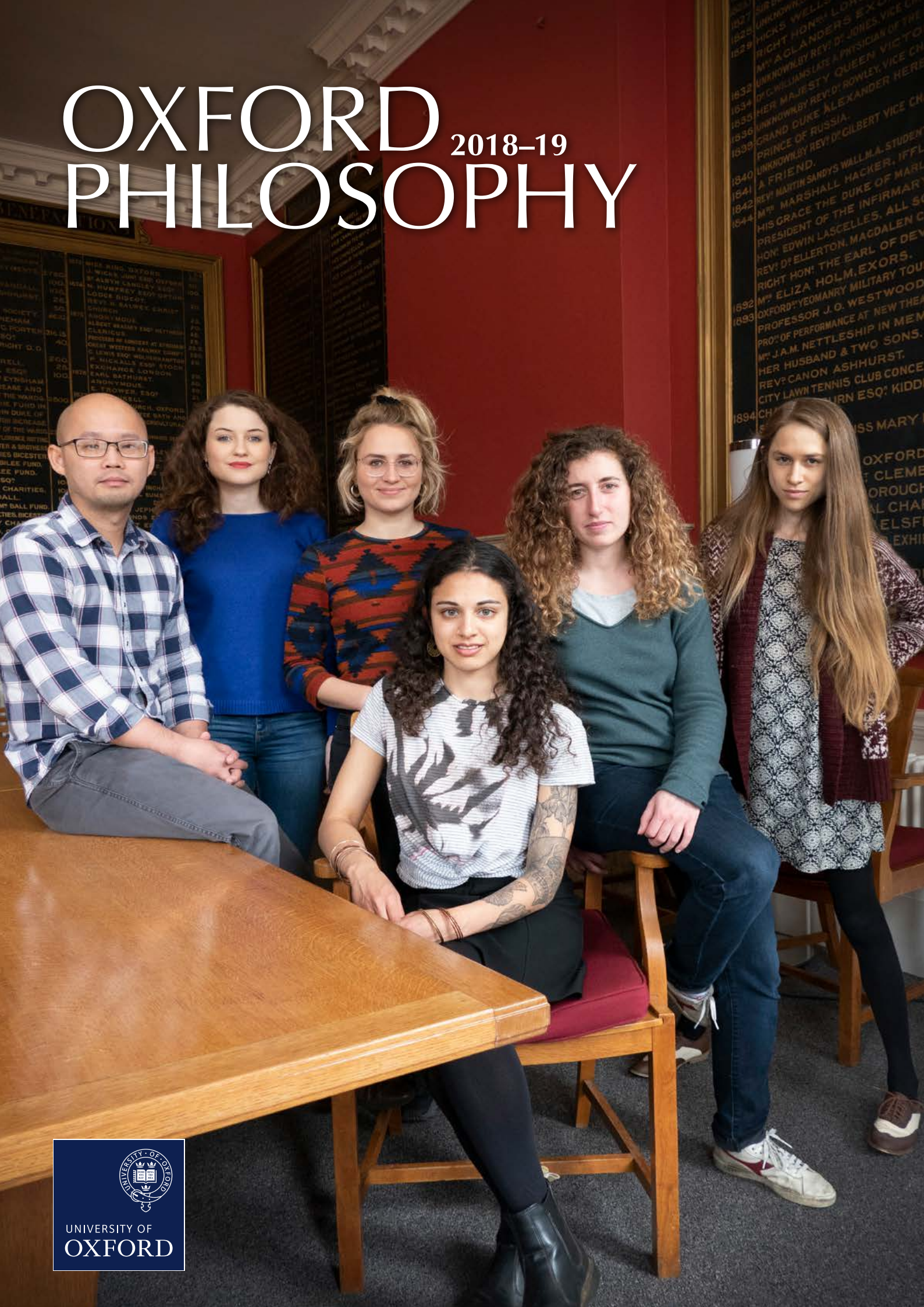


# OXFORD <sup>2018-19</sup> PHILOSOPHY

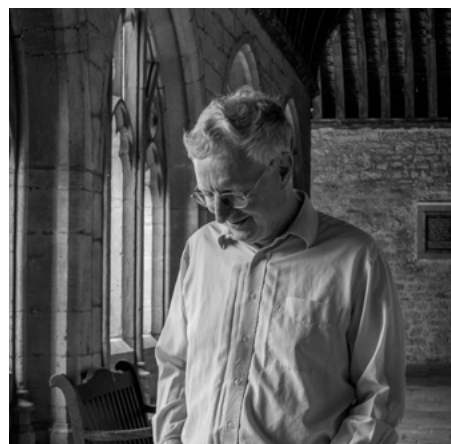


UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD



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## Welcome

*from the Chair of the Faculty Board*

In the course of my peregrinations around the University, and—occasionally—outside it, I am often asked to characterise the size and shape, and the particular character, of the Philosophy Faculty in Oxford. This is not a straightforward proposition, especially if one is to be brief. Oxford as a whole is singular amongst Universities, bearing many marked organisational differences from even so close and long-standing a sibling as Cambridge; whilst the Philosophy Faculty is singular again within Oxford.

But a helpful place to begin is with the shape of our undergraduate degree provision. Academically, the University is divided into four Divisions: Humanities; Social Sciences; Maths, Physical, and Life Sciences; and Medical Sciences. Philosophy sits within the Humanities Division. However, we are unique amongst Oxford faculties and departments in having joint undergraduate degree courses with partners across all four Divisions. This gives us a special place in the University, and a special outlook, spreading throughout the heart of academic activity in Oxford. It also serves to underscore the fact that philosophy is an activity which is naturally of an interdisciplinary character.

At any one time within the University there will be around 1400 undergraduate students reading for degrees involving philosophy (I'd be surprised if this number were not some kind of a record for a leading research-intensive university). This amounts to over 10% of the entire undergraduate student body. Of course we don't have all of any undergraduate: each will spend varying proportions of their time on philosophy (even students reading for the very same degrees) and none will have been doing nothing but philosophy; we always do philosophy with something else. But in my view this is a very healthy thing. There is great richness to be found in studying philosophy alongside with and intertwining other subjects. Keeping all this running, with this very large body of students, eight different possible joint-degrees, and extensive further variation available within each degree, is a great testament to the skill, enthusiasm, and thoroughgoing commitment of colleagues across the Faculty.



On the graduate student side our numbers are—as one would expect—smaller. Around 150 students will be undertaking full-time graduate study in philosophy, and a little under a half of these will be doctoral students. As many of you will already know from our earlier mailing, a major concern of the Faculty is graduate student funding. We have far fewer internal resources than we need to fund DPhil places, and Government support is increasingly dwindling, difficult to access, and difficult to predict. Each year we lose many exceptionally talented students to other universities, and many who are more than deserving of the opportunity of doctoral study are unable to take it up. I hope you might consider visiting [campaign.ox.ac.uk/philosophy](http://campaign.ox.ac.uk/philosophy) and supporting our Graduate Scholarship Fund.

This year we welcomed five new Tutorial Fellows—Rachel Fraser, James Read, Joel David Hamkins, Bernhard Salow, and Amia Srinivasan—whilst Dan Zahavi has joined-us part-time from the University of Copenhagen. You may read more of Prof. Zahavi's work, with its fascinating practical dimension, later in the magazine.

And as I write we have just heard the splendid news of a great gift to the Humanities Division which will allow the construction of our long-awaited Humanities Building. You can read more about this at [schwarzmancentre.ox.ac.uk](http://schwarzmancentre.ox.ac.uk) and I look forward to writing with further details in the next edition of Oxford Philosophy.

*Chris Timpson*

*Professor of Philosophy and Fellow of Brasenose College*

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Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Faculty of Philosophy or the University of Oxford.





### Oxford Philosophy Ranked No. 1 in The Complete University Guide

We are delighted to report that for the second year in a row, the Philosophy Faculty has been placed 1st in the The Complete University Guide among philosophy departments in the UK. The guide provides rankings based in five categories (Entry Standards, Student Satisfaction, Research Quality, Research Intensity, and Graduate Prospects). Philosophy joined The Department of Politics and International Relations in a group of nine Faculties and Departments from Oxford which were awarded the top spot.



### Sanders Public Philosophy Award

**Amia Srinivasan**, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Fellow of St John's College, has won the Marc Sanders Public Philosophy Award, for her article "The Right to Sex" published in *London Review of Books*, March 2018. In the article, Amia considers whether we can have a political critique of desire that avoids authoritarian moralism and the logic of entitlement, but which nonetheless takes seriously that who and what we sexually desire is shaped by oppression.



### Agora - A Marketplace of Ideas

**Aaron James Wendland**, a recent D Phil and Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, has launched a new column in the *New Statesman*. "Agora - A Marketplace of Ideas" is a platform from which philosophers engage with current social, political and cultural issues, bringing the wider public into the debate. The column runs each week with pieces by established members of the academic community. Readers can already enjoy articles by Oxford philosophers: Roger Crisp, Cécile Fabre, Jeff McMahan, and Timothy Williamson.



### £13.3 million Donation to Future of Humanity Institute

The University of Oxford's **Future of Humanity Institute** (FHI) is pleased to announce a donation of up to £13.3 million from the philanthropic organisations Good Ventures and the Open Philanthropy Project. The donation is the largest in the Faculty of Philosophy's history. It will support the FHI in its mission of ensuring a long and flourishing future for humanity.



### ERC Consolidator Grant Awarded



**Tom Douglas**, Senior Research Fellow at the Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics and Fellow of Jesus College, has been awarded an ERC Consolidator Grant, for the 5-year project "Protecting Minds: The Right to Mental Integrity and the Ethics of Arational Influence." The aims of the project are to (1) determine whether and how a moral right to mental integrity can be established; (2) develop a comprehensive and fine-grained account of its scope, weight, and robustness, and (3) determine what forms of arational influence infringe it, and whether and when these might nevertheless be justified. The analysis will yield guidance on controversial forms of arational influence including persuasive digital technologies, salience-based nudges, treatments for childhood behavioural disorders, and biological interventions in criminal rehabilitation.



### Cantat Ergo Sumus

On Saturday June 29, **Paul Lodge**, Professor of Philosophy and Fellow of Mansfield College, performed a selection of songs at the Old Fire Station in Oxford from his project "Cantat Ergo Sumus" along with local band **Flights of Helios**. The performance was part of "Life and Death," a ninety minute showcase for Oxford University academics at the city's Offbeat Festival. The songs were a selection from Paul's original settings of poems by philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Margaret Cavendish, Hildegard von Bingen, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. To find out more about this and Paul's other musical projects, visit his website: [paulodge.com](http://paulodge.com)

### In Memoriam



**Mary Warnock**  
1924-2019

The Faculty is sad to report of the death of Mary Warnock, Baroness Warnock CH, DBE, FBA, FMedSci on 20th March 2019. Mary was connected with Oxford Philosophy as a Fellow in Philosophy at St Hugh's College and Lady Margaret Hall (where she had also been an undergraduate). She, is of course, noted for her long career of public service and many contributions to political life, chairing public inquiries on education, animal experimentation, fertilisation and embryology. Within philosophy, Mary wrote much on ethics and the philosophy of mind.



**Dan Robinson**  
1937-2018

The Faculty is sad to report the death of Professor Dan Robinson, a Philosophy Faculty Fellow, and Adjunct Fellow at Linacre College. In philosophy, he produced significant work across several fields: most notably philosophy of psychology (in which he received honours from the American Psychological Association), philosophy of law, and philosophy of mind. Visiting Oxford for a term every year, Dan delivered many lectures for the Philosophy Faculty, some of have been preserved and can be viewed on the University's podcasts site: [podcasts.ox.ac.uk/people/dan-robinson](http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/people/dan-robinson)



**NEW PEOPLE**  
TUTORIAL FELLOWS



**James Read**  
Pembroke College

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**James** completed his DPhil from Oxford in 2018. Before that, he studied Physics and Philosophy at Oxford, and Mathematics at Cambridge. His research is centred in the philosophy of physics—at present, he is working on issues regarding: (i) the nature of spacetime in general relativity; (ii) the ontological import of symmetry transformations in physics; and (iii) the meaning of probabilities in physics.



**Rachel Fraser**  
Exeter College

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**Rachel** joins the faculty from Cambridge, where, for two years, she held a Junior Research Fellowship at Peterhouse. Before that, she did her graduate and undergraduate work at Oxford—first, as an undergraduate and MPhil student, in Philosophy and Theology, and then, as a DPhil student, in Philosophy. Rachel's research spans epistemology, philosophy of language, and feminist philosophy, and she is particularly interested in their areas of overlap. Her recent work explores the epistemic and the ethical dynamics of narrative and metaphor, as well as more traditional issues in epistemology.



**Bernhard Salow**  
Magdalen College

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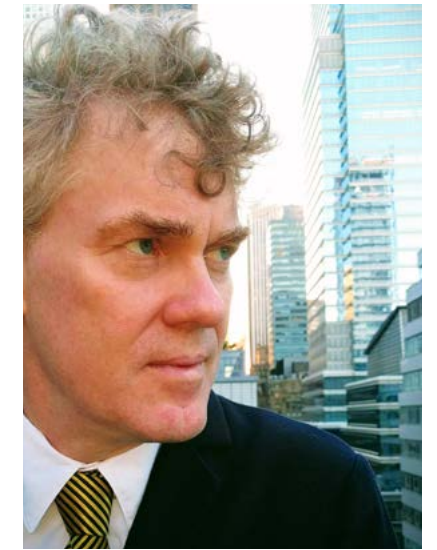
**Bernhard** returns to Oxford, where he was an undergraduate and BPhil student, after seven years spent in two Cambridges: four as a PhD student at MIT, and three as a Junior Research Fellow at Trinity College Cambridge. His primary research is in epistemology, with occasional forays into related areas of decision theory and the philosophy of language. More specifically, he works on the internalism/externalism debate and on questions about the kind of control we can and should exert over what we learn—two sets of issues which he thinks interact in surprising and fruitful ways.



**Amia Srinivasan**  
St John's College

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**Amia** joins the Faculty from University College London, where she was a lecturer in philosophy from 2015-2018. Before that, she was a DPhil student at Oxford and a Prize Fellow at All Souls College. She also has a BPhil from Oxford, and an undergraduate degree from Yale. Her research focusses on topics in epistemology, political philosophy, and feminism. She is currently writing a book on the history, epistemology, and politics of genealogy, and has recently written about anger in politics, the internalism/externalism debate in epistemology, and the ethics of sexual desire. Her essays and criticism—on philosophy, feminism, politics and animals—have appeared in various outlets, including the *London Review of Books*, the *New York Review of Books*, and *The New Yorker*.



**Joel Hamkins**  
University College

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**Joel** comes to Oxford from the City University of New York, where he taught from 1995. After earning a BS in mathematics at the California Institute of Technology, he took a PhD in mathematics in 1994 at the University of California at Berkeley. His research program spans diverse topics in logic, including mathematical and philosophical logic, especially set theory and the philosophy of set theory, as well as modal logic, computability theory, and the logic of games. In more playful recent work, he has been investigating infinitary game theory, and this work has led to several fun projects in infinite chess, infinite Go, and infinite Sudoku.

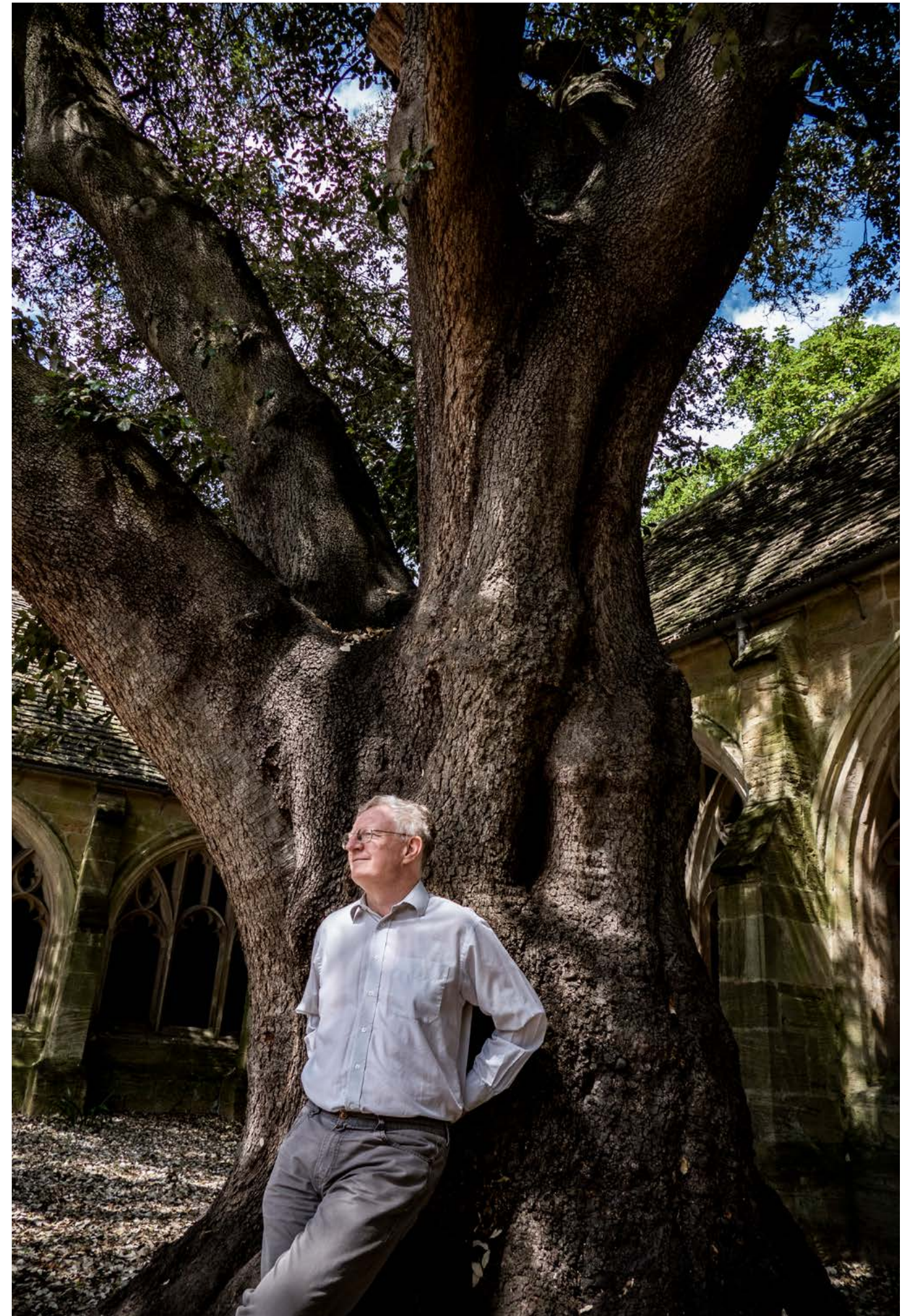


# Doing Philosophy

**Timothy Williamson** tells us about his recent book, in which he offers an accessible introduction to the nature of philosophy as he conceives it.

Some years ago I published a rather technical book on philosophical methods, how they work and how they could work better: *The Philosophy of Philosophy* (Blackwell, 2007). It was rather technical because I wanted to explain things in precise detail, for example, the logical structure of thought experiments, and why philosophy is not about conceptual connections, but is just as much about reality as physics is, though at a still more abstract level. I don't regret writing the book in such a rigorous style, but it certainly didn't make for easy reading. Moreover, most of the views defended in it are quite non-technical, for instance that philosophy is not some weirdly exceptional activity, as many twentieth-century philosophers liked to think, but is one of the sciences, in a broad sense that includes mathematics, psychology, linguistics, and economics, as well as physics, chemistry, and biology. The idea began to grow on me that, having already presented the argumentation step-by-step, I was free to give the big picture much less technically, in a form accessible even to those who have never studied philosophy. That is how I came to write *Doing Philosophy: From Common Curiosity to Logical Reasoning* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

Another aim of the new book is to provide a concise response to the widespread negative stereotype of philosophy as an obsolescent, lazy form of natural science, in which one theorizes about the world while lounging in an armchair, rather than getting up and heading off to find out what is really there. While physicists have to do their experiments, and find out what actually results, how can philosophers get away with just imagining their thought experiments, and imagining what results? A quick answer is that there is a tradition of thought experiments in physics too: Galileo devised many, and Einstein was inspired by imagining what it would be like to ride on a light-beam. Of course, it would also be unethical to carry out famous thought experiments from moral philosophy in real life, for instance by actually pushing a fat man off a bridge to divert a runaway trolley, making it kill one rather than five, to see what happens. But even if one did so, the real life experiment would tell us no more than we had already learned from imagining the thought experiment. Sometimes the mere possibility is enough. But we have to understand when it is enough, and why.



Photography by Keiko Ikeuchi



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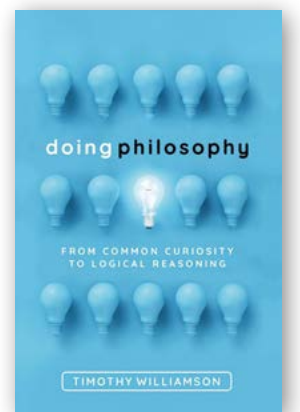
*However sophisticated and technical the methods for choosing between them, the questions philosophical theories answer are rooted in natural human wonder about the world, a wonder already expressed in children's endless questions.*

.....

Exceptionalism about philosophy becomes utterly implausible once you consider all the areas where philosophy overlaps other disciplines. For example, logic is studied by philosophers, mathematicians, and computer scientists, often asking the same questions, and answering them in the same rigorous ways. The philosophy of language extensively overlaps semantics and pragmatics as branches of linguistics—indeed, both branches derive much of their theoretical framework from philosophy. Similarly, there is a large overlap between the philosophy of mind and theoretical psychology. Both economists and philosophers have contributed to the development of decision theory and epistemic logic. The same person may count as a philosopher of physics when employed in a department of philosophy and as a highly theoretical physicist when employed in a department of physics; the same goes for philosophy of biology and theoretical biology. The landscape of inquiry is continuous, though not uniform. Which parts count as philosophy is to some extent a matter of historical accident. In particular, once one looks carefully at what is happening on the ground, the idea that philosophy's neighbours all make progress while philosophy does not is hard to take seriously.



Photography by Keiko Ikeuchi



*Doing Philosophy:  
From Common Curiosity  
to Logical Reasoning*  
OUP 2018

Something on which I said too little in *The Philosophy of Philosophy* was the similarity in the criteria used by philosophers and natural scientists to decide between theories. They emphasize unifying power, fit with what is already known, deductive strength, simplicity, and elegance. You might wonder what legitimate role those aesthetic criteria can play in theory choice: who said the truth is simple or elegant? But it is hard to do without them, in both philosophy and natural science, especially when we dismiss a whole mass of possible theories as non-starters. Think of the theory that mind-body dualism holds on a Sunday, and mind-body monism on every other day of the week, or of the theory that physics is Newtonian on a Sunday, and relativistic on every other day of the week. If we had to take such theories seriously, we'd grind to a halt, bogged down in an inexhaustible mass of unpromisingly ad hoc candidates. Their complexity and inelegance enables them to be dismissed at once.

Quite why that approach works so well has not been fully explained, but in both philosophy and natural science we'd be stuck without it.

Saying all this does not mean that philosophy should be a natural science, like physics, chemistry, and biology. Mathematics is one good precedent for a rigorous science which is not a natural science. At first sight, mathematics has no use for criteria of theory choice like unifying power, simplicity, and elegance. Mathematicians simply prove their theorems; they don't need to compare them with alternative candidate theorems. But even mathematical proofs depend on axioms or first principles, the basic steps out of which complex proofs are built, accepted without having been proved from anything else. They are not linguistic conventions—as Quine pointed out, unless you already have some first principles by which to deduce things, you can't derive any consequences

from a convention. The first principles of mathematics constitute a genuine theory, justified in part by criteria such as unifying power, simplicity, and elegance. Similarly, one can endorse that view of theory choice in philosophy without assimilating it to a natural science.

The subtitle of the book is "*From Common Curiosity to Logical Reasoning*." It emphasizes the fact that, however sophisticated and technical the methods for choosing between them, the questions philosophical theories answer are rooted in natural human wonder about the world, a wonder already expressed in children's endless questions. That wonder respects no boundaries between academic disciplines. That's where philosophy comes from.

*Timothy Williamson*  
*Wykeham Professor of Logic and Fellow of New College*



# Map of Oxford

.....  
*Ensuring that minority students have  
 the resources they need to navigate  
 successfully within the sometimes opaque  
 world of professional philosophy*  
 .....

Photography by Keiko Ikeuchi

## Maya Krishnan tells us about the Oxford chapter of Minorities And Philosophy (MAP) and its work promoting minority participation in philosophy.

The “space of reasons” is supposed to be a place where identity doesn’t count. Fundamental to the self-image of Anglophone academic philosophy is the view that what matters is the substance of what is said, rather than the demographic details of who is speaking. But if the space of reasons is identity-neutral, why is it so hard to find minorities there? Data from Julie Van Camp shows that only one in four tenure-track positions in philosophy departments ranked in the top-fifty by the Philosophical Gourment Report were held by women as of 2018 (see [http://web.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/doctoral\\_2004.html](http://web.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/doctoral_2004.html)). And data provided by the American Philosophical Association shows that fewer than one in five members self-identified as non-white in their member demographic survey.

The discrepancy between the content of academic philosophy’s mythos and the constitution of its demos led to the founding of Minorities And Philosophy (MAP), an international association of graduate students who are promoting minority participation in philosophy. There are

currently chapters at 117 philosophy departments across the world, each of which organizes programs specific to the needs of their individual departments. The 2018-19 academic year has seen the revival of Oxford’s MAP chapter, which was founded in 2013 by current DPhil student Saloni de Souza. The new iteration of Oxford’s MAP chapter grew out of a desire that many graduate students felt to move beyond an exclusive focus on gender underrepresentation and to take into account different and overlapping forms of exclusion.

One major aim of Oxford’s MAP chapter is to provide philosophical platforms for voices that are undervalued by the mainstream. MAP teamed up with DPhil students Alesia Preite and Chiara Martini in Michaelmas Term 2018 and Hilary Term 2019 in order to co-convene an intersectional feminism reading group called “Being a woman and...”. Undergraduate and graduate students gathered in the Ryle Room (in Michaelmas) and Somerville (in Hilary) to discuss readings from, among others, bell hooks, Uma Narayan, and Alia Al-Saji.

MAP also joined DPhil students Lea Cantor and Sihao Chew from Oxford Philiminality to co-host a conference on 23 June 2019 called “Pluralising Philosophy: Learning from the Case of Chinese thought.” Speakers combining expertise in critical theory and Chinese philosophy came together to reflect upon the ‘paradoxical parochialism’ of a philosophical practice that professes universality while largely privileging the problems of European thinkers.

A second goal of Oxford’s MAP chapter is to ensure that minority students have the resources they need to navigate successfully within the sometimes opaque world of professional philosophy. To that end, MAP has teamed up with People for Womxn in Philosophy (PWIP), a group of undergraduate Oxford philosophy students, to initiate an informal mentoring scheme that will connect any interested undergraduate student with a graduate student mentor (minority status is not required for participation on either side). Graduate students can share their perspectives on topics such as the etiquette of being a conference attendee, the appropriateness of approaching faculty members who share an undergraduate’s interests, or how to know when is the right time to start submitting to journals.

This kind of information is crucial to success in academia, but is not part of any official curriculum. First-generation and low-income students in particular can find themselves at a disadvantage because they have not been taught the ‘soft skills’ that fancy schools have already instilled in their more privileged peers. The mentoring scheme began accepting signups at the end of Hilary Term 2019, and the organizers aimed to have facilitated at least one meeting between mentors and mentees before the end of the academic year.

The third primary aim of Oxford MAP is to serve as a hub for information about goings-on relevant to minorities through its website, [oxfordmap.wordpress.com](http://oxfordmap.wordpress.com). Oxford already has an array of reading groups, lectures and seminars that deal with topics such as race, gender, and class, but the difficulty of

communicating across colleges means that it can be hard to stay informed about what is happening. The website publicizes these events, and organizers can ask for their events to be listed on the website by email.

The website also includes a blog that publicizes the diversity work that Oxford faculty and graduate students have been undertaking. The first full blog post featured the new undergraduate paper in feminist philosophy that Professor Mari Mikkola oversaw this past academic year. Mikkola spoke to MAP about the process through which new papers are introduced, as well as the way that the standing of feminist philosophy within analytic philosophy as a whole has changed over the past ten years and how she thinks about philosophy as inherently perspectival.

Regardless of whether one holds that philosophy should be identity-neutral or perspectival, the data make one point clear: the space of reasons as it exists today is warped and circumscribed by practices of exclusion that ultimately hurt everyone in the discipline. When philosophers find themselves edged out of the conversation because of their appearance or background or disability status, academic philosophy as a whole becomes diminished. The most fundamental goal of the Oxford MAP chapter is to be one more part of the ongoing collective process by which the discipline has been learning how to live up to its own ideals.

*Maya Krishnan is a graduate student in the Faculty of Philosophy and a Fellow of All Souls College*



# Learning and Doing

**Peter Railton** discusses the content of his 2018 John Locke Lectures: *Learning and Doing: Toward a Unified Account of Rationality in Belief, Desire and Action*.

How is it that agents such as us, natural creatures situated in a web of causal relations, are capable of being at the same time rational creatures responsive to a web of normative relations? In one traditional sense, rationality is about reasoning, and about thinking or acting in accord with such reasoning. Asking how we are capable of rationality in this sense is asking how we are capable of making transitions in thought that are not simply one thought causing another, but that are normatively guided by logical relations, and that issue in belief. Put another way, in virtue of what capacities can we be aptly responsive to logical reasons as such, such that our thinking does in fact count as reasoning and effectively shapes what we believe and do?

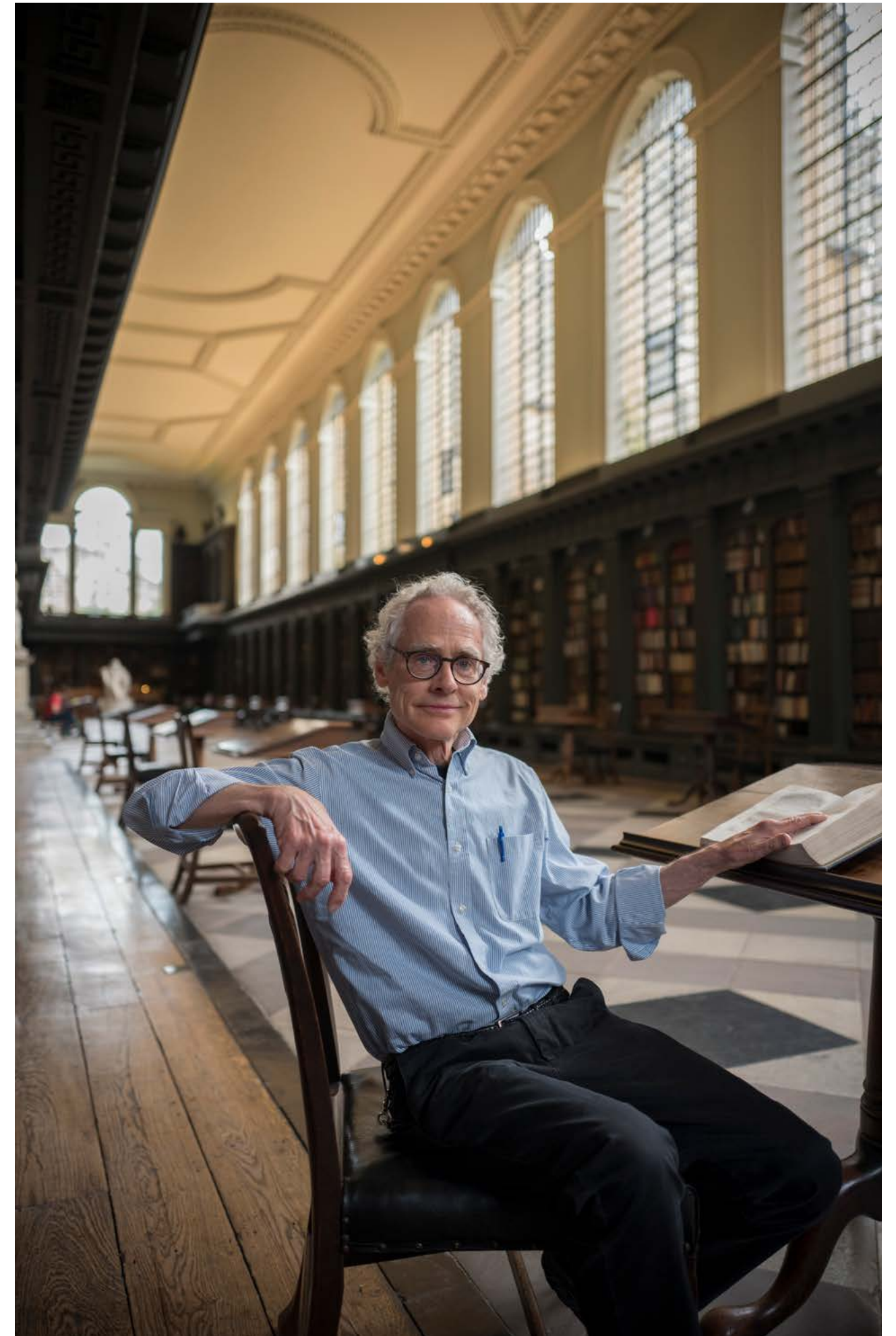
This way of putting it makes it clear that such responsiveness involves a wide array of capacities—abilities to apply general concepts or rules to particular instances, to grasp and follow inferential relations, to recall previous steps in reasoning, to imagine relevant further steps in reasoning, to be sensitive to when one's mental state is or is not propitious for reasoning, to be alive to possible errors and able to make corrections, and so on. That is, even asking how we are capable of reasoning involves examining the nature of a connected system of capacities, which must work together if we are to reason well enough to be credited with doing so rationally.

Moreover, most of these capacities must be able to work non-deliberatively in order for logical deliberation to be possible—as Lewis Carroll's Tortoise showed Achilles, the transition from one step to another, while it must somehow be guided by logical relations, cannot require another bout of reasoning, on pain of regress. What might be the nature of this kind of intelligent, non-deliberative normative guidance?

Once we see the broad nature of what it takes to be aptly responsive to logical relations, we can see that the same is true for our capacity to be aptly responsive to other kinds of normative considerations—for example, substantive evidence or goods. While reasoning will play a role in these capacities, so will perception, memory, inference, imagination, self-control, and self-correction. This is not a new point. It was emphasized, in part by invoking regress arguments, by Aristotle, Hume, and Kant. All three therefore took upon themselves the task of trying to construct a causal model of the psyche to support the workings of such responsiveness to reasons for belief, action, and feeling—if there be any such.

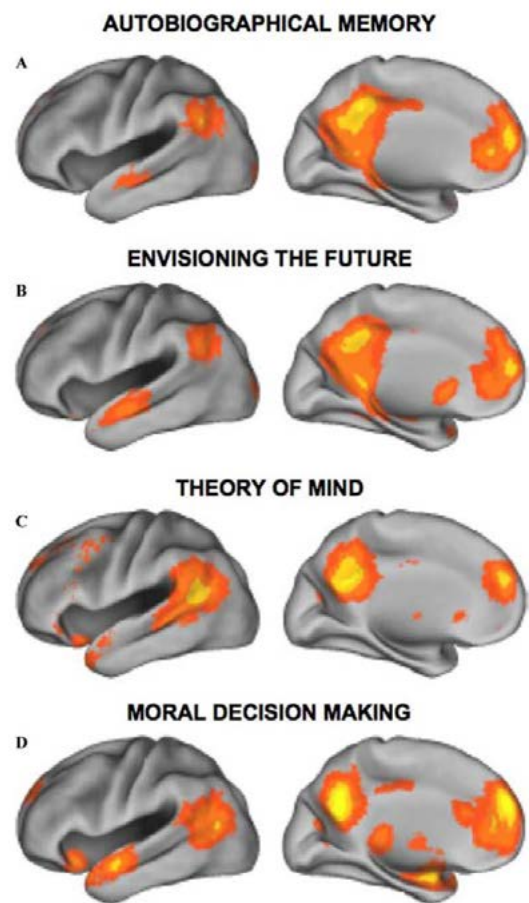
In the 2018 John Locke Lectures, I was attempting to make a start on the same task, drawing upon developments in philosophy and psychology since the time of Hume and Kant. Shared by all three figures, and critical for avoiding regress, is a 'core' picture of basic action as behavior that is caused by, and under the direct control of, beliefs and desires. This core picture, we can now see, is not the result of a quirk in human psychology—rational decision theory understands choice and action in terms of the combined influence and control of credences and preferences, and, increasingly, even artificially-intelligent agents built from scratch embody both the idea of a representational model of the world and its possibilities and a preference or value function that encodes goals and provides weights for the assessment of options, decision-making, control, and correction.

"What I cannot create I do not understand," the physicist Richard Feynman has said. So the challenge for understanding how humans can be aptly responsive to reasons can be translated into a task of building reasons-responsive agents from simpler ingredients—what the



Photography by Keiko Ikeuchi



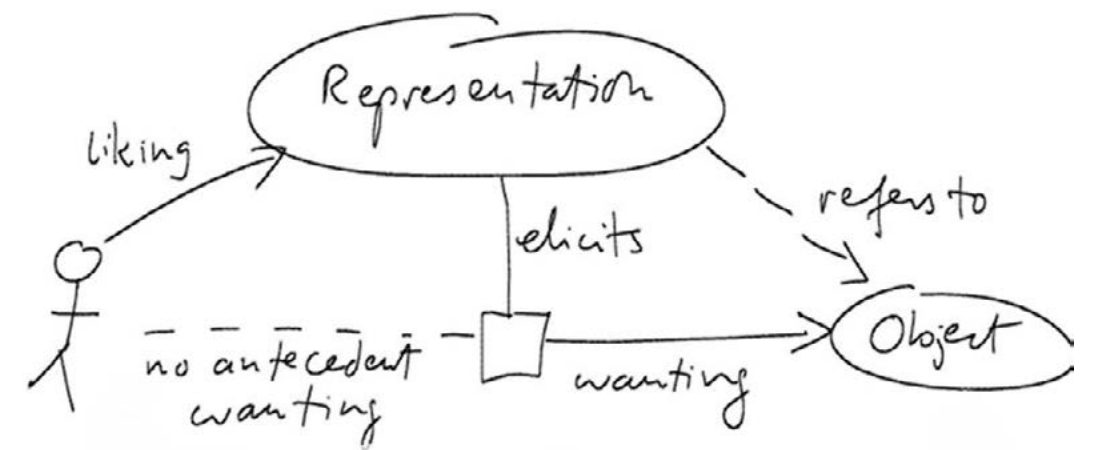


Brain scans showing locations of neurological activity during different kinds of thinking.

*Aristotle, Hume, and Kant took upon themselves the task of trying to construct a causal model of the psyche to support the workings of responsiveness to reasons for belief, action, and feeling. I was attempting to make a start on the same task.*

philosopher Paul Grice called “creature construction”. My argument, extended across the Lectures, was that we can ‘build’ belief and desire from simpler ingredients, and see thereby how a core belief-desire account of action (including the mental action of inference) equips us to become attuned, and directly responsive, to reasons for belief and action. Belief and desire turn out to have a parallel, compound nature, embodying an affective attitude toward a representational content that elicits and regulates a component of action-guidance, but then is subject to learning through feedback from unexpected or unwelcome experience. Their structure thus is dynamic and regulative, such that, for example, attraction to what Aristotle would call an ‘apparent good’ and confidence in what Hume would call ‘relations of ideas and facts’ can eventuate in intentional action or inference—action and inference under an idea of a good or a relation—without requiring conscious deliberation, avoiding thereby the risk of regress.

Such non-deliberative intentional action is not accomplished, however, by a blind disposition or habit-like ‘perception-action link’. Rather, action is mediated by a causal-evaluative model partly constituted by the agent’s beliefs and desires, which embodies a representation of the relationships, facts, and goals in light of which the action or inference makes sense, and which is capable of directly guiding the action or inference as a form of that model-based control. Thanks to recent developments in neuroscience and cognitive science, we are beginning to get an idea of what such underlying representational structures could look like, and how they can function to provide intelligent, context- and value-sensitive guidance without requiring self-conscious deliberation. Indeed, if the argument of these Lectures is correct, it is just such a capacity that underlies, and makes possible, self-conscious deliberation itself—an implicit grasp of logical relations, embodied in the structure and dynamics of a model, permits direct transition from thought to thought in a way patterned on such relations. The resulting picture emphasizes the skill-like nature of reasoning, and of practical competence, and fluent agency in general. It ties in with an emerging empirical literature on the dynamic modeling and control capacities that underlie skilled behavior—in contrast to a battery of reflex-like dispositions. Crucial to this picture, moreover, and to the sense in which it involves genuine responsiveness to reasons as such, is that it does not merely cause action, given a perceptual stimulus, but it regulates action as a continuous process, involving adaptive learning.



Learning is understood here in a way familiar from formal and behavioral learning theory, but also suggested in Aristotle’s and Hume’s accounts of how we are able to become attuned to reasons through experience. Both were especially concerned with attunement to ethical or moral reasons, and showed how distinctive kinds of psychic capacities—for well-calibrated feeling and self-control, in Aristotle, and for empathic simulation and evaluation of actions and rules, in Hume—equipped humans with the wherewithal to be responsive to the grounds upon which ethical and moral ethical reasons are based. Virtue, for them, is the resulting competency in recognizing ethical or moral reasons and in translating these reasons into appropriately-motivated action.

This idea of an acquired underlying competency, akin to other forms of social and communicative competency, also gives us an alternative picture of what might underlie ‘moral intuitions’—in contrast to the idea that moral judgment is the upshot of an ‘innate moral module’ or of the contestation between an ancient and relatively primitive emotional system and a more recent and cognitively sophisticated reasoning system (as in recent ‘dual-process’ models of moral judgment). The affective system instead turns out to be a cognitively-sophisticated probabilistic learning system and a chief locus for our general capacities for memory, representation, projection, and evaluation. Why affect? It combines a capacity to respond to values by representing the world in certain ways (as fear responds to evidence of risk to represent a situation as dangerous) and by orchestrating relevant mental and behavioral responses (as fear reorients attention, primes perception, memory, and inference, motivates a risk-reducing response, and so on). At the same time,

the expectations affect produces permit monitoring action and learning from discrepancies. Belief and desire, I argued, draw upon these features of affect to represent, guide, and learn—and their shared affective elements enable us to see how belief and desire could play the joint role of weights in a unified system for guiding thought and action guidance. This picture of the central role of well-attuned affect in our acquired competencies to respond appropriately to reasons for action is not something that would surprise Aristotle (with his idea of virtuous action as involving acquiring and acting from the ‘the right feelings’ and on the ‘right desires’) or Hume (with his idea that sentiment is part of belief as well as desire, and crucial to making us reasonable creatures).

In closing the Lectures, I drew upon some neuroscientific evidence about the infrastructure of moral judgment and some informal evidence I have gathered over years of confidential sampling of undergraduate ‘moral intuitions’ in the classroom, to argue that ‘moral intuitions’—including the infamous patterns of intuitive judgment in the ‘trolley problem’—might be of more epistemic interest than recent psychologically-inspired critiques the role of affect in moral judgment would suggest. It appears that these patterns reflect a capacity to model and evaluate the kind of agent who would perform the relevant action in the circumstances, deploying not a narrow moral competence, but a wide competence in understanding people and society—as either Aristotle or Hume would gladly have told us.

*Peter Railton is Gregory S. Kavka Distinguished University Professor; John Stephenson Perrin Professor; and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*



# Exploring Identity

## *Political and Philosophical*

**Anita Avramides** reports on the memorial conference for her colleague Kathy Wilkes

Kathleen Vaughn Wilkes was a Fellow of St Hilda's College and Lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy from 1973 until her untimely death in 2003. In April 2018 the College celebrated her life and work by holding a two-day conference in her honour. The event formed part of a year-long celebration of the 125th anniversary of the College. Close to one hundred people gathered from all around Britain and Europe to share memories of Kathy as both a philosopher and political activist. At the first session one of her brothers spoke of Kathy as a sister and family member, Professor Julia Annas reminisced about a shared time with Kathy as an undergraduate at St Hugh's College, Professor Helen Steward spoke of Kathy as a beloved tutor, Dr Edward Harcourt attested to her as an inspirational graduate supervisor, Dr Ralph Walker talked of her contribution

to the Faculty of Philosophy, and Dr Anita Avramides spoke of her as a colleague at St Hilda's. At the dinner that followed, the crime writer Val McDermid told of her friendship with Kathy that began when Val was an undergraduate at St Hilda's and Kathy the College Dean. Among the many books that Val has written, she has dedicated one to K.V. Wilkes. *The Skeleton Road* tells the story of an intrepid Oxford don from one of the Oxford women's colleges who travels to Croatia and gets caught up in the war for independence. While the story is fictional, it is inspired by Kathy's life and works.

Kathy's political work began, not in Croatia, but in (what was in 1979) Czechoslovakia. The story of how she came to be involved with the dissident philosophical community in Prague in 1979 has been recounted by many. In his obituary for Kathy, published in



*Kathy's goal was to understand the world, but by insisting on the right of others to join with her in seeking to understand it*

Publicity photograph taken by Kathy's brother, Patrick Wilkes

the *Guardian*, Bill Newton-Smith remembers that it was Kathy who first responded to an invitation from the philosophical community in Prague to conduct clandestine seminars there. Newton-Smith writes: "Harassment by the security police never daunted her, though, inevitably, the authorities eventually denied her visas. This merely galvanised her further and, with friends in the west, she created the Jan Hus Foundation, which was to become a major source of support for the dissident community." At the conference in April, Bill—along with Sir Anthony Kenny and Sir Roger Scruton—spoke of Kathy's commitment to the philosophers (and, indeed, all the people) of Prague. They recounted stories of imprisonment and of being chased to the border by the secret police. When the time came and Kathy was no longer allowed to enter Czechoslovakia, she turned



Conference at St Hilda's College April 2018

her attention to the philosophers in Dubrovnik—working at the Inter-University Centre (the IUC) to bring together academics from both the east and the west of Europe. When war broke out between Serbia and Croatia, Kathy remained in Dubrovnik. To mark her courage and assistance, she was made an honorary member of the Croatian army, and an honorary citizen of the city of Dubrovnik. After the war, she worked tirelessly for the city: raising

money, organising mine clearance and re-establishing the IUC, which had been largely destroyed by the war. For this, and her contributions to philosophy, she was awarded a doctorate honoris causa by Zagreb University. To honour her, the Croatian Ambassador, HE Igor Pogaz, attended the conference at St Hilda's in April and spoke warmly of what Kathy meant—and continues to mean—to the people of Dubrovnik.





Kathy receiving honorary citizenship of Dubrovnik in 1993



Kathy's brothers, Patrick, Andrew, and Robin Wilkes, at the unveiling of her photograph in the Oxford Philosophy Faculty

Kathy Wilkes was first and foremost an Oxford philosopher. On the second day of the conference there were sessions devoted to her philosophical work. One session concentrated on inter-disciplinary work between philosophy, psychology and neuroscience, both in Kathy's time and today. With her work in the philosophy of mind Kathy was much ahead of her day. She was one of the first philosophers to understand the importance of interdisciplinary work. Kathy's philosophical work on personal identity and the mind-body problem was informed by her knowledge of the latest empirical findings in both psychology and neuroscience. Along with colleagues at Balliol College, she ran an interdisciplinary seminar which culminated in, among other things, a volume entitled *Goals, No-Goals and Own Goals: A Debate on Goal Directed and Intentional Behaviour*. The editors of that book, Professor Denis Noble and Alan Montefiore, both spoke at the conference and recalled Kathy's contribution to the volume and those seminars. Dr Maike Glitsch

and Dr Anita Avramides spoke of the interdisciplinary work that is carried out at St Hilda's today in a workshop that they now run on a termly basis, "Brain and Mind: From Concrete to Abstract," which is open to all members of the University, to the general public and to A-level students from local schools. They acknowledged a debt to Kathy's early interest in bringing philosophy into discussion with other disciplines.

In another session, Dr Karen Nielsen (Somerville College, Oxford), Professor Joseph Moyal (Prague) and Professor Ricardo Viale (Milan) spoke about Kathy's legacy in both ancient Greek philosophy and philosophy of mind. Kathy's interests in philosophy ranged wide: she studied Greats as an undergraduate and did her PhD under the supervision of Tom Nagel and Richard Rorty at Princeton. Many of us, as we read back over Kathy's work—her books *Real People* and *Physicalism*, and the volume of papers she edited with Bill Newton-Smith, *Modelling the Mind*, as well as her many journal articles—were astonished at how

well they have stood the test of time.

The conference was brought to an end with a concert of piano music by the Botrill Piano Duo, who played music associated with both Prague and Croatia. A photograph of Kathy now hangs in the corridor outside the Ryle Room in the Philosophy Faculty. She is a woman whose intellect and whose passion touched the lives of generations of students and ordinary citizens. Bill Newton-Smith summed things up perfectly when he wrote, again in her obituary in the *Guardian*: "Some have sought to understand the world; others have sought to change it. Kathy's goal was to understand the world, but by insisting on the right of others to join with her in seeking to understand it, she did change the world as well."

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Photography by Keiko Ikeuchi

# Applied Philosophy

**Dan Zahavi** explains how his current research uses insights from phenomenology to enrich work in psychiatry, psychology, and, in particular, nursing.

Phenomenology, the tradition I was trained in and have worked on since the early nineties, is not only a distinct philosophical approach, it is also a tradition that is firmly situated within a certain Kantian or post-Kantian framework. With Kant, the pre-critical search for the fundamental building blocks of reality was transformed into a transcendental philosophical reflection on what conditions something must satisfy in order to count as real. Although phenomenology differs in many ways from traditional Kantian transcendental philosophy—Husserl, for instance, argued that it is necessary to expand Kant's concept of the transcendental and include the humanities and the manifold of human sociality and culture in the transcendental analysis—phenomenology arguably still holds on to the reflective move that is the defining feature of transcendental thought. Its main aim is not to contribute to or augment the scope of our empirical knowledge, but rather to step back and investigate the nature of, and the conditions for, this knowledge.

If this is so, one might reasonably wonder whether phenomenology can inform empirical work? The answer to that question is straightforward. From the outset, phenomenology was seen by many as offering a refreshingly new way to conduct philosophy, one that connected with everyday experience in a way not normally seen, and for more than a century phenomenology has informed the debate in a variety of disciplines including psychology, sociology,

and anthropology. Within the last few decades, phenomenology has also started to influence cognitive science and has become a significant trend within qualitative research. Max van Manen's book *Researching Lived Experience* from 1990 has, for instance, been cited more than 18,000 times.

In my own work, I have combined a scholarly engagement with Husserl's phenomenology with a systematic interest in issues also discussed in philosophy of mind and cognitive science. I have written extensively on topics such as consciousness, self-consciousness, selfhood, social cognition, empathy and shame. During the last few years, I have also started to explore how writings on collective intentionality, affective sharing and communal experience by phenomenologists such as Max Scheler, Edith Stein, Edmund Husserl, Gerda Walther, Martin Heidegger, Aron Gurwitsch, and Alfred Schutz might intersect with and impact theoretical considerations in the social sciences.

My current work in Oxford examines how ideas from phenomenological philosophy have been and can be used in psychiatry, psychology, and, in particular, nursing. The influence in some of these areas can be traced back to the early beginnings of phenomenology. In 1912, the psychiatrist (and philosopher) Karl Jaspers published a short article where he suggested that psychiatry could learn from Husserlian phenomenology. This was followed up in Jaspers'





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***From the outset phenomenology was seen by many as offering a refreshingly new way to conduct philosophy, one that connected up with everyday experience in a way not normally seen.***

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milestone contribution *Allgemeine Psychopathologie*, where he not only argued that psychiatry requires philosophical tools and distinctions but also defended the view that psychiatry has to consider the experiential perspective of the patient if it is to make scientific progress. Some years later, the French psychiatrist Eugène Minkowski reflected on how philosophical phenomenology might be relevant in clinical practice and argued that the use of a phenomenological framework and approach could help the psychiatrist gain a better understanding of the lifeworld of the patient.

Early on, ideas from phenomenology were also picked up by experimental psychologists, some of whom went on to argue that the phenomenological method was indispensable to psychology insofar as it wanted to do justice to the manifold of qualitative phenomena. In texts from the 1920s and 1930s, for instance, the German psychologist David Katz, who is primarily known for his work on touch and colour, argued both that ideas and insights from phenomenology might lead to better experiments and better theorizing, and that experimental techniques could also be used to refine phenomenological observations and explorations as well as make the findings more reliable and intersubjectively accessible.

It was only several decades later that nursing studies started to draw on phenomenology when developing and securing its own methodology and theoretical foundations. At first sight, the idea that

phenomenology might offer relevant tools to health care professionals and qualitative researchers seems fairly straightforward. The latter typically strive to take the experiential claims and concerns of their subjects seriously. When doing research on, say, cerebral palsy or locked-in syndrome, it is acknowledged that it is important for the nurse to understand what it is like to live with such conditions. All of this seems to fit well with the phenomenological approach, but it also raises some intriguing metaphilosophical questions about the relationship between philosophical phenomenology and applied phenomenology, and indeed about the very idea of applied philosophy.

If qualitative research in general, and nursing studies in particular, want to draw inspiration from phenomenological philosophy, how should it proceed? When surveying the existing discussions within qualitative research, one can discern two quite different approaches. For some, to qualify as phenomenological research it is enough if the research in question simply involves a concern for and interest in the experiences of the patients or clients. For others, the researcher must engage in some depth with the technical details of the original work of, say, Husserl or Heidegger, and even adopt part of their method in order for the research to count as phenomenological.

Despite the fact that these different approaches have gained huge popularity, I have concerns with both of them. I would argue that the first involves a

far too superficial engagement with phenomenology, while the second leads all too easily to a kind of hyper-philosophizing with little clinical relevance (something the psychiatrist Minkowski already warned against early on). Consider again the claim that phenomenology is at heart a form of transcendental philosophy. Is it reasonable to propose that nurses who wish to better understand how different dimensions of human existence are affected in pathology, illness, or difficult life-circumstances should first master Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* or learn to suspend various deep-seated metaphysical assumptions about the world before they are allowed to use ideas from phenomenology? Such a strategy not only lacks theoretical justification, it has also proven quite counterproductive. It has generated many publications where protagonists and antagonists juggle with methodological meta-reflections and various technical concepts—frequently ending up by misinterpreting both.

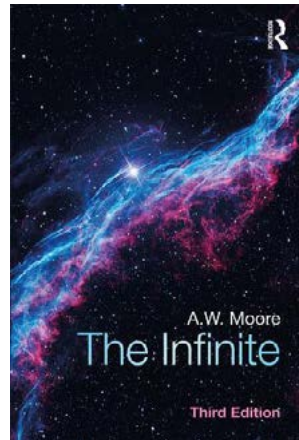
Together with my postdoc Anthony Fernandez, I am currently involved in a collaboration with qualitative researchers and nursing scholars to develop an alternative to both of the outlined approaches. My aim in developing this alternative approach is to strike a better balance between an overly superficial and an overly deep engagement with the classical works in phenomenology. Rather than trying to adhere to Husserl's cursory instructions about how to apply phenomenology, let alone seeking to adopt Husserl's or Heidegger's philosophical method, it might be more

relevant for health care professionals to let their own research and clinical practice be informed by central phenomenological concepts such as lifeworld, intentionality, empathy, pre-reflective experience, and the lived body, ie, concepts with a fairly direct clinical and interpersonal relevance. When assessing the value of the research, we should not primarily be concerned with its orthodoxy, but rather with the results it delivers. Does it allow for new insights or better therapeutic interventions? Does it make a valuable difference to the scientific community and/or the patients?

I think there is plenty of evidence suggesting that ideas from phenomenology can not only make a difference in the handling, analysis, and interpretation of the available data. They can also make a difference to the way the data are obtained in the first place—for instance, through special interview techniques or by influencing the experimental design. It is important, though, that the nursing community starts looking beyond the different proposals currently dominating the qualitative research literature. The way forward for anybody interested in the practical application of phenomenology is to draw on and learn from all the available resources. If qualitative researchers and nursing scholars join forces with philosophers, psychiatrists, and cognitive scientists then everybody will profit.

*Dan Zahavi is Professor of Philosophy, Senior Research Fellow of St Hilda's College, and Professor in the Department of Media, Cognition and Communication at the University of Copenhagen*

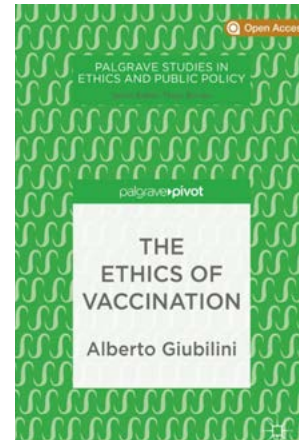




## The Infinite 3rd Edition

Adrian Moore  
Routledge 2019

The infinite is captivating and puzzling in its many guises; the endlessness of space and time; the thought that between any two points in space, there is always another; the fact that numbers go on forever; or the idea of an all-knowing, all-powerful God. In this new edition of his acclaimed introduction to the infinite, Adrian Moore takes us first on a journey from early Greek thought about the infinite to Cantor's remarkable discovery that some infinities are bigger than others. He goes on to develop his own views, including a discussion of death and human finitude and in a new part, 'Infinity superseded', refines these ideas through a re-examination of Spinoza, Hegel, and Nietzsche.

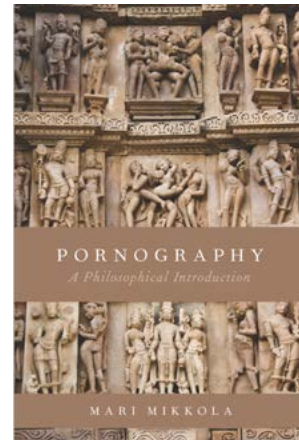


## The Ethics of Vaccination

Alberto Giubilini  
Palgrave MacMillan 2019

In this open access book Alberto Giubilini discusses individual, collective, and institutional responsibilities with regard to vaccination from the perspective of philosophy and public health ethics. It addresses the issue of what it means for a collective to be morally responsible for the realisation of immunity and what the implications of collective responsibility are for individual and institutional responsibilities. The book will appeal to philosophers interested in public health ethics and the general public interested in the philosophical underpinning of different arguments about our moral obligations with regard to vaccination.

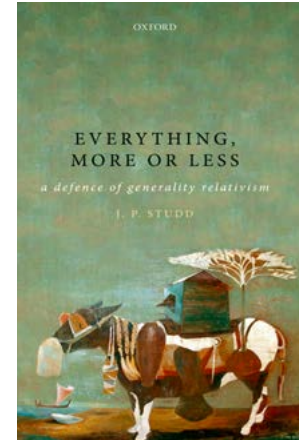
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## Pornography: A Philosophical Introduction

Mari Mikkola  
OUP 2019

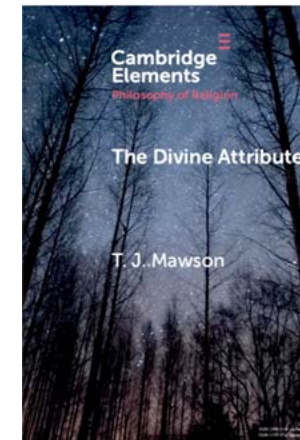
Debates over pornography tend to be heated and deeply polarized—as with other topics that have to do with sex, pornography cuts to the core of our values and convictions. Discussing the issue is complicated by widespread confusion over the conceptual and political commitments of different anti- and pro-pornography positions, and whether these positions are even in tension with one another. For a start, different people understand pornography differently and can easily end up talking past one another. In order to clarify the debate and make genuine philosophical headway in discussing the topic of pornography, Mari Mikkola here provides an accessible introduction to contemporary philosophical debates conducted from a feminist philosophical perspective.



## Everything, More or Less: A Defence of Generality Relativism

James Studd  
OUP 2019

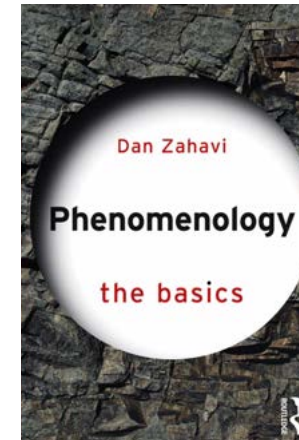
Almost no systematic theorizing is generality-free. Scientists test general hypotheses; set theorists prove theorems about every set; metaphysicians espouse theses about all things regardless of their kind. But how general can we be and do we ever succeed in theorizing about absolutely everything? Not according to generality relativism. James Studd offers a sustained defence of generality relativism. Along the way, the contemporary absolute generality debate is traced through diverse issues in metaphysics, logic, and the philosophy of language; some of the key works that lie behind the debate are reassessed; an accessible introduction is given to the relevant mathematics; and a relativist-friendly motivation for Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory is developed.



## The Divine Attributes

Tim Mawson  
CUP 2018

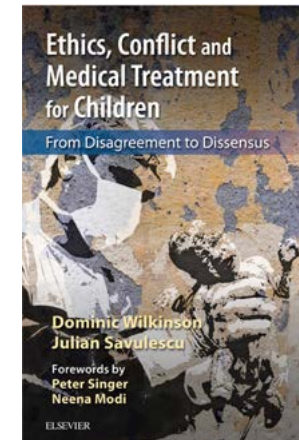
*The Divine Attributes* explores the traditional theistic concept of God as the most perfect being possible, discussing the main divine attributes which flow from this understanding, ie, personhood, transcendence, immanence, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, perfect goodness, unity, simplicity and necessity. Tim Mawson argues that the atemporalist's conception of God is to be preferred over the temporalist's on the grounds of perfect being theology, but that, if it were to be the case that the temporal God existed, rather than the atemporal God, He'd still be *perfect enough* to count as the God of Theism.



## Phenomenology: The Basics

Dan Zahavi  
Routledge, 2018

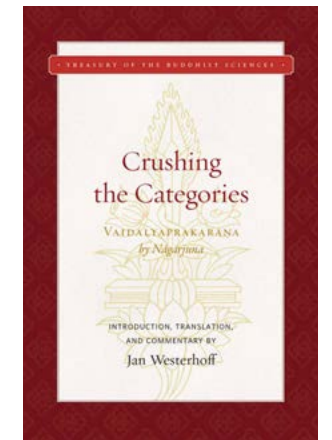
A concise and engaging introduction to one of the dominant philosophical movements of the 20th century, this lively and lucid book provides an introduction to the essential phenomenological concepts that are crucial for understanding great thinkers such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. Dan Zahavi examines and explains key questions such as: What is a phenomenological analysis? What does phenomenology have to say about embodiment and intersubjectivity? How is phenomenology distinguished from, and related to, other fields in philosophy? How do ideas from classic phenomenology relate to ongoing debates in psychology and qualitative research?



## Ethics, Conflict and Medical Treatment for Children: From disagreement to dissensus

Dominic Wilkinson,  
Julian Savulescu  
Elsevier 2018

The case of Charlie Gard, reached global attention in 2017. It led to widespread debate about the ethics of disagreements between doctors and parents, about the place of the law in such disputes, and about the variation in approach between different parts of the world. From opposite sides of the debate Dominic Wilkinson and Savulescu critically examine the ethical questions at the heart of disputes about medical treatment for children. They use the Gard case as a springboard to a wider discussion about the rights of parents, the harms of treatment, and the vital issue of limited resources, outlining a series of lessons and propose a radical new 'dissensus' framework for future cases of disagreement.



## Crushing the Categories: Vaidalyaprakarana by Nagarjuna

Jan Westerhoff ed.  
Wisdom Publications  
USA 2019

The *Vaidalyaprakarana* provides a rare glimpse of the sophisticated philosophical exchange between Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools at an early stage. Belonging to a set of Nagarjuna's philosophical works known as the *yukti-corpus*, the *Vaidalyaprakarana* is noteworthy for its close engagement with the Hindu philosophers. In the extensive analytical commentary that accompanies his translation, Jan Westerhoff investigates the interaction of the founder of the Madhyamika school with this influential school of Hindu thought; and explains how Nagarjuna's arguments that refute the Naiyayika categories are essential to the Madhyamika path in general.





# Mary Midgley

1919-2018

Sasha Lawson-Frost and Otto Räsänen

Photography by Dr Ian Ground

In her final book, *What is Philosophy For?*, Mary Midgley writes, “It is indeed interesting that our forefathers apparently could not see through their previous muddled ways of thinking until someone like Rousseau lit them up.” The words “lit them up” are chosen because Midgley is talking about what she calls Rousseau’s “intellectual explosives”—Rousseau’s withering critique of the freedom-stifling society and culture of his time, a critique which he grounds in an appeal to a clearer vision of human nature. Midgley immediately goes on to wonder about the possibility of such transformative criticism in the present: “But then, what are we taking for granted today that will be seen through tomorrow?”

Despite the destructive nature of the explosive metaphor, neither thinker is interested in just tearing things down. In his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, Rousseau laments the influence of philosophers who “move around in all directions, armed with their fatal paradoxes,” only to “undermine the foundations of faith and ... virtue.” For Rousseau, any serious search for truth is an uphill battle; since for any one way of getting things right there are always going to be a multitude of ways of getting it wrong. The result is that the pursuit of knowledge is full of people creating fundamentally negative projects. These projects can rigorously critique our existing forms of life, but they do so without finding any adequate replacement for them. And if any philosophers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries could be said to evade Rousseau’s charge, Mary Midgley is perhaps one of the clearest examples. Whilst being a harsh and unrelenting critic of dogmas like reductionism and scientism—once observing “What makes me write books is usually exasperation”—Midgley also provides us with a clear and positive vision of what philosophy is and what is for.

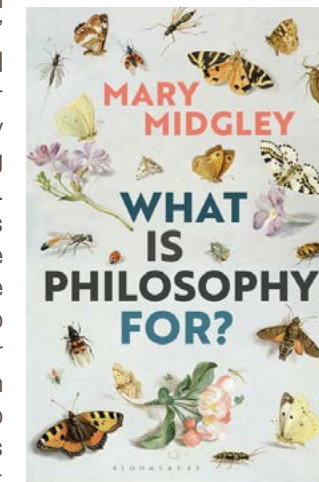
For Midgley, the job of philosophy is to make sense of our existing, muddled ways of thinking by drawing connections and patterns between them. Whilst we can’t tackle all the problems of philosophy at once, neither can we reduce them down to a single philosophical picture. We need philosophy to provide us with the conceptual tools and insights for navigating our various world-pictures, but still we cannot escape the deep complexity of nature. She is wary of the excessive use of technical vocabularies which run the risk of “inviting us to be clever at the expense of being realistic.”

Mary Midgley passed away on the 10th of October, 2018 at the age of 99. Her last book had been published no more than a month earlier, the final marquee event in a remarkable philosophical life. During Midgley’s time in Oxford from 1938 onwards at Somerville College, she formed intellectually stimulating friendships with a group of other remarkable future philosophers: Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, and Iris Murdoch, all of whom joined Oxford in the years 1937-1939. Asked why so many brilliant female philosophers all began appearing at Oxford during the Second World War,

Midgley said that “the reason was indeed that there were fewer men about then.” In particular, Midgley describes how their small wartime classes involved men and women who were “all more interested in understanding this deeply puzzling world than in putting each other down.”

Leaving the institution in 1942 upon completion of her degree and in her early twenties, it would be several decades until her first book was published; she was fifty-nine and now at Newcastle University when *Beast and Man* (1978) came out. From then onwards she would be prolific as an author: sixteen more books would follow. Her works address a huge breadth of philosophical issues, including the moral significance of the relation between science and ethics, philosophy of the environment, and the moral significance of our animality. The way Midgley addresses these issues is strikingly different to the work of much modern philosophy.

She does not tackle positions like moral egoism or scientific reductionism as stand-alone philosophical propositions which can be critiqued or emended as theoretical positions. Rather, she sees these approaches as ones that are situated in a much broader cultural context, and with an influence that extends well beyond the realms of academia. Morality and ethics are, on this conception, a fundamental part of what it means to be a part of the kind of world we live in. To have a world without morality then, would mean “losing the basic social network within which we live and communicate with others, including all those others in the past who have formed our culture.”



**What Is Philosophy For?**  
Midgley’s final book, published in 2018.

Under this conception of what philosophy and ethics are for, philosophical reasoning is crucial and necessary for understanding the innate complexity of the world, and it is not something which can ever be done away with. Philosophy is needed for illuminating the models and thought systems which underlie our thinking about pretty much everything—from science, to ecology, to human nature. We cannot simply get away from these models and thought systems: “the [only] alternative to getting a proper philosophy is not avoiding philosophy altogether, which cannot be done, but continuing to use a bad one.”

Midgley’s legacy is one that will not soon be forgotten. The insights she offers us about human nature, ethics, and how we do philosophy, are both illuminating and extremely needed. Her life and work, as well as those of Anscombe, Foot, and Murdoch, continues to be explored and celebrated, for example with the Royal Institute of Philosophy’s 2018-19 London lecture series, and with the *In Parenthesis* project, a research collaboration based in Durham and Liverpool, which also had a reading group running in Oxford this year ([womeninparenthesis.co.uk](http://womeninparenthesis.co.uk)).

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# OXFORD 2018 - 19 PHILOSOPHY