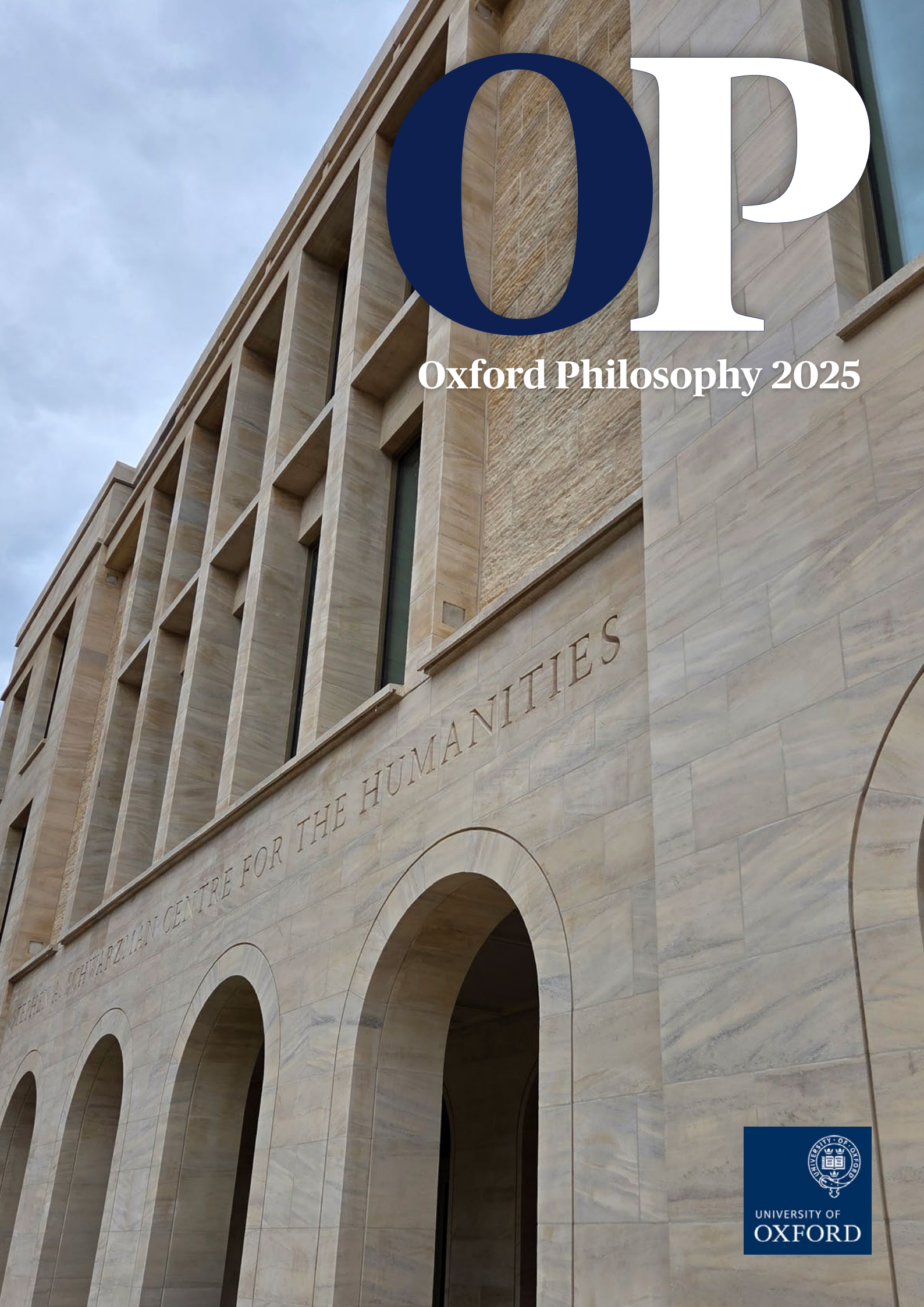

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Oxford Philosophy 2025

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Oxford Philosophy 2025

Oxford Philosophy

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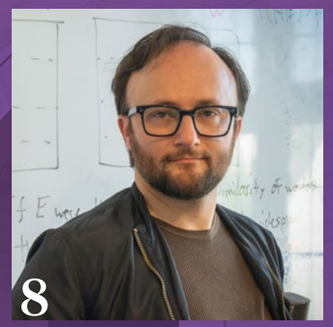


WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF FACULTY BOARD

Photography by Keiko Ikeuchi

This summer we are preparing to move into the new Stephen A Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities. Though we will miss the high ceilings and arched corridors of our current building, our new faculty space will have a substantial common area, and we are hoping that this will make it easier for us to come together as a community of philosophers.

The Faculty hosted two sets of public lectures this year. In Michaelmas Term, Melissa Lane gave the Isaiah Berlin Lectures, on the theme 'Lycurgus to Moses: Thinking Through Lawgivers in Legal and Political Philosophy'. The Berlin Visiting Professorship was set up in 2004 for a period of twenty years, so this was the final set of Berlin lectures for which we have funding. The 2024 lectures were a fitting tribute to Berlin's legacy, drawing audiences not only from Philosophy, but also from Politics, Law, History, and Classics. In Trinity Term, Richard Pettigrew gave the John Locke lectures, 'From a Point of View', exploring questions of both theoretical and practical rationality: how we should build our point of view on the world, how this point of view should evolve, and how we should act in the light of it.

There have been two exciting new developments at our Institute for Ethics in AI. First, we have a new endowed post, funded by a donation from Brendan McCord. Our inaugural McCord Professor of Philosophy and AI, Philipp Koralus, is directing a Laboratory for Human-Centered AI (HAI Lab), within the Institute. We are very grateful to Brendan McCord for his generosity in making this possible. Second, Caroline Green leads the Institute's new AI Accelerator Fellowship program, funded by an additional donation from Stephen Schwarzman. This visiting fellowship program will bring together experts from industry, academia, government, and civil society to work collaboratively on the ethical questions posed by emerging AI technologies.

We are delighted to be able to offer congratulations to Adrian Moore, who has been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy, and to our DPhil student, Eric Sheng, who was the British Society for the History of Philosophy graduate prize winner for 2024.

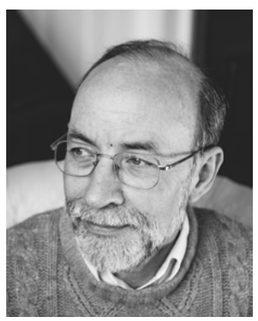
We welcome one new tutorial fellow to the Faculty, Samuel Fletcher (Merton), who is an expert in Philosophy of Physics. At the beginning of the year, Jeff McMahan retired from the Sekyra and White's Professorship in Moral Philosophy. In June, there was a conference in his honour: 'Just Philosophy: A Tribute to Jeff McMahan'. Our new Sekyra and White's Professor, David Owens, will be joining us in August. Finally, at the end of this academic year, Lindsay Judson retired from his tutorial fellowship in ancient philosophy at Christ Church, a position he has held since 1987. In September, there will be a conference to mark his retirement, and to thank Lindsay for his contributions over many years to both the College and the Faculty.

Ursula Coope
Professor of Ancient Philosophy
Professorial Fellow, Keble College

Eric Sheng Wins BSHP Graduate Essay Prize

Congratulations to Eric Sheng, currently a D Phil student at Merton College, who was the winner of the 2024 British Society for the History of Philosophy Graduate Essay Prize. The prize of £1000 is awarded annually, via open submission, to the writer of an essay that makes a significant contribution to the history of philosophy. Eric's winning essay is titled 'Locke's Epistemic Individualism Revisited: Observation and the Domain of Testimony'.

Adrian Moore Elected Fellow of the British Academy



Photograhy : Mim Saxl

The Faculty is delighted to announce that Adrian Moore has been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy. On his election, Adrian observed, 'I am of course both honoured and flattered to have been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy. I am very grateful to the Academy, but also to St Hugh's College, to the Faculty of Philosophy, and to the University more widely for the many ways in which they have supported me throughout my academic career. I hope that I will be able to contribute to the work of the Academy in a way that will serve as an expression of my gratitude'.

Accelerator Fellowship Programme: Advancing AI Ethics

The Accelerator Fellowship Programme (AFP), housed within the Institute for Ethics in AI and led by Caroline Green, is a five-year initiative bringing together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to address the ethical challenges of artificial intelligence. Its mission is to build a global hub for AI ethics by fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and championing responsible AI development.

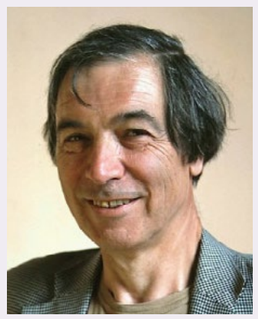
The AFP focuses on pressing ethical concerns such as human rights, bias, privacy, accountability, and transparency. It operates through three main pillars: Events and workshops to build cross-sector understanding and shared language; Fellows' research, leading their own projects tackling key ethical issues; Collaborations with organisations, universities, and institutes to co-create practical solutions.

Key themes it has been exploring include: AI and Creativity—fostering dialogue between creators, AI developers, academics, and industry to ensure AI respects creative rights; an International AI Bill of Human Rights—examining the possibility of a global framework to protect human rights amidst rapid technological change and regional differences; AI and Social Care—engaging with care sector stakeholders to ensure AI enhances human well-being in health and social services.

AFP Fellows - Clockwise LtoR: Alondra Nelson; Cass Sunstein; Joy Buolamwini; Yuval Shany

Follow updates and events at: afp.oxford-aiethics.ox.ac.uk

Accelerator Fellowship Programme



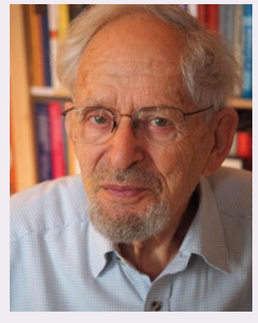
Hugh Rice

1943-2025

The Faculty is very sad to announce the death of Hugh Rice at his home in Avoine, France. Hugh arrived at Christ Church in 1961 where he read Classics as a Marjoribanks Scholar (BA 1965) and then the B Phil (1967) as a Senior Scholar. Apart from a year as an instructor in philosophy at the University of Connecticut, Storrs (1967-8), Hugh spent the rest of his career at The House, first as a college lecturer (1968-9) and then as Official Student (Fellow) and Tutor in Philosophy (from 1969 until his retirement in 2008). Hugh's philosophical interests were mainly in epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of religion. He was the author of numerous journal articles and the book *God and Goodness* (OUP, 1999), in which he argued that 'belief in God need not be seen as a strange or irrational kind of belief, but can be a natural extension of our ordinary ways of thinking'. However, Oxford alumni are most likely to remember Hugh as the author of a copious and helpful set of notes designed to accompany 'Hodges' for those taking logic at Prelims and Mods. There will be a memorial service for Hugh at Christ Church in September.

A fine philosopher ... with a vigorous intellect and a perceptive eye ... a wonderful colleague, supportive and wise

Sarah Foot, Dean of Christ Church



Alan Montefiore

1926-2024

The Faculty is very sad to announce the death of Alan Montefiore. Alan spent his national service in Singapore helping repatriate Japanese prisoners of war before reading PPE at Balliol College (1948-51). His career began at the then new Keele University, but he returned to Balliol nine years later as a fellow where he remained until his retirement in 1994.

Alan's early work was focussed on moral philosophy, including his book *A Modern Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (Routledge, 1958). However, he was most famous for bridging the divide between Anglo-American and continental European philosophy, and counted Jacques Derrida among his friends. He co-founded the Forum for European Philosophy in 1996, and was President until 2018. He was also a founding member of the Jan Hus Education Foundation, giving underground lectures in central Europe in the 1980s, for which he received the Czech Honorary Jan Masaryk Silver Medal in 2020.

Alan was the life and soul of Balliol PPE, and his Kant classes were legendary

Sudhir Hazareesingh, Fellow of Balliol College

Alan's Jewish heritage played a prominent role in his intellectul life, and he served, like his father Leonard before him, as President of the Wiener Holocaust Libary in London. The notion of identity was a central theme in Alan's philosophical writing, and he combined the two in his book *A Philosophical Retrospective: Facts, Values, and Jewish Identity* (Routledge, 2011).

Alan's late colleague, Bill Newton-Smith, once observed: 'Students were encouraged to do their own thing under judicious guidance,' and his former student, Sudhir Hazareesingh (now Balliol's Tutorial Fellow in Politics) summed up his affection as follows: 'Alan was the life and soul of Balliol PPE, and his Kant classes were legendary'.

RETIREMENT

Jeff McMahan

Sekyra and White's Professor of Moral Philosophy and Professorial Fellow of Corpus Christi College

Jeff McMahan has been one of the defining moral philosophers of his generation. His intellectual path began in English literature before leading him from PPE at Corpus Christi College to doctoral work under the guidance of Jonathan Glover, Derek Parfit, and Bernard Williams. After many years teaching in the United States, he returned to Oxford in 2014 as Sekyra and White's Professor of Moral Philosophy, and Professorial Fellow of Corpus Christi College. There, he became a generous mentor, exacting interlocutor, and leading figure in the University's philosophical life.

After early work on the ethics of killing, Jeff became the central figure in the contemporary revival of just war theory. His influence spans philosophical, legal, and policy debates alike. *The Ethics of Killing* (OUP, 2002) and *Killing in War* (OUP, 2009) remain touchstones in their fields.

What unites his contributions is not only their range, but their moral ambition: to understand what we owe to others—even in the hardest cases—and always with an eye to how moral reasoning can better track what matters most.

Jeff continues to work on *The Ethics of Creating, Preserving, and Ending Lives*, a book that addresses some of the most challenging questions in moral theory. He retired from teaching in 2024—though not, we trust, from philosophy. His career was celebrated at a conference at Corpus in June entitled 'Just Philosophy: A Tribute to Jeff McMahan'. Speakers included many of the most prominent moral philosophers in the world, such as Peter Singer, Shelly Kagan, and Frances Kamm.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

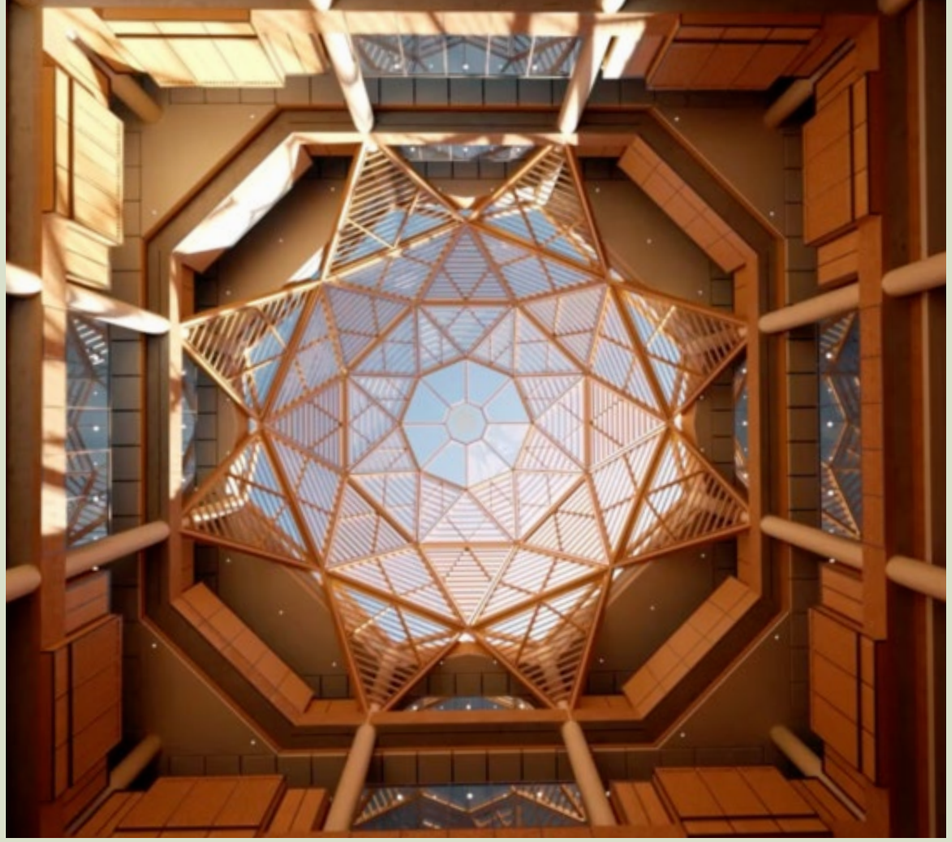
NEW ARRIVAL

Samuel Fletcher

Professor of Philosophy of Physics and Tutorial Fellow in Philosophy at Merton College

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

Samuel Fletcher studied physics and applied mathematics as an undergraduate at Princeton University before switching to philosophy of science in graduate school. While studying for his PhD in the Department of Logic and Philosophy of Science at the University of California, Irvine, he completed an MS in Statistics after becoming interested in the foundations of statistical evidence. Samuel has held a Marie Curie Fellowship at the Munich Center for Mathematical Philosophy and visiting positions at the Universities of Pittsburgh, Geneva, Oxford, Bristol, Bonn, and the LSE. Before joining the Oxford Philosophy Faculty, he was Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Much of Samuel's research has concerned the foundations of physics and of statistics, and how problems in these fields inform and are informed by broader issues in the philosophy of science. He also has interests in the conceptual and physical basis of computation, metaphilosophy, and the history of physics and philosophy of science.



A Home for the Humanities

The Stephen A Schwarzman Centre

William Whyte

Does thought require a place to think? As an architectural historian, I am not qualified to offer a normative answer—I leave that up to you. But I have made a career out of that question, exploring the different ways in which different ages have designed and built their universities and schools. From Plato onwards, where people think and teach and study has mattered. The Academy, after all, had its sacred grove and gymnasium, its banquets and sacrifices to the muses, its portrait of Socrates and—eventually—the burial site of Plato himself. Its gateway marked it out as a place apart, and later legend claimed it was surmounted with an inscription—Ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσίτω, i.e., 'Let no-one ignorant of geometry enter here'.

That epigraph is engraved at the entrance of the monumental Mathematical Institute, built on the site of the old Radcliffe Infirmary about a decade ago. Next door has arisen a still larger edifice—the largest capital project ever undertaken by the University—which will, in autumn 2025, become the new home for the Philosophy Faculty: its new place to think.

The Stephen A Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities is the result of the largest gift ever given to the University, which currently stands at £185 million. It will house seven faculties—including Philosophy, seven libraries—including the Philosophy Faculty Library, two institutes—including the Centre for Ethics in AI, a place to work with visiting school pupils, as well as a suite of spaces for performance, conferences, and public engagement events. There will be a 500-seater concert hall, a 250-seat theatre, a 100-seat cinema, a recital hall, a black box experimental performance space, a white box gallery, and a new home for the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments.

Much of the building is designed to be shared with the people of Oxford, making it a pioneering attempt to break down the divisions between town and gown. While the upper floors, which contain the Faculties and the new Bodleian Humanities Library will only be accessible to members of the University, the ground floor—with its cafes and places to read—will be fully open to everyone. The performances are also intended to attract a wide audience and, to that end, John Fulljames, former director of the Royal Danish Opera Company, has been recruited to run a whole new Cultural Programme.

With environmental sustainability in mind, the Schwarzman Centre has been built to Passivhaus standards. An approach to construction that aims to achieve the lowest possible energy consumption and the highest levels of comfort, Passivhaus was developed in Germany and sets a dauntingly rigorous level of precision to pass the test. Indeed, this will be the largest Passivhaus building in Europe, and the only Passivhaus concert hall in the world. To achieve the exacting demands on airtightness, the façade alone has been lined with three football pitches worth of insulation.

The building materials and methodology have also been informed by a desire to cut down on carbon. Faced in stone from Rutland and hand-made bricks from York, the structural steel is from Bolton and architectural steel from Sheffield. Ninety-seven per cent of the companies involved are British. The contactors, Laing O'Rourke, have used low-carbon concrete and ensured that theirs has been an all-electric site, without any diesel generators. Transport to and from the Laing O'Rourke factory, where much of the building was prefabricated, was undertaken using recycled vegetable oil as fuel.

Designed by Hopkins, architects of Glyndebourne Opera House, the Smith Campus Center at Harvard, and Portcullis House in Westminster, the Schwarzman Centre was intended to fulfil a very precise, but also challenging, brief: 'a contemporary version of a traditional Oxford building'. That explains the materials used and the echoes of older edifices in the façade. There is something here of Hawksmoor, of the Clarendon Press, perhaps even of New College; and something, too, designed to signal its civic as well as academic identity. Sitting surrounded by a variegated collection of other styles, which range from the Greek Revival of the Observatory to the geometric abstraction of the Blavatnik, the building does not compete, but is intended to feel like the solid, substantial core around which the others have evolved.

Inside, the references to older buildings continue, but in a more playful way. At the heart of the Centre is the huge Great Hall. The same size as the Radcliffe Camera, it gestures back to that great icon with a 63-tonne dome of plate-glass, steel, and timber. But it is, of course, not just the materials and the design that differentiate this from its eighteenth-century precursor. It is also its purpose, for while the Radcliffe Camera was designed exclusively for the University, this is open to all.

The Great Hall also evokes the Old Schools Quad at the heart of the Bodleian Library. Each of the Faculties has its own front door, with its name set above it. To stand in that space is to see a complete picture of the seven faculties located there: English and History, Linguistics and Modern Languages, Music, Philosophy, and Theology. The Humanities Library, which will combine seven collections in one, also opens into the Great Hall, as does the Oxford Internet Institute (OII), a Social Science department that has found a home with the Humanities.

Each faculty has a slightly different footprint, though all share some features in common: seminar rooms, offices for academics and professional staff, a social space and facilities for graduate students. Overall, indeed, the building provides more than 400 desks for our postgraduate community. Philosophy will have a presence on three of the four floors. At ground level, there is a suite of rooms for public engagement. At the first floor there are rooms for the Centre for Ethics in AI. The Faculty common room and seminar rooms, together with a series of tutorial and administrative offices, will be on the second floor, between History and the OII.

Building work began on the project in February 2023 and will be completed in the summer of 2025, leaving (almost) two months to move everyone in before Michaelmas Term. It will be a huge operation, but one that will, we hope, provide a wonderful environment for Philosophy; if not quite a new Academy, then perhaps a new sort of agora. Certainly, the opportunities for public engagement and interdisciplinary work will be unrivalled. But so will be the facilities for simply studying and teaching philosophy itself. At a time in which humanities departments are being closed across the world, Oxford is almost uniquely fortunate to be able to build a great new home. We look forward to welcoming you soon.

William Whyte is Professor of Social and Architectual History and a fellow of St John's College. He has served as the University's Senior Responsible Owner and chair of the Project Board during the building of The Stephen A Schwarzman Centre.

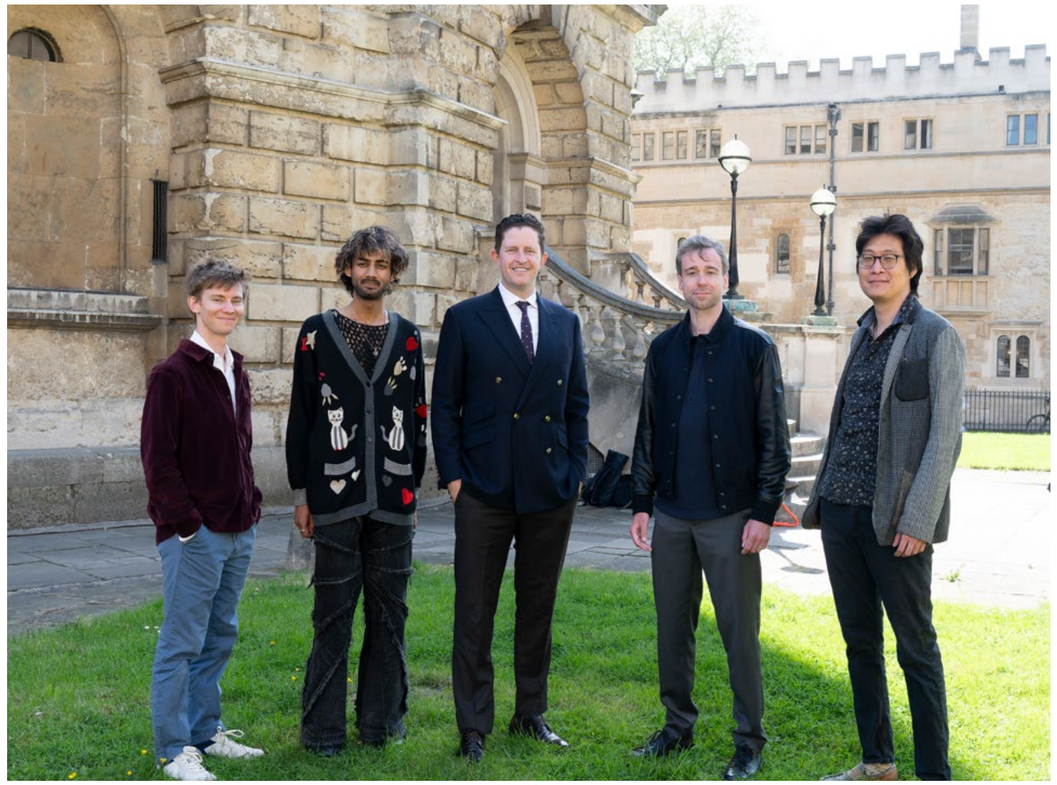
HAI Lab launch, Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Laboratory for Human-Centered AI

In 2024 the new Laboratory for Human-Centered AI (HAI Lab) opened in the Institute for Ethics in AI, which is part of the Faculty of Philosophy. It is directed by the inaugural McCord Professor of Philosophy and AI, Philipp Koralus.

The mission of HAI Lab is to build a philosophy-to-code pipeline that will bring together philosophers and technologists to collaborate on open-source proof-of-concept software projects to help bring AI into the service of human flourishing. This mission is facilitated by a fellowship program in cooperation with the Cosmos Institute to allow technologists and builders to collaborate with philosophers at Oxford. Early fellows have already brought in experience from companies including Google, Imbue, and OpenAI, and the first cohort have moved on to places including LinkedIn and Apple. The November launch gala in the Dinosaur Hall of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History brought in 100 luminaries from tech, computer science, and philosophy.

There are two new annual events in the Oxford calendar associated with HAI Lab. One is the Cosmos Lecture in Human-Centered AI. The inaugural lecture was given by Turing laureate Leslie Valiant of Harvard University in October, on 'The importance of being educable'. The other new annual event is the Trinity Term Philosophy, AI, and Innovation graduate seminar, which explores issues at the intersection of philosophy, AI, and technological innovation. The seminar welcomes a variety of visiting discussants from philosophy, computer science, and the technology industry throughout term. The focus is on how a concern for human flourishing can be embedded in the global technology development pipeline, and on exploring how broader bridges can be built between philosophy and technology. In its second iteration—this past academic year—the seminar culminated in a clinic to facilitate grant applications for independent summer projects on the themes of the seminar.



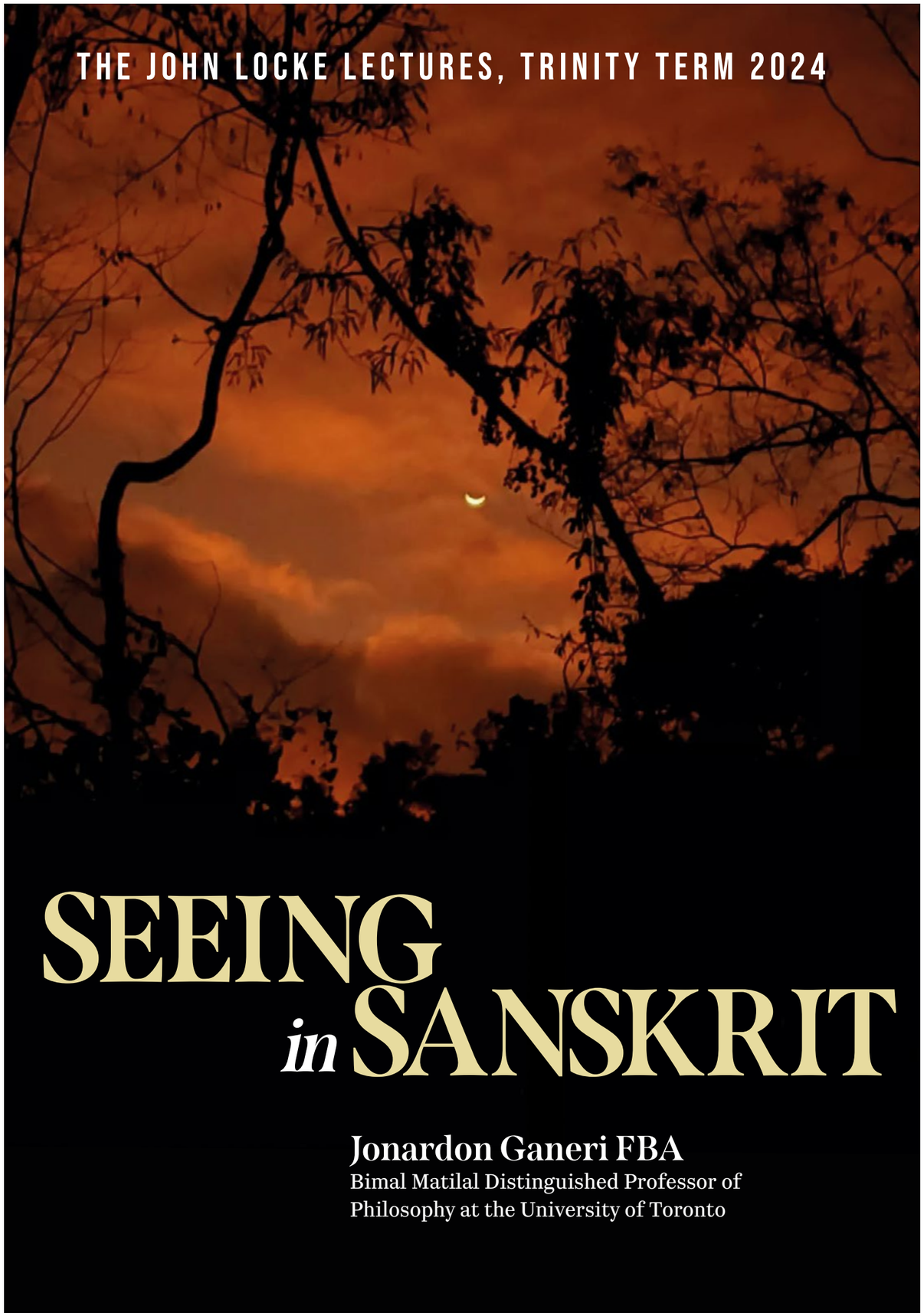
Brendan McCord and Philipp Koralus with HAI Lab Cosmos Fellows (LtoR) Ryan Kearns, Jules Desai, and Vincent Wang Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

Brendan McCord and Adriane McCord

Philipp Koralus with his daughter Selina

Problems related to the nature of reason and collective intelligence are a particular focus of HAI Lab. For example, in his book *Reason and Inquiry* (OUP, 2023), Philipp Koralus proposed a novel mathematical theory of reason, as an alternative to familiar logical and probabilistic, and decision-theoretic frameworks. The framework proposed by Philipp and collaborators is based on the ancient Socratic idea that the nature of thought lies in the dynamics of questions. A Python package of the operations of the erotetic theory is currently in beta testing and will be one of the first outputs of the HAI Lab philosophy-code pipeline. This framework lends itself to structured evaluation of the reasoning capacities of large language models, which has been discussed in a recent piece in WIRED Italia. A more recent project is concerned with mapping what Philipp calls the 'inquiry complexes' underlying philosophy using AI.

For more information about HAI Lab visit www.hailab.ox.ac.uk



SEEING *in* SANSKRIT

Jonardon Ganeri FBA
Bimal Matilal Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto

Photography : Sarah Seymour

Among the philosophers of classical India, some made the defence of realism into a way of life. These absolute realists unflinchingly upheld the mind-independence of everything they knew, including of wholes as distinct from sums of parts, of absences as much as presences, and of subjects of experience irreducible to streams of psychological events. Their founding text was the *Nyāya-sūtra*, a text that ranks in global significance as on a par with the *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā* of Nāgārjuna or the *Theaetetus* of Plato. They continued their work from the first century CE right through up to the 20th; indeed there are Naiyāyikas alive today. Perhaps theirs is one of the longest uninterrupted traditions of philosophical inquiry in history.

Naiyāyikas were realists in the philosophy of perception too, indeed naïve realists, and it was to a reconstruction and defence of Nyāya naïve realism that Bimal Matilal devoted himself during the years he held the Spalding Chair at All Souls College in Oxford, resulting in his magisterial work *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge* (OUP, 1991). In addition to the task of historical retrieval, Matilal provides rearticulations that make the classical theory available to contemporary philosophical audiences, and he is willing to innovate, developing the classical theory in new directions and providing fresh arguments of his own. Despite being a book about a centuries-old philosophical tradition, Matilal's essay was perhaps ahead of its time. For it has only been more recently that naïve realism has enjoyed a renewed degree of philosophical popularity, driven largely by fresh interest among philosophers of perception many of whom have been based in Oxford. For this reason, and because Matilal was himself an Oxford philosopher, now, nearly forty years after its original publication, seemed a good time to revisit and reassess Matilal's singular contribution in my John Locke Lectures.

Matilal tells the story of philosophy in classical India as an encounter between two diametrically opposed views about the nature of perceptual experience. One view, which Matilal associates with Buddhism and labels 'Buddhist Phenomenalism', has it that what we are most immediately acquainted with in perceptual experience are mental entities of some type, perhaps akin to sense data or ideas or 'forms' of appearance (*ākāra*). The opposing view is that of the Nyāya philosophers, and Matilal calls it 'Nyāya Realism'. Nyāya Realism is a sort of relationalism, according to which perceptual experience constitutively relates perceivers to ordinary material objects and their mind-independent properties.

In my Locke Lectures, I proposed a different way to tell the story of Indian epistemology. In my version there is again an opposition and oscillation between two rival views. One view is that of Infallibilist Relationalism, the view that perceptual experience, fundamentally constituted by relations of conscious acquaintance with mind-independent objects and their properties, is never in itself erroneous, but that we can be misled in the judgements or beliefs that we make on its basis. The advocates of such a view, as I showed in detail in my third lecture, are committed to the claim that what seem to be instances of perceptual illusion are in reality nothing but cases where our actual perceptual experience has mislead us into believing something false. The opposing view is the Content View, which holds instead that perceptual experience represents the world as being a certain way, and so sustains accuracy conditions which may or may not be met.

My argument was that the Nyāya philosophers seek a middle way, a position that partially agrees with both Infallibilist Relationalism and with the Content View. It agrees with the Infallibilist that perceptual experience is fundamentally constituted by relations of conscious acquaintance with mind-independent objects and their properties, but it agrees with the Content View that perceptual experience might itself be mistaken. Put another way, Nyāya seeks to accommodate the idea that there can be perceptual error but to do so without any commitment to the idea that perceptual experience has representational content. Nyāya philosophers argue that perceptual experience must have a structure if we are to be able to account for perceptual phenomenology, perceptual error, and the epistemic role of perceptual experience in grounding judgement. Rejecting any idea that the content of perceptual experience is representational, it must rather be that whatever structure perceptual experience has it borrows from the structure of the world as thus experienced.

In my Locke Lectures, I proposed a different way to tell the story of Indian epistemology.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

In my lectures, I claimed that if we are to hold faith with the naïve realism of the Nyāya then their account of perceptual structure cannot quite be as Matilal formulates it. Matilal's account follows a concession, made in the late first millennium under duress from Buddhism, but one which undercuts the clarity of the early thinkers' commitment to naïve realism. Matilal speaks, in his exegesis of the Nyāya claim that ordinary face-to-face perceptual experience is *savikalpaka*—meaning that it is associated with *vikalpa*, the constructive imagination—adding that such perceptual experience is *infused* or *soaked* with imagination.

The metaphor is borrowed from Matilal's Oxford colleague Peter Strawson, who in turn intended it to be an exegesis of a claim made by Kant (*Critique of Pure Reason* A120, note a). So I called 'the Kant-Strawson thesis' the thesis that genuine perceptual experience is infused or saturated or soaked with concepts. Strawson argued that imagination is required both to perceive a particular object as identical to the same particular object a few seconds ago, and to perceive a particular object as belonging to the same type as other particular objects. Strawson's interpretation of Kant is not uncontroversial; for Wilfred Sellars, the upshot of Kant's remark is instead that perceptual consciousness involves the constructing of sense-image models of external objects, thereby associating the idea with the projection of mental images rather than concepts onto objects, an activity Michael Dummett called 'proto-thought'.

I argued in my fourth and fifth lectures that there is a role for Strawson's idea in our best account of our ability to perceive absence, and that absence perception is constitutively linked to our ability to perceive art-works. In particular, an audience's perception of characters on a theatre stage, and the staged emotions they enact, trades on a perception of the absence of the real subject of the play or the real emotion being enacted—a non-Aristotelian theory of theatre inspired by the work of the Indian logicians and aestheticians whose ideas Bimal Matilal did so much to publicise and promote during his years at All Souls.

To listen to podcasts of Jonardon's Locke lectures go to: www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/john-locke-lectures

The Problem of Copredication

Ofra Magidor discusses her recent research in the philosophy of language

Consider a carton of eggs. The eggs will share many properties: they might all have the properties *being white*, *being round*, and *being fragile*. But properties can often be shared even by objects that are much more dissimilar to each other. For example, a philosophy lecture and a painting on the wall can both have the property of *being interesting*, even though the lecture is an event and the painting is a concrete object. And a scarf and a gem can both have the property of *being blue*, even though the scarf is an artifact made of wool, and the gem is a natural substance made of stone. Furthermore, objects can often share a property even though they have this property in very different ways. For example, the philosophy lecture might be interesting by containing novel arguments, while the painting might be interesting by containing an unusual arrangement of colours. Similarly, the scarf might be blue by being navy-blue, while the gem might be blue by being turquoise. In other words, properties are generally *very versatile*: the very same property can be had by very different objects, and had by them in different ways.

The idea that most properties are versatile to a certain extent is a mundane observation. But for the past few years, I have been working—together with David Liebesman from the University of Calgary—on a project which maintains that this observation should be extended: many properties are far more versatile than theorists typically assume that they are (we call this claim Property Versatility).

As it stands, Property Versatility is a vague claim: just how versatile are different properties and in what ways? Nonetheless, this insight turns out to be incredibly fruitful in addressing a wide range of issues in the philosophy of language, metaphysics, and beyond.

One central issue concerns *the problem of copredication*. Copredication is a linguistic phenomenon whereby a sentence seemingly ascribes two categorically incompatible properties to a single entity, and yet the sentence is perfectly acceptable and even true. Here are two examples:

(1) Lunch was delicious but took hours.

(2) The book on the shelf was written by Tolstoy.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

It is easy to think of scenarios where uttering these sentences would be perfectly acceptable and describe something true. Yet many theorists find this very puzzling. 'Lunch', the thought goes, has two meanings: it could pick out a portion of food (which is eaten around midday), or could pick out a kind of event (which takes place around midday and involves eating food). But on the face of it, neither meaning accounts for the true reading of (1): lunch in the food sense can be delicious but not take hours, and lunch in its event sense can take hours but not be delicious. More generally, the worry goes, no object can have both the properties of *being delicious* and of *taking hours*. Similarly, theorists have thought that 'book' in (2) could either pick out a physical object (a copy or volume) which can be on the shelf but not written by Tolstoy; or an informational object (an abstract text or novel) which was written by Tolstoy but cannot be on the shelf.

There is a significant literature on the problem of copredication. Chomsky famously maintained that the problem is so intractable that it (together with a number of additional troublesome phenomena) should lead us to give up on the project of systematically assigning meanings to individual words, and combining them to yield truth-conditions for sentences. Others in the literature have been less sceptical, but nevertheless propose accounts of copredication which assume that copredication sentences have a much more complex structure than they appear to have, and require adopting a range of non-orthodox machinery in semantics and metaphysics.

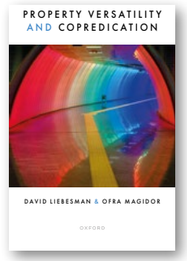
However, once we take on board Property Versatility, we can see that there is no need for such radical reactions to the problem. According to the Property Versatility approach to copredication, (1) and (2) have just the structure they seem to have, namely ascribing to a single object the two ordinary properties mentioned in the sentence. This is enabled because at least one of the two properties mentioned turns out to be more versatile than theorists have taken it to be. For example, it suffices for a true reading of (2) that *being on the shelf* is versatile enough that it can apply to informational books (in addition to volumes).

How can informational books be on shelves? The key idea is that just as the navy scarf can be blue in a different way than the turquoise gem, so can the informational book be on the shelf in a different way than the physical volume. Still, when we say that both the scarf and the gem are blue, we are talking about the very same property *being blue*: we are not speaking non-literally, or somehow equivocating on the term 'blue'. Similarly, the informational book and the physical volume can both have the very same property *being on the shelf* without any equivocation. Of course, this is compatible with thinking that the informational book has this property in virtue of the fact that a physical copy of it has it. (Compare: I have the property of *touching the keyboard*, in virtue of the fact that my fingers have this very same property.)

Not all properties are versatile in precisely the same way. Suppose I have three copies of *War and Peace* on my shelf. In this context, there is a reading of 'book' on which it's true to say that there are three books on the shelf (the three copies), but also another reading on which it's true to say that there is only one book on the shelf (the novel *War and Peace*). This latter reading should not come as a surprise given the claim that informational books often have the (versatile) property *being on the shelf*. But now suppose that I accidentally spill some coffee on all three copies. It does not seem true to say that there is exactly one coffee-stained book on the shelf (we only get a reading on which we count *three* coffee-stained books—the three volumes). This suggests that the predicate 'is coffee-stained' denotes a property that is less (or at least differently) versatile than the one denoted by 'on the shelf': having its text appear in a coffee-stained volume is not sufficient for an informational book to count as coffee-stained. This also means that we cannot make sweeping generalisations about how to account for each copredication sentence: we have to carefully consider the evidence in each case. In the case of 'The coffee-stained book is written by Tolstoy', we can only interpret the sentence as being about a physical volume which has the versatile property of *being written by Tolstoy*.

Property Versatility has implications far beyond philosophy of language and linguistics. Metaphysicians have been interested in what sort of entities cities are, and in particular how it can be true of London that it both *has an area of 1582 sqm* (a property we typically ascribe to geographical areas) and that it *elected Sadiq Khan as mayor* (a property we typically ascribe to populations). In discussions of the metaphysics of artworks, philosophers have wondered how a symphony can have properties like *being one hour long* or *being sonorous* (properties we typically associated with particular performances), and yet it can also be performed many times or even exist without ever being performed. And in the philosophy of action, philosophers have wondered how collectives can have intentional properties such as *deciding to go on strike* (properties we typically associate with individual agents). Recognising that many properties are more versatile than is typically assumed allows us to make progress in all these areas.

Ofra Magidor is Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy and a fellow of Magdalen College



Property Versatility and Copredication by David Liebesman and Ofra Magidor was published by Oxford University Press in the spring of 2025.

The Crop and the Soil

Reflections on Modern Stoicism

The scholar in me bristles at the impression created by some modern exponents that Stoic theorising amounts to nothing more than a collection of aphorisms to be memorised.

Simon Shogry explores the reality behind the recent popular interest in the philosophy of the Stoics.

Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE)

The popular fascination with Stoicism is a curious phenomenon. Judging from the proliferation of blogs, podcasts, and YouTube videos touting the benefits of the Stoic way of life, the school of philosophy founded by Zeno of Citium at the turn of the 3rd century BCE has become the Internet's go-to repository of practical wisdom and advice—an ancient 'life hack' for alleviating anxiety and attaining tranquility.

As a professional exegete of Stoic philosophy, I have mixed feelings about this development. On the one hand, Stoic ethical doctrine is certainly not the worst thing that excessive social media use can get you to believe. I see no reason to discourage anyone from cultivating a sincere aspiration to live virtuously, as Zeno proposed, or from coming to see the acquisition of wealth, power, and reputation as indifferent to happiness. Internalising this central Stoic teaching on the value of externals could help to soften the blow of the vicissitudes of 'late stage capitalism'.

On the other hand, the scholar in me bristles at the impression created by some modern exponents that Stoic theorising amounts to nothing more than a collection of aphorisms to be memorised. Alas, the life hack is not so simple—or so the ancient Stoics would insist (and here I include not only Greek Stoics such as Zeno but also the Roman Stoics so beloved online: Seneca and Marcus Aurelius). This emerges from the ancient Stoic account of virtue—the one thing, they claim, which is both necessary and sufficient for attaining a flourishing, happy life. As the perfection of our natural capacity to reason, virtue requires not merely *believing* the correct ethical doctrines but *understanding* them—fully appreciating why they are true, and being able to explain how they follow from fundamental facts (as the Stoics see them) about the nature of human beings and our role in the cosmos at large.

Ancient Stoic philosophy is systematic, in the sense that it pursues its inquiry into the good life alongside a larger inquiry into nature as a whole. Physics and ethics are thus conceived as two interconnected parts of philosophy. Their relationship is brought out in an image: if philosophy is a farm, the Stoics say, then physics is the soil and ethics the crop. The suggestion here seems to be that without the foundations provided by physics, the truths of ethics could not be adequately established. Unless we know what kind of creature the human being is—including what purpose, if any, we have come into the cosmos to perform—we cannot know which things are genuinely beneficial and harmful to us. And without this knowledge of good and bad, we cannot hope to organise our lives successfully, i.e. around the acquisition of virtue and not of wealth, fame, and other ultimately indifferent distractions.

How exactly did the Stoics pursue this strategy of deriving ethical from physical truths? Scholars continue to debate the details, and the paucity of surviving Stoic texts throws up a considerable challenge to reconstructing a precise answer—no complete work authored by Zeno or any other Greek Stoic has come down to us today. However, one key point is surely the Stoic thesis that the cosmos is arranged teleologically and providentially, as a result of being governed by a divine intelligence present everywhere within it. Human beings enjoy a privileged relationship with this divine intelligence, insofar as we also use reason to direct our actions, in contrast with non-rational animals, plants, and the inanimate objects populating the natural world. Human nature is essentially rational, and as the only cosmic part to possess the rational power which structures the whole, we are said to be 'offshoots' and 'allies' of the divine mind, whose infallible exercise of reason sets the standard for the use of our own. To discharge the distinctive role we play in the cosmos and fully realise our human nature, we must perfect our natural capacity of reason by conforming our thoughts as closely as possible to those of the mind ruling the cosmos. This is what it means to live virtuously, or, what is the same, to live 'in agreement with nature'—Zeno's canonical formulation of the human *telos*.

This cursory sketch obviously needs to be filled in further to support Stoic axiology in all its complexity, but it suffices to show that the study of physics cannot be a purely descriptive enterprise for the Stoics: uncovering facts about human and cosmic nature holds normative implications for how we should lead our lives.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

The Stoa of Attalos, Athens

Photography : Georgios Liakopoulos

Conspicuously absent from the version of Stoicism celebrated online, however, are any such appeals to cosmic parthood and the wider teleology on which it rests. This raises an interesting theoretical question: can Stoicism become unmoored from its foundations in a physical theory that now may strike us post-Darwinians as fanciful, hopelessly antiquated, and maybe even simple-minded? Can modern Stoics harvest the crop without the soil?

In fact, there is ancient precedent for attempting to establish the Stoics' ethical doctrines without recourse to any teleological cosmic theory. Active within Zeno's circle of first-generation Stoics was a dissident voice, Aristo, who argued that since knowledge of the cosmos is completely beyond us, the study of physics should be abolished: he saw only ethics as a legitimate object of philosophical inquiry. Aristo ultimately lost this argument within the Stoic school. Under the leadership of Zeno's successors Cleanthes and Chrysippus, the indispensability of physics for ethics, along the lines I discussed above, becomes solidified as orthodoxy, and it is this mainstream Stoic position that Seneca and Marcus go on to expound in their own writings.

Should modern Stoics take up Aristo's mantle? Arguably no first-order normative ethical theory is completely innocent of metaphysical assumptions, so Aristo goes too far if he means to deny that philosophical scrutiny and clarification of such assumptions can have relevance to our normative theorising. The pressing questions, then, seem to be these: Can humans be essentially rational without being cosmic parts? And could this restricted, but still quite robust, theory of human nature sustain the distinctive Stoic thesis that virtue is the only thing that benefits us?

Rather than pursue these questions here, I exhort the Internet's legions to till the soil themselves and see whether it can nourish the crops they wish to sell.

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Stoic Eros was published by Cambridge University Press in 2024.

The Practical Self

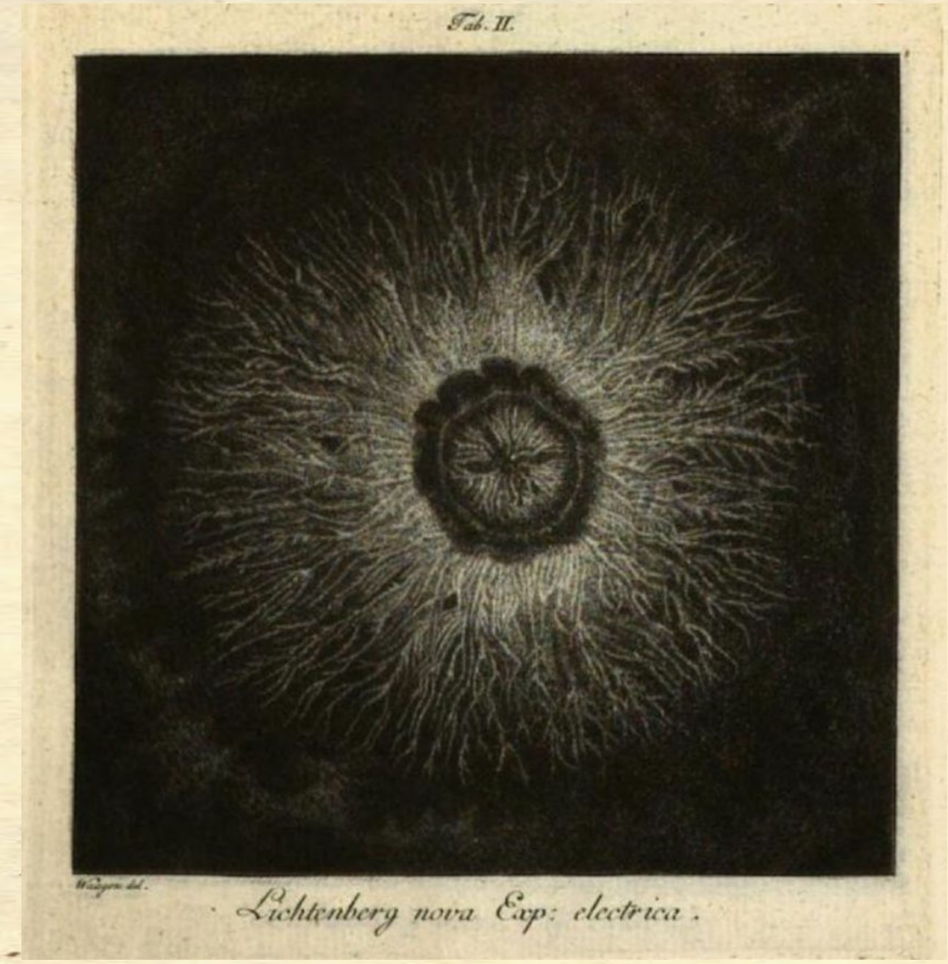
Anil Gomes tells us about the major themes from his recent book

Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy* begins with a withdrawal. The meditator isolates himself in a warm room, free of all distractions, so that he can properly examine his beliefs and identify those which will form the foundation for his philosophy. There he stays for six days, with no leave for exercise, shopping, or medically-required travel. There he reflects on his beliefs, on God, and on nature, and there he comes to realise his essence as a thinking thing. Descartes's philosophy begins in quarantine. It begins in social isolation.

It is a starting point which has irritated many of his critics. What kind of self-regard is needed to begin philosophy in isolation from others? Well, philosophy has to start somewhere. And Descartes's starting point need not be motivated by the thought that isolation is an especially secure basis from which to pursue philosophical inquiry. It may instead be a way of making vivid a philosophical project which starts with our self-conscious capacities—those capacities we take into isolation, the capacities involved in recognising our beliefs, in subjecting them to evaluation—and asks how much knowledge of the world follows in its wake.

A lot, according to Descartes. Simply by reflecting on the nature of self-conscious capacities, we can come to recognise our own existence, our nature as a thinking thing, the existence of God, and, eventually, the existence and nature of the material world. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant is similarly optimistic: it follows from the very fact that we are self-conscious that we are situated in a world of causally interacting substances, located in space and time, with properties that change over time according to general laws. In different ways, and with different emphases, both argue that self-conscious subjects must be related to an objective world.

My book *The Practical Self* begins with these Cartesian and Kantian projects. They seem almost magical from the distance of contemporary philosophy. How could reflection on the capacities involved in self-conscious thought lead us to the distinction between soul and body or to the existence of a world of causally interacting substances? In Descartes's case, the magic is underwritten by a proof of God's existence since God's status precludes our being deceived about the material causes of our beliefs. For Kant, it is underwritten by his claim that the nature of the world depends, in some sense, on our ability



to cognize it. It is God's grace and beneficence and Kant's transcendental idealism which allow us to get substantive knowledge of the world from reflections on the nature of self-conscious capacities.

Neither of these options seemed tenable to philosophers in the twentieth-century, and few today are brave or foolhardy enough to have God or idealism play the role they did in Descartes's and Kant's own arguments. One response is to reject the isolationist starting point as a relic of outdated philosophical thinking. We hamstring our intellectual inquiry, one might think, in abjuring the knowledge, understanding, and insight occasioned by empirical investigation into the nature of human beings. At the tail end of the eighteenth century, the philosopher, physicist, and aphorist George Christoph Lichtenberg makes the opposing complaint. It is not that Descartes goes too far into isolation. He does not go far enough. 'One should say *it is thinking*, just as one says, *it is lightning*', he writes, 'To say cogito is already too much as soon as one translates it as *I am thinking*. To assume the I, to postulate it, is a practical requirement'.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

> ***The self-conscious thinking undertaken in isolation is an agential activity: giving and withdrawing assent is something we do. And neither experience nor conceptual mastery put us in a position to know that we are the agents of our thinking.***

Lichtenberg's remarks were enormously influential on those who read them—Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, the logical positivists, Wittgenstein, Freud: all drew insightfully on Lichtenberg's comments when reflecting on the nature and character of self-conscious thought. But the aphoristic passage is easily misunderstood. It is not concerned with the possibility of subjectless episodes of thinking, with Descartes's grounds for recognising a subject of thinking above and beyond the episode of thinking itself. Rather, it is concerned with our entitlement to think of ourselves as the *agent* of our thinking. Sometimes thoughts strike us like lightning. When this happens, we are their patient. It is central to our self-conscious lives that this is the exception: we are first and foremost the agents of our thinking. Lichtenberg's puzzle is to explain our right to think of ourselves as such.

This puzzle that has surprising force. The self-conscious thinking undertaken in isolation is an agential activity: giving and withdrawing assent is something we *do*. And neither experience nor conceptual mastery put us in a position to know that we are the agents of our thinking. Lichtenberg's alternative is that to assume the I, to postulate it, is a practical requirement. Making sense of this suggestion requires us to draw a distinction between two different ways in which we can take a stand on things. One is theoretical, of the sort involved in believing that things are thus and so. The other is a distinctive sort of practical assent which Kant sometimes calls *faith*. We have practical grounds for accepting that we are the agents of our thinking. Self-consciousness requires faith in ourselves as the agents of our thinking.

This helps with the Cartesian and Kantian projects because faith can be undermined and it can be sustained. Iris Murdoch, in the final part of her maddening and bewitching *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, draws attention to the beliefs, experiences, practices, and rituals which religion once provided for us and which she thinks need to be co-opted to support our search for the good. Similarly, our faith in ourselves as the agents of our thinking can be and is sustained by beliefs, experiences, and practices which relate us to the world. Prime among them are the practices involved in holding and being held accountable for one's judgements—practices which are part of what P F Strawson once characterised as the *participatory stance*.

To hold someone accountable for their judgement is take that judgement to be imputable to them. It is to take them as the agent of their thinking. The practice of criticising and cavilling thus provides us with a framework with which to sustain the idea that we are the agents of our thinking. And this provides us with a connection to the world. For our faith in ourselves as the agents of our thinking is sustained by practices which relate us to other thinkers. We are thus *practical selves*: intellectual agents who have distinctively practical grounds to recognise ourselves as such. And our faith in ourselves as practical selves is sustained through interaction with others.

The argument of *The Practical Self* is that self-consciousness requires faith in ourselves as the agents of our thinking and that this faith is sustained by a practices which relate us to other thinkers. This is how isolation ends: in a world of other people, talking, arguing, and holding one another to account.

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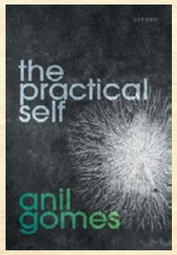


The Practical Self was published by Oxford University Press in 2024.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

Lindsay Judson

Understanding the Facts and the Truth They Bear Out

Michail Peramatzis reflects on the many contributions to Ancient Philosophy made by Lindsay Judson on the occasion of his retirement.

Lindsay Judson's retirement at the end of 2024-25 will mark more than forty years of contribution to the philosophical community at Christ Church and the Oxford Philosophy Faculty. Lindsay was a Classics undergraduate at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and then completed his D Phil *Necessity, Chance, and Explanation in Aristotle* under the supervision of the eminent Oxford Ancient Philosopher J L Ackrill. In 1987 he was appointed to what in the Christ Church dialect is called 'an Official Studentship' (a College Fellowship-Tutorship) together with a University Lectureship (now known as an 'Associate Professorship') at the Philosophy Faculty. He has also taught outside Oxford, at King's College London, the Open University, and Stanford University. In what follows I shall outline three central areas in which his many research achievements have made him an internationally renowned figure in Ancient Philosophy.

The first area is Aristotle's natural philosophy, especially his notions of chance and teleology. Lindsay argues that Aristotle seeks to examine how his fourfold conception of causation fits with chance. He understands Aristotelian chance as involving rare events that are incidental *relative to all the natural and deliberative processes that belong to a subject*, normally an Aristotelian substance, like a plant or an animal. This type of restriction is an important idea which also plays a pivotal role in Lindsay's view of Aristotelian teleology. Lindsay criticises the implausible, but surprisingly popular, interpretation of Aristotle's teleology in which the famous rainfall example in *Physics* II.8 suggests that rain is for the sake of the crops' growth, and so for supporting humans (anthropocentrism) and/or life generally (biocentrism). He contends that Aristotle's dichotomy between 'for the sake of something' and 'by chance' need not apply universally to regular beneficial outcomes. He proposes to restrict this dichotomy just to natural substances. The coming-into-being, functioning, and parts of natural substances have beneficial outcomes, and are thought by Aristotle to be for the sake of those outcomes. Further, natural substances are the primary beneficiaries of such outcomes.

The second area where Lindsay has made indispensable contributions is Aristotle's metaphysics, with his recent translation and commentary on *Metaphysics* Λ and his papers on the nature, unity, and subject-matter of metaphysics in book Λ and in ZHΘ. Lindsay expresses his dissatisfaction with the ways commentators understand Aristotle's treatise the *Metaphysics*, as well as the discipline of metaphysics. Because of the overlap in subject-matter between Aristotle's natural philosophy and the sort of inquiry conducted in most of the *Metaphysics*

interpreters tend to construe the latter as merely preliminary to an exalted science which is 'metaphysics proper', normally identified with theology. In this sort of construal, most of the *Metaphysics* 'should be thrown away like Wittgenstein's famous ladder' once we are ready to study theology. Alternatively, some commentators take most of the *Metaphysics* to be negative: the perceptible, material, and perishable substances studied by natural philosophy are not basic, nor can they account for the totality of the cosmos; it is only the imperceptible, immaterial, and imperishable substances studied by theology that can play this role.

Lindsay argues that while natural science and metaphysics share *the same subject-matter*, they still differ in *how they treat it*. He maintains that the natural scientist examines the principles of natural substances (essence, form, matter, actuality, potentiality, etc.) with the limited aim of *using* these principles to understand the specific natures of natural substances. The metaphysician, by contrast, studies those same substances and their principles to *reflect upon* them and raise questions about their status, priority relations, definitions, unity, etc. Lindsay also addresses the other side of the problem: the relation of this 'reflective' study of natural substances and their principles to the theological study of imperishable substances. He argues that the metaphysical, reflective study of natural substances and their principles will single out the principles of all beings (and primarily of all kinds of substance). These will be used as starting points to grasp the imperishable substances studied by theology, for these, too, are to be understood in terms of the very same basic principles, such as essence, form, and actuality. Imperishable substances so understood will in turn be used as starting points to grasp better natural substances and their characteristic principles (matter, potentiality, change): for the former are prior to and the causes of the latter.

Thus, in Lindsay's view, first philosophy consists of several parts, such as the reflective study of natural substances and their principles and the theological study of imperishable substances. Moreover, there is no privileged treatment of any of those parts: theology does *not constitute* first philosophy; the other, non-theological subdisciplines are neither reduced to nor eliminated in favour of theology. Nor are the different subdisciplines simply treated stepwise. Rather, there are important conceptual interdependencies among them.

The third area where Lindsay's work has made a great impact is the study of Plato. His work on the *Meno* emphasises that Plato's focus on the ability to work out a phenomenon's explanation for oneself suggests that Plato conceives knowledge as the highest form of knowledge: high-level understanding. This is to be contrasted with interpretations that take Socrates or Plato to be engaging in a project similar to modern epistemological approaches in which knowledge is understood as a form of improved true belief, where justification makes the relevant difference.

Lindsay shows that this line of interpretation does not do justice to the *Meno*. This has implications for the dialogue's famous paradox of inquiry: either we already know what we inquire into, and so inquiry is unnecessary, or we do not know it, in which case inquiry is impossible as we cannot know what to look for. Plato notoriously has Socrates offer the Theory of Recollection as a way to resolve this paradox: inquiry does not involve the attainment of new knowledge but is recollection of latently preexisting knowledge. Lindsay cautiously restricts the type of inquiry the paradox and the Theory of Recollection focus on. It is not ordinary inquiry, nor simply Socratic inquiry, but a search for high-level understanding. Moreover, Lindsay rejects the view that true belief is the key to resolving the paradox, whereas the Theory of Recollection is secondary. In his reading, the Theory of Recollection is central, as the text suggests, and the key notion is that of recognition. Socrates distinguishes between a way in which we must already know, that is, by the cognitively basic and non-inferential capacity of recognitional knowledge, and another way of knowing, that of high-level understanding, which we lack at the early stages of our inquiry but can come to have based on our already possessed recognitional knowledge.

Lindsay sitting at John Locke's desk in his study at Christ Church

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

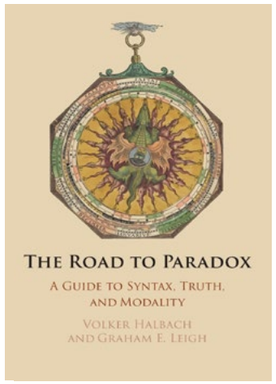
Lindsay has also written on Plato's *Euthyphro* and has offered what seems to me to be the most plausible reading of the notoriously difficult argument about Euthyphro's dilemma. I am looking forward to his future work on this and related themes, as he is working on a book dedicated to this dialogue.

I should also highlight Lindsay's tireless and invaluable work as the editor of two series published by Oxford University Press: the Clarendon Aristotle Series (1988-present; with J L Ackrill 1988-2001) and Oxford Aristotle Studies (1996-present; with Julia Annas 1996-2017). In this capacity he has helped many young and not so young scholars make their work better in so many different ways. Lindsay will continue to work not only on his book on the *Euthyphro* and other research projects but also as the editor of those series after his retirement. In all such endeavours he deploys his intellectual virtue of *not going beyond the evidence*: he seeks to understand the facts and the truth they bear out, following Bertrand Russell's 'intellectual' advice to future generations. It is clear to people who know him that he also follows Russell's 'moral' advice of cultivating the 'wisdom of tolerance, charity, and love'.

Michail Peramatzis is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Tutorial Fellow in Philosophy at Worcester College.

BOOKS

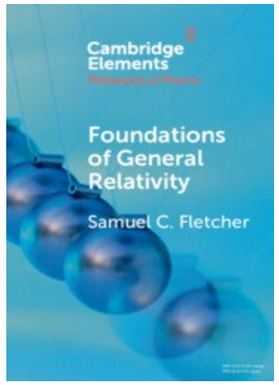
A selection of recent publications featuring members of the Oxford Philosophy Faculty



The Road to Paradox: A Guide to Syntax, Truth, and Modality

CUP
Volker Halbach and Graham E Leigh

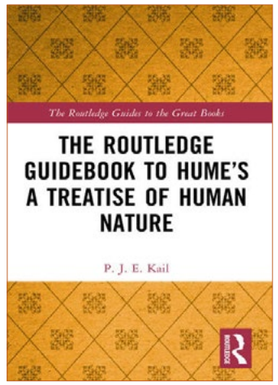
Truth, provability, necessity, and other concepts are fundamental to many branches of philosophy, mathematics, computer science, and linguistics. Their study has led to some of the most celebrated achievements in logic, such as Gödel's incompleteness theorems, Tarski's theorem on the undefinability of truth, and numerous accounts of the paradoxes associated with these concepts. In this book, Volker Halbach and Graham Leigh provide a clear and direct introduction to the theory of paradoxes and the Gödel incompleteness theorems. They offer new analyses of the ideas of self-reference, circularity, and the semantic paradoxes, and help readers to see both how paradoxes arise and what their common features are. The book is a valuable for students and researchers with a minimal background in logic and equips them to understand and discuss a wide variety of topics in philosophical logic.



Foundations of General Relativity

CUP
Samuel Fletcher

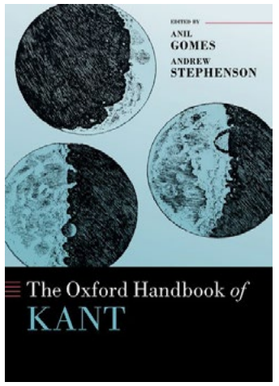
In this Cambridge Element Samuel Fletcher offers a somewhat comprehensive interpretation of general relativity, a description of what reality would be like if the theory were true. This concerns (i) what possibilities it represents, (ii) the internal structure of those possibilities and their interrelations, and, to some extent, (iii) how those possibilities differ from what has come before. By providing an interpretive foil that one can amplify or amend, it aspires to shape the research agenda in the foundations of general relativity for established philosophers of physics, graduate students searching for work in these topics, and other interested academics. The title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.



The Routledge Guidebook to Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*

Routledge
Peter Kail

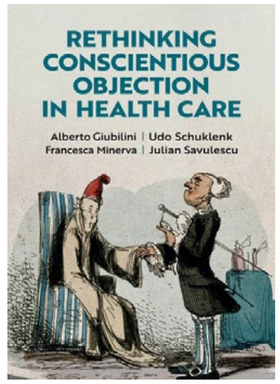
A Treatise of Human Nature is commonly regarded as Hume's masterpiece. It is a profound work of great ambition, seeking to reorient philosophy by establishing a 'science of human nature'. In this Routledge Guidebook Peter Kail provides a clear and accessible introduction to its key themes, and explores the lasting philosophical significance of the work, the context of Hume's philosophy, the character of Hume's theory of human nature, the two central themes of scepticism and naturalism, and the unity of the three original volumes. Written for readers approaching Hume's seminal work for the first time, this guidebook includes a helpful overview of the text, chapter summaries, and further reading throughout. It is an essential introduction for undergraduate students studying the history of modern philosophy, and all those who wish to engage more deeply with this classic work.



The Oxford Handbook of Kant

OUP
Ed. Anil Gomes and Andrew Stephenson

Kant's work is characterized by both breadth and unity: he writes powerfully about mind, epistemology, metaphysics, logic, mathematics, natural science, ethics, politics, religion, history, aesthetics, education, and more. And across those areas, he is concerned to work out and defend a view of human beings and their place in nature according to which our own reason enables us to discover and uphold the laws of nature and freedom—that is, to think for ourselves. The newly commissioned essays which make up this Handbook collectively present a picture of where the study of Kant's philosophy finds itself at this point in the twenty-first century. They are organized around the four questions which Kant said unite all interest of our reason: (1) What can I know? (2) What ought I to do? (3) What may I hope? and (4) What is the human being? Their aim is to help students and scholars of Kant's philosophy think for themselves about the topics about which he wrote with such insight.



Rethinking Conscientious Objection in Health Care

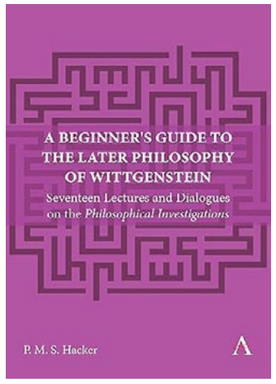
OUP
Alberto Giubilini, Udo Schuklenk, Francesca Minerva, and Julian Savulescu

This book presents the case against the right of healthcare professionals to refuse delivery of certain healthcare services based on their moral views. It provides philosophical analyses of conscience and freedom of conscience, as well as the arguments and principles typically utilized when arguing in favor of allowing healthcare professionals conscientious objection. The authors criticize those arguments and offer a philosophical and historical analysis of the concept of professionalism, as well as an appeal to the nature of professional obligations, to build their case against the right to conscientious objection in healthcare. They explain why arguments for pluralism, tolerance, and diversity which support a right to freedom of conscience in society at large do not necessarily support the same right within the healthcare profession, or indeed any profession that is governed by internal norms of professionalism which an individual freely decides to enter.

Leibniz: Journal Articles on Philosophy

OUP
Paul Lodge, Richard Francks, Antonia LoLordo, and Roger Woolhouse

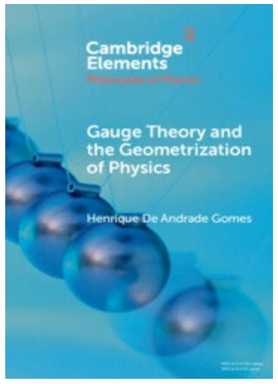
This volume gathers together for the first time translations of the philosophical journal articles that appeared during Leibniz's lifetime under his name, or which would have been easily attributed to him due to other identifying marks. Its primary aim is to convey a sense of the way in which Leibniz's philosophical views would have been available to the reading public of the time. Among the thirty articles included are seminal pieces such as 'Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas', the 'New System' and its accompanying 'explanations', 'On Nature Itself', and Leibniz's two responses to criticisms by Pierre Bayle. Readers will also encounter less familiar pieces, including those from the early 1690s in which Leibniz engages with Simon Foucher and offers a series of critical discussions of Descartes and Cartesian philosophy. Finally, the collection contains three extended reviews of works by other philosophers, Wolf Heinrich von Lüttichau, Samuel Pufendorf, and the Earl of Shaftesbury.



A Beginner's Guide to the Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein

Anthem
P M S Hacker

In this Beginner's Guide, Peter Hacker, leading authority on the philosophy of Wittgenstein and author of a dozen books on his work, introduces the later philosophy of Wittgenstein to those with an enquiring mind. It selects an array of topics that will capture the interest of all educated readers: the nature of language and linguistic meaning, the analysis of necessity and its roots in convention, the relation of thought and language, the nature of the mind and its relation to behavior, self-consciousness, and knowledge of other minds. No philosophical knowledge is presupposed—only curiosity and a willingness to shed prejudices. Written in a laid-back colloquial style and interspersed by dialogues between the author and questioners, the book is amusing and entertaining to read. Wittgenstein's ideas are presented in all their profundity for the widest possible audience, in a style that is intellectually stimulating and provocative.



Gauge Theory and the Geometrization of Physics

CUP
Henrique De Andrade Gomes

This Cambridge Element is broadly about the geometrization of physics, but mostly it is about gauge theories. Gauge theories lie at the heart of modern physics: in particular, they constitute the Standard Model of particle physics. At its simplest, the idea of gauge is that nature is best described using a descriptively redundant language; the different descriptions are said to be related by a gauge symmetry. The over-arching question this Element aims to answer is: Why is descriptive redundancy fruitful for physics? Henrique De Andrade Gomes provides three inter-related answers to the question: 'Why gauge theory?', that is: Why introduce redundancies in our models of nature in the first place? The first is pragmatic, or methodological, the second is based on geometrical considerations, and the third is broadly relational.

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