysics of freedom, revealing his compelling conception of the true unity of the self, a thinking active being, and its place in the world.

The Leibniz-De Volder Correspondence
Paul Lodge (Yale, 2013)

A critical edition, both in the original Latin and in English translation, of one of the most important sources for our understanding of Lebniz's monadological metaphysics and his account of the nature of body. The volume also includes an eighty page introductory essay. Here Lodge demonstrates how a reading of the correspondence as a dialogue sheds new light on a number of Leibniz's most important theses, and offers a novel interpretation of the relationship between Leibniz's fundamental ontology and his conception of the material world.

The Powers of Aristotle's Soul
Thomas Kjeller Johansen (OUP, 2012)

Aristotle is considered by many to be the founder of 'faculty psychology', the attempt to explain a variety of psychological phenomena by reference to a few inborn capacities. By investigating Aristotle's main work on psychology, the *De Anima*, Johansen offers an original account of how Aristotle defines the capacities in relation to their activities and proper objects, and considers the relationship of the body to the definition of the soul's capacities. He also investigates how the account of the capacities in the *De Anima* is adopted and adapted in Aristotle's biological and minor psychological works.

Modal Logic as Metaphysics
Timothy Williamson (OUP, 2013)

Are there such things as merely possible people who would have lived if our ancestors had acted differently? Are there future people, who have not yet been conceived? Questions like those raise deep issues about both the nature of being and its logical relations with contingency and change. In *Modal Logic as Metaphysics*, Williamson argues for positive answers to those questions on the basis of an integrated approach to the issues, applying the technical resources of modal logic to provide structural cores for metaphysical theories.

Rationality Through Reasoning
(The Blackwell / Brown Lectures in Philosophy)
John Broome (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)

Rationality Through Reasoning answers the question of how people are motivated to do what they believe they ought to do, built on a comprehensive account of normativity, rationality and reasoning that differs significantly from much existing philosophical thinking. Broome develops an account of theoretical and practical reasoning that explains how reasoning is something we ourselves do, rather than something that happens in us, and argues that the connection between rationality and reasons is much less close than many philosophers have thought.

Quantum Information Theory and the Foundations of Quantum Mechanics
Christopher Timpson (OUP, 2013)

This book is a conceptual analysis of one of the most prominent and exciting new areas of physics, providing the first full-length philosophical treatment of quantum information theory and the questions it raises for our understanding of the quantum world. Timpson argues for an ontologically deflationary account of the nature of quantum information and, with this in place, one central moral which is drawn is that, for all the interest that the quantum information-inspired approaches hold, no cheap resolutions to the traditional problems of quantum mechanics are to be had.

Category Mistakes
Ofra Magidor (OUP, 2013)

Category mistakes are sentences such as 'Green ideas sleep furiously' and 'Saturday is in bed'. Such sentences strike most speakers as highly infelicitous but it is a challenge to explain precisely why they are so. Magidor addresses this challenge. The phenomenon of category mistakes is particularly interesting because a plausible case can be made for explaining it in terms of each of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. *Category Mistakes* follows this division, with Magidor developing and defending a novel version of the pragmatic approach: the presuppositional account of category mistakes.

Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion: Reason, Love and Epistemic Locatedness
Pamela Sue Anderson (Ashgate, 2013)

Unearthing the ways in which the myths of Christian patriarchy have historically inhibited and prohibited women from thinking and writing their own ideas, this book lies fresh ground for re-visioning the epistemic practices of philosophers. Anderson seeks both to draw out the salient threads in the gendering of philosophy of religion as it has been practiced and to revision gender for philosophy today. This book presents invaluable new perspectives on issues such as the gender (often unwittingly) given to God, the aims of a feminist philosophy of religion, and the way in which gendering opens philosophy of religion up to diversity.

ANYONE
for Philosophy?

Marianne Talbot introduces us to the activities of **Philsoc**, the Department for Continuing Education's Philosophical Society.

ONE of the best things about my job as Director of Studies in Philosophy at Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE), is that it makes me automatically the President of The OUDCE Philosophical Society.

Philsoc is a marvellous organisation. It is, I should imagine, one of the oldest, largest and healthiest amateur philosophy societies in the world.

This year the OUDCE Philsoc celebrates its 40th anniversary, having been founded in 1973 by Dr Tony Chadwick, one of my illustrious predecessors. It was started with the aim of encouraging and supporting anyone interested in philosophy. 40 years later this continues to be its aim. The ways in which we are able to support those interested in philosophy, though, have changed massively, mainly thanks to the internet.

Every year Philsoc publishes a journal, written entirely by members. This year's *Philosophical Society Review* has contributions ranging from 'On Causality and Mental States' through 'Metaphor as Bottom-Up Concept Creation' to 'Pierce: Biting the Hand of Duns Scotus?' There are 26 different pieces on subjects from moral philosophy to philosophy of mathematics.

The Review also publishes the winning essays of the prizes sponsored by the Philosophical Society. There are several such prizes, all of them designed to encourage an interest in philosophy on the part of OUDCE students. The most prestigious is the Chadwick Prize, sponsored still by the family of the society's founder. The winner of this prize gets £150 and a free weekend school of their choice. The Boethius Prize is for the runner up who gets £75 plus a free weekend. Finally there is the Lyceum Prize of £25, aimed at students under 30.

In 2012 Philsoc inaugurated a series of essay prizes aimed at those who participate in OUDCE's weekly and online courses. Students submit for the prizes the essays they write for their courses. The prizes here are book-tokens to the value of £25, £15 and £10 respectively. Winners are likely to be more interested, however, in the publication of their essays in the review, and the diplomas they are handed at the annual Philsoc dinner.

The Philsoc dinner is an annual affair, attended by about sixty people, and held in the evening of Members' Day. On Members' Day four or five members each gives a talk to the other members attending. In my experience, these talks are extremely high quality, and attract the usual rather tough questioning from attendees. It is on Members' Day that my Presidential heart swells with pride at the achievements of members, none of whom can devote all their time to philosophy, but all of whom put in a hugely creditable performance. The dinner afterwards is great fun: we award the prizes, congratulate the speakers and quite often have far too much to drink.


We have recently started a Philsoc 'Away Day' when ten to twenty members visit Piggot's, Eric Gill's beautiful old Farmhouse near High Wycombe. There is a day of philosophy and feasting running parallel to the music school that Piggot's has run for many years.

Many of our 340 members come from overseas. It is amazing how often these members attend weekend schools, summer schools and Members' Day. But they can also participate by writing for the Review and by means of the online forum, a very lively discussion group. International members can also listen to the recordings from our archive. This contains recordings of most of the weekend schools held at OUDCE since 1973.

If you think The OUDCE Philosophical Society might be for you, please check out the website at: **www.oxfordphilsoc.org** We should be delighted to welcome you!
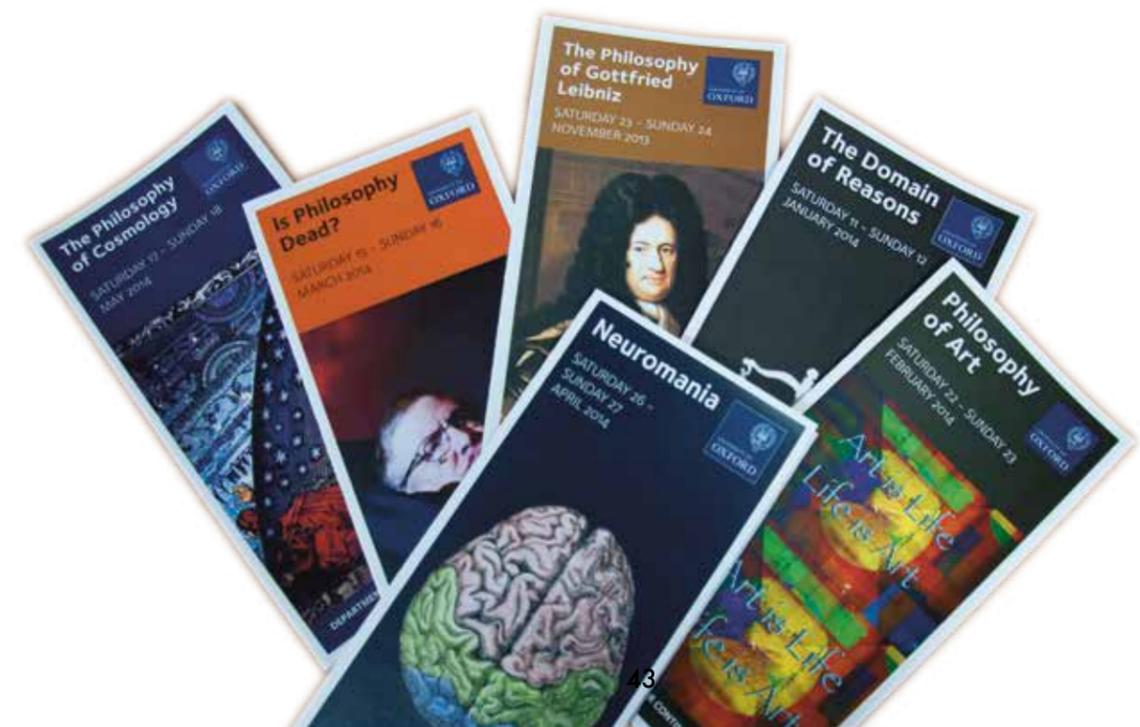
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