



Philosophy at Cambridge

Newsletter of the Faculty of Philosophy

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From the Chair

Tim Crane



Professors Rae Langton and Richard Holton to join the Faculty

Welcome to the tenth Faculty of Philosophy Newsletter. Charles de Gaulle is supposed to have said that if you want things to stay the same, you have to perpetually renew them; and in the Faculty of Philosophy we have been trying to follow his advice. The Faculty is known for its excellence in research, and for its rigorous undergraduate degree programme. But in order to maintain these things, we need to be thinking constantly about how we might develop and improve. Two recent developments stand out.

First, this newsletter marks the official opening of a major fundraising campaign to support graduate students. Every leading philosophy department depends upon the quality of its graduate students, and we have been fortunate in Cambridge in having many superb students who have gone on to teach philosophy all over the world. Graduate students are not just

the researchers of the future, they are the researchers of the present.

But it has become increasingly difficult in recent years for graduate students in philosophy to fund their education. Despite the exceptionally generous support of some of our alumni, as well as from the Colleges and the University, many of our graduate students struggle to support themselves during their period of study. Here in the UK, we compare unfavourably with the top US institutions, where graduate students are normally fully-funded for the whole of their PhD. With the likelihood that the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council will stop funding MPhil students in the coming years, the situation looks as if it will get worse.

It is for this reason that we are launching a campaign to develop a fund for the support of graduate students in philosophy at Cambridge. Our ambitious ultimate aim

is to be able to fully fund all our graduate students, MPhil and PhD. The campaign has been initiated by some very generous donations from our alumni, and a brochure, *Thinking Through the 21st Century: The Next Generation of Cambridge Philosophers* has been produced by the University's Development Office. For a copy of this brochure, please contact the Development Office: www.campaign.cam.ac.uk. For other inquiries about this campaign, please feel free to contact me directly.

The second exciting recent development—and our major news for this year—is that we have appointed Richard Holton and Rae Langton from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to professorships in the Faculty, starting in September this year. They are both world-leading philosophers who have made substantial contributions to a number of different areas of the subject.

Richard works especially on the philosophy of mind and its connections with psychology and moral philosophy, including decision-making, making up your mind, weakness of the will and temptation, among other things. His work draws on empirical work in psychology, and he is currently pursuing an inter-disciplinary project on the nature of addiction.

Like Richard, Rae works in a number of different areas of the subject—ethics, feminist philosophy, metaphysics and the history of philosophy—and like him too, she has made significant contributions to them all. She is also well known for her work on questions about the ethics of pornography and objectification. She has recently been made a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and will give the prestigious John Locke Lectures in Oxford in 2015. We are delighted that they are joining the Faculty.

People

Meet our new appointments



Paulina Sliwa works mostly on ethics and epistemology, and is particularly interested in questions where those two intersect. Recently, she has been thinking about moral knowledge, particularly its role in praise, blame, and morally good action. She's also interested in how our various cognitive imperfections—our proclivity to biases and computational limitations—bear on how we should form and revise our beliefs. Paulina comes to Cambridge from MIT in the *other* Cambridge, where she wrote a dissertation on moral testimony. Prior to that she was an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford, where she read Physics and Philosophy. She is excited to join the vibrant research and teaching community at Cambridge!



Angela Breitenbach's research focuses on the history of modern philosophy, specifically the philosophy of Kant, as well as questions in philosophy of science, philosophy of biology, and aesthetics. Among other things, she is currently working on a problem at the intersection of these interests, concerning a Kantian conception of the role of beauty in science. She has an undergraduate degree and MPhil from the University of Cambridge and a doctorate from the Humboldt-University of Berlin. After three years as a Junior Research Fellow at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and three further years as a Lecturer at the University of East Anglia, she is now very happy to return to the Cambridge Philosophy Faculty.



Tim Button's first book, *The Limits of Realism* (OUP), will be released in 2013. It explores how sceptical angst ("am I just a brain in a vat?") has influenced debates about what there is in the world, and about how we are able to talk and think about it. From 2010 to 2012, Tim was a research fellow at St John's College, Cambridge, and he has remained there since his appointment as a lecturer.

He has also recently been a visiting scholar at the University of Texas Austin, and a visiting fellow at Harvard.



Luca Incurvati works on the philosophy of mathematics, logic and language, with occasional forays into metaphysics. He has an undergraduate degree and a masters from Rome "La Sapienza", and an MPhil and a PhD from Cambridge. Before his appointment as a temporary lecturer in the Faculty, he was a Junior Research Fellow at Magdalene College. His work has appeared in journals such as *Analysis*, *Erkenntnis*, *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, *Philosophical Studies* and *Review of Symbolic Logic*. He has ongoing projects on conceptions of set, naturalism in the philosophy of mathematics and the notion of rejection.



Nicholas Vrousalis, previously at KU Leuven (Belgium), has joined the Faculty as a temporary lecturer. He read Economics at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. After some graduate work in Economics, he went to Oxford to do a doctorate in Political Philosophy with G.A. Cohen. His research is concerned with distributive ethics, theories of exploitation, Marxism, and the conceptual space at the intersection of Analytical Marxism and Critical Theory. He is presently planning two Faculty-based workshops, one on domination and one on hate speech.



Chris Thompson has joined the Faculty as a temporary lecturer. He recently completed his PhD in philosophy at LSE. Prior to that, he worked as a civil service policy advisor in the UK and New Zealand civil services. His research interests lie in political philosophy, epistemology, and their intersection in the philosophy of public policy. His focus is on 'social epistemic mechanisms', that is institutions and procedures that allow democracies to

make correct decisions. His thesis provided an account of how political agents search for and extract information from the environment, and how this is then pooled into the social choice. He is currently extending this research and developing an epistemic account of deliberative democracy—the conditions under which discussion and debate increases the accuracy of decisions.



Brian Pitts is a post-doctoral researcher who works mostly on the philosophy of science, both the philosophy of physics (especially space and time) and general philosophy of science. He studied at Notre Dame (Philosophy/HPS) and the University of Texas at Austin (Physics). He is interested in the idea of progress and achieving reflective equilibrium between ostensible scientific examples and normative methodology. In particular, in what can be said in bringing together Bayesian and (more or less) reliabilist epistemologies.

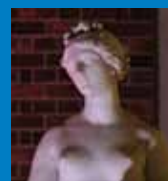


John Maier was appointed as a post-doctoral researcher working on pragmatism. He works primarily in metaphysics, the philosophy of action, and the philosophy of language. He has previously held positions at the University of Sydney, the Australian National University, and the University of Colorado, and received his PhD. from Princeton in 2008. He has recently completed a monograph on agency and modality.



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www.cam.ac.uk/video-and-audio

Jane Heal retires after 26 years



Jane Heal at her retirement garden party, St John's

Professor Jane Heal retired from the Faculty at the end of 2012 after 26 years. Daughter of a notable pair of Oxford philosophers, William and Martha Kneale, she first arrived in Cambridge in 1964 as an undergraduate at New Hall to read history, changing to Philosophy (then 'Moral Sciences') after two years. Jane then stayed on to do a PhD, working on problems in the philosophy of language. After two years post-doctoral study in the USA, she held a lectureship at Newcastle University, before returning to Cambridge in 1986. Jane was awarded her personal professorship in 1999—the same year that she became the first ever female president of St John's College.

In 1997 she was elected a Fellow of the British Academy—still one of only a handful of women in philosophy to receive this honour. Decisive here, no doubt, was her pioneering work in what came to be known as 'Simulation Theory'. Jane developed the thought that our understanding of other people is achieved by, so far as we are able, placing ourselves inwardly in their

situation and then allowing our thoughts and emotions to run forwards in a kind of imaginative experiment. The competing idea, that we learn to operate a kind of theory that links humans' physical behaviour and external conditions to their mental states was, she argued, at most a far less important factor in our attempts to understand others.

Jane has written extensively on the philosophy of mind and language and published two books, *Fact and Meaning* (Blackwell 1989) and *Mind, Reason and Imagination* (CUP 2003). During her long career at Cambridge she made a major contribution to the Faculty, serving on several committees and being Chair of the Faculty Board. She was instrumental in the success of the Faculty's fundraising appeal, and played a large part in the design of the Faculty's new premises. In retirement, Jane continues to supervise graduate students and to pursue her research in the philosophy of mind. She will also spend more time in her garden.

Awards, Honours and Promotions

Professor Huw Price has been elected to a Fellowship of the British Academy.

Alex Oliver was promoted to a Professorship. He was also awarded a major research grant from NWO in the Netherlands for a project on trust in banking with Professor Boudewijn de Bruin (Groningen).

Emeritus Professor, **Onora O'Neill** was appointed as Chair of the Equality and

Human Rights Commission in October 2012 for a period of 3 years.

Dr Angela Breitenbach has been awarded a 2 year Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship from May 2013. **Dr Adam Caulton** was awarded a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship to work on philosophy of physics. **Dr Brian Pitts** has a 2-year Templeton grant for 2014–16. Graduate student **Rob Trueman** was awarded the Analysis Trust Studentship for 2012–13, here in the Faculty.

Departures

Two long-serving members of support staff recently retired. We bid farewell to **Mrs Margrit Edwards** in December 2012 after 25 years with the University, 16 of these as Principal Secretary in the Faculty.

Mrs Lesley Lancaster retired in April 2013 from her role as Graduate Secretary after 22 years. They have both played an invaluable role in the smooth running of the Faculty. Staff and friends attended their retirement parties, to celebrate their contribution and to wish them well.

Dr Fraser MacBride left to take up a Chair at the University of Glasgow in January 2013.

Dr Serena Olsaretti was appointed as Research Professor at UPF (Barcelona).

Student Prizes

Katharine Jenkins (Emmanuel) was awarded the Matthew Buncombe prize for best overall achievement in the MPhil. The Craig Taylor prize for best performance in the Tripos went to **Hugo Havranek** (Peterhouse) for Part IB and **Bastian Stern** (Trinity) for Part II.

Routledge Lecture in Philosophy

Professor Susan Wolf (Chapel Hill, North Carolina) gave the 7th Routledge Lecture in Philosophy on 21 February 2013. Her talk entitled 'Responsibility, Moral and Otherwise' examined the nature of responsible agency. A typescript is available from the faculty website. We are grateful to Routledge for their continuing support.

Future Events

Alumni Festival 2013

28 September 2013

Professor Michael Potter will give a talk entitled 'Wittgenstein on Religion'. Further details are available from: www.alumni.cam.ac.uk.

'Logic and Assertion: How are they related?'

Michael Potter will give his inaugural lecture as Professor of Logic. Details to be announced.

Information about other forthcoming events is available from the Faculty website.

“Erroneously supposed to do no harm”

Huw Price discusses a theme in his inaugural lecture

Bertrand Russell’s celebrated lecture ‘On the Notion of Cause’ was first delivered on 4 November 1912, as his Presidential Address to the Aristotelian Society. It gave Russell a place beside Hume as one of the great causal sceptics, and twentieth century philosophy one of its most famous lines: “The law of causality”, Russell declares, “Like much that passes muster among philosophers, is a relic of a bygone age, surviving, like the monarchy, only because it is erroneously supposed to do no harm”.

On 1 November 2012, taking advantage of a happy accident of timing, I used my inaugural lecture as Bertrand Russell Professor to mark the centenary of ‘On the Notion of Cause’, and to ask what its conclusions look like with the benefits of a century’s hindsight. As I explained, the story has many Cambridge connections. Indeed, much of what Russell set out to achieve was given proper if sadly sketchy foundations in one of Frank Ramsey’s late papers from 1929, just four months before his untimely death. (It has taken the rest of us most of a century to catch up).

Preparing my lecture, I wondered what Russell had had in mind in the other part of his famous line. Just *what*, in his view, was the harm that the monarchy is erroneously thought not to do? I assumed this would be an easy curiosity to satisfy—somewhere, the prolific Russell would have written about the monarchy at greater length. But I searched in vain.

Eventually I wrote to Nicholas Griffin of the Russell Archives at McMaster. He told me that there was nothing to find, not even in Russell’s correspondence, so far as he knew it. But he suggested a context for Russell’s remark. In 1910 Britain had concluded a constitutional crisis, bought on by the Liberal government’s determination to remove the veto power of the House of Lords. A crucial step was the King’s indication that he would support the Government, if necessary, by creating sufficient new Liberal peers to ensure passage of the Bill through the Lords (Russell would have been one of those new peers, in that counterfactual world). Professor Griffin suggested that in the light of the King’s support, some on the Liberal side were saying that the monarchy wasn’t so bad after all; and that Russell may have been taking the opportunity to indicate that he was made



*The Queen and Prince Philip on the balcony of Buckingham Palace.
Photo: Carfax from Wikimedia Commons*

of sterner stuff—that the old battle lines of the Russell’s remained unchanged.

But this doesn’t tell us what Russell thought the harm in question actually was, at that point in the nation’s history—when, thanks in part to Russell’s own ancestors, it had long been a “crowned republic”, as Tennyson put it (a fact reaffirmed in the recent crisis). So, as my centenary footnote to Russell’s great paper, I offered my own proposal. In my view, there is a significant harm associated with modern constitutional monarchies (of which there are nine or ten in all, most of them in Western Europe)—a consequence remarkable for the fact that although in plain sight, it goes unmentioned, and apparently almost unnoticed. It is indeed “a relic of a bygone age”, as Russell puts it, whose cost is hidden from us by the sheer familiarity of the system of which it is a consequence—by the fact that a traditional picture holds us in its grip, as Wittgenstein might have put it. Moreover, while I don’t suggest that this is what Russell actually had in mind, it is something that he in

particular would have had reason to have in mind—it resonates in several ways with aspects of his own life. In all senses, then, it is an excellent fit.

The point in question is so simple that it is apt to seem banal. In selecting children on a hereditary basis for public office, we deny them a freedom we take for granted for our own children, to decide for themselves what they want to make of their lives. To see the issue in perspective, imagine such a system being proposed in some contemporary democracy, starting from scratch. In future, various public offices would be filled by selecting infants who would be brought up to fill the roles in question. A knock at the door might signal that your child had been chosen to be a future Archbishop of Canterbury, say. The main objection would not be that it was undemocratic, but that it was absurdly unfair to the individuals concerned.

The fact that we do find this system acceptable in practice, for one particular public office, turns mainly on its sheer familiarity—that’s just how things are

done. Perhaps also, as Russell thinks in the case of causation, we are in the grip of bad metaphysics: we think of royalty as a natural kind, and hence imagine that it is a natural matter that royal children should be brought up to play these roles—that's the kind of beings they are, as it were. The picture holds us captive, and central to it is the fantasy that what these families enjoy is a matter of entitlement and privilege, not constraint and obligation.

It is easy to see how we got to this point, from the distant past this picture actually depicts: on the one hand, a great erosion of opportunity on the side of royalty, as—thanks in part to Russell's ancestors in the British case—its powers were curtailed; on the other, an even greater expansion of opportunity on the side of ordinary people, especially children, as we came to accept that young people should make their life choices for themselves. The combination means that the heirs to modern democratic monarchies are now marooned on little islands of under-privilege, impoverished not only compared to their own ancestors, but also, more importantly, compared to the standards that now exist in the community at large.

This may seem an exaggeration. Couldn't an heir simply abdicate, if she didn't want to rule? Well, yes, but certainly not simply! It would be a difficult, public and personally costly process. She would be disappointing a nation's expectations, impressed on her throughout a childhood in which she had been taught that this is her duty, her place in life (there's the small matter of putting a sibling in the hot seat, too). Why should her freedom require her to scale such a formidable fence, when our children come and go as they please?

This was my proposal concerning the monarchy's hidden harm, and it is easy to see why I took it to be Russellian in spirit. Russell felt the constraints of his own childhood very deeply, and was greatly relieved to escape them when he came of age. Later, when he himself became a father, he was an advocate of allowing children as much freedom as possible. Famously, too, he was an opponent of conscription. He also had a talent for calling our attention to those uncomfortable truths that hide themselves in plain sight. I think he would have felt it entirely appropriate to call attention to this one.



Bertrand Russell in 1910. Photo courtesy of Trinity College, Cambridge

A podcast and typescript of Huw Price's inaugural lecture are available from the Faculty website.

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The Wittgenstein-Skinner Archive

Arthur Gibson on Wittgenstein's rediscovered archive

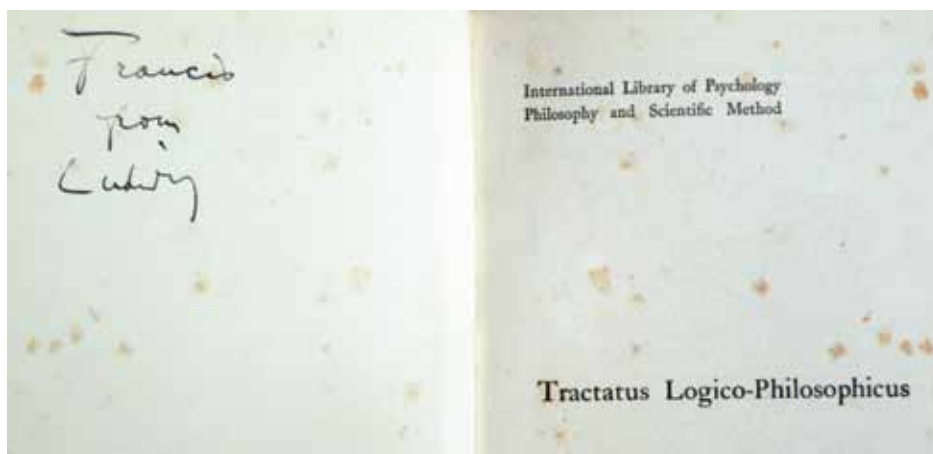
In early October 1941 German bombers attacked Oakington RAF base. Victims were rushed to hospital in Cambridge. The only slightly later admission of a polio patient was unnoticed, by-passed, being left untreated for very many hours in a corridor. This is how Wittgenstein's closest friend Francis Skinner came to die at the age of 29.

Within the week of Skinner's funeral, in a state of trauma, Ludwig attempted to resign his Philosophy Chair; arranged to leave Cambridge for Guy's Hospital working to fulfil his, now memorial, plan with Francis; attended Francis' funeral; reclaimed from Skinner's family the Wittgenstein-Skinner Archive, and posted them to Skinner's school friend, Reuben Goodstein.

Eventually Goodstein gave the Archive to the Mathematical Association. It was a much-appreciated invitation from the Association (and full acknowledgement to it in references here), with the support of Trinity College, for me to research and prepare this unpublished Archive for book publication.

Detailed research on the Archive yields the following context. Wittgenstein's relationship with Skinner was redolent of his intense friendship with David Hume Pinsent. Dying in World War I, 1918—some months short of his 29th year, the *Tractatus* was dedicated to Pinsent. Probably this is mirrored in Wittgenstein's gift of it to Francis (shown on the right).

In different generations both Pinsent and Skinner lived in the same Trinity College Court as Wittgenstein, studying mathematics; each went with Ludwig to Norway, and both wrote under his influence, with Pinsent substantially helping Wittgenstein to draft his only book review in English (I thank and acknowledge the Hon. Mrs Anne Keynes and Prof. Simon Keynes for access to these unpublished Pinsent manuscripts). A descendant of David Hume, emulating yet disputing with Wittgenstein, Pinsent began composing a philosophical work towards the end of his time with him. If this composition bears any relation to Wittgenstein's own philosophies—and it would be a distant one—it would find its referent in the late 1930s. So it is not surprising that Russell found it disagreeable, as Pinsent noted. Francis Skinner more completely submerged



Wittgenstein's dedication to Skinner; with thanks to William Truscott

himself in Wittgenstein's identity via composition. One way that Wittgenstein acknowledged this was to dedicate Skinner as his custodian and editor of some of his other large volumes, long before Rhees, Anscombe, and others.

The Archive's Contents

The Archive is written in Skinner's hand, with revisions by him and also periodically by Wittgenstein. Not infrequently this process involved complex interplay between their complementary re-drafting of phrasing in both their handwriting, which lays bare some of Wittgenstein's thought processes. This feature amounts to striking new data of how Wittgenstein creatively worked. The Archive consists of the following nine manuscripts:

1. The original *Brown Book* itself, with hitherto unknown new sentences in Wittgenstein's handwriting on its opening pages. (It also displays a significant number of German paragraphs or sentences in Wittgenstein's hand, on facing pages to the English text. These are often varying translations, or sometimes extend the notion there expressed in English.)
2. A *Pink Book*, entitled Book I and Book II (composed of 14,200 words as well as many visual illustrations). It appears to be a fair copy, with revisions and the occasional paragraph added by Wittgenstein. It is very different from the "Yellow Book" fragments that Alice Ambrose published, with only

occasional hints of superior overlap. There are grounds for supposing that it is what Wittgenstein wished to write instead of, or to replace the "Yellow Book".

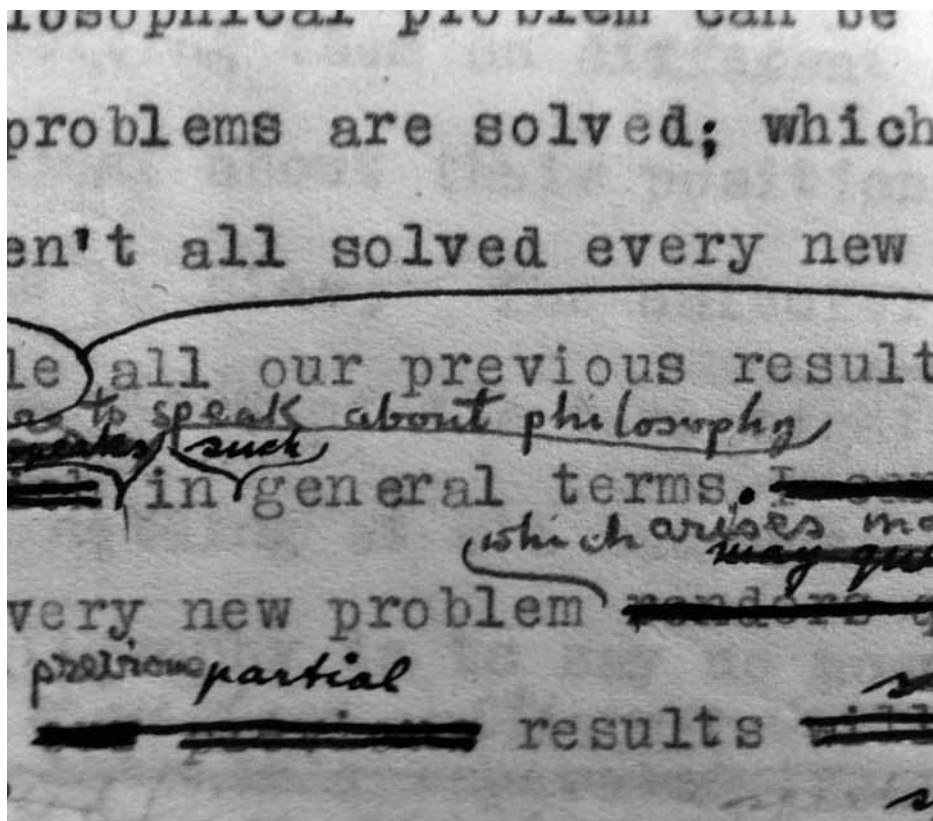
3. "Communication of Personal Experience" (at 12,000 words, this comprises the hitherto unknown extension after the ending of the published version of *Brown Book*), in fair copy form, with finely nuanced revision of details in Wittgenstein's hand, and with cross-referencing to the printed *Brown Book*.
4. *Lectures on Philosophy* (This manuscript is 20,352 words long, replete with lecture dates, the first of which is stated to be "Wedn. Jan 17th" [1934]). It is a series of carefully crafted notes with continuous arguments and strategies that do not correspond to any published narrative.
5. "Visual Image in his Brain" (comprised of 3,600 words, it was probably a private dictation to Skinner). Refined remarks in lecture note form.
6. *Lectures on Self-Evidence and Logic* (20,544 words). Almost detailed lecture notes, with evidence of revision prior to its final form. It comprises one term's lectures, with evidence that the manuscript has been crafted and re-shaped in the direction of becoming a unified manuscript. Although it returns to the matter of self-evidence in the *Tractatus* and is concerned to challenge Russell's views on logic and pure mathematics, yet it is not a repeat of earlier views. Rather, it newly develops denial of self-evidence.

7. *Norwegian Notebook* (4,400 words). Draft form. This was perhaps dictated to Skinner on his visit to Wittgenstein in Norway, while completed in Cambridge.

8. *A Mathematical Investigation*. This manuscript is entirely constituted of precise unusual forms of calculations. Since it does not obviously have Wittgenstein's hand expressed in it, there is a problem of ascription. Nevertheless, given that it is a component in an Archive that Wittgenstein himself gathered as an expression of his and Skinner's joint work, we should at least allow space for it to be aired. It comprises 12,353 mathematical symbols—without any narrative. It explores matters involving Fermat's Little Theorem. Its deviation from the usual routes of calculation explicitly complements how Wittgenstein's own philosophy exposes unexpected possibilities within the use of 'rules'.

9. An incomplete cyclostyled copy of the *Blue Book*. It is the only typescript in the Archive. Significantly, it ends prematurely, roughly at the same point as a later Skinner handwritten copy.

This last on the list is the least significant member of the Archive, though it signals a route to a research pathway. The Trinity College archivist, Jonathan Smith, who deals with its Wittgenstein Collections, has written a pioneering (forthcoming) chapter on the *Blue Book* ("Wittgenstein's Blue Book: Reading Between the Lines" in N. Venturinha, *The Textual Genesis of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations*. Routledge, 2013), analysing another newly discovered typed copy of the *Blue Book* given by Wittgenstein to Robert Thouless, recently acquired by Trinity College. This is highly annotated by Wittgenstein, and it has revisions in Skinner's handwriting. For example, Skinner's hand presents a revision "to speak about philosophy", with Wittgenstein also including other changes (see image). Throughout the Archive there is a complex role for such interaction between Wittgenstein and Skinner, no doubt under the former's direction. My analysis of the Archive displays similar handwriting interaction between Wittgenstein and Skinner, but of a more substantial sort. By such means and others, the Archive displays great insights into Wittgenstein's thought processes portrayed by the manuscripts. Not a few of these thought process are concerned, in original ways not published before, with



Thouless' copy of the Blue Book displays Skinner's revision "to speak about philosophy", with Wittgenstein's own handwriting also on the same page; with thanks to Trinity College, Cambridge

the uses of advanced mathematics and its problems as analogies for the problems of mapping usage in natural languages and in philosophy.

Professor Arthur Gibson (Jesus College 1970–73) is based in the Department of

Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics, Cambridge University. He has just finished preparing the Wittgenstein-Skinner archive manuscripts for his forthcoming book publication "Ludwig Wittgenstein Dictating Philosophy: to Francis Skinner".

Philosophers in the News

Cambridge Project for Existential Risk

A new project to establish a Centre for the Study of Existential Risk (CSER) at the University of Cambridge has attracted widespread media coverage recently. The project was co-founded by the Bertrand Russell Professor **Huw Price, Jaan Tallinn** (one of the founders of Skype) and the eminent British astrophysicist, **Lord Martin Rees**. CSER will support research to identify and mitigate catastrophic risk from developments in human technology, including artificial intelligence. Further information and news is available from <http://cser.org>.

The Leveson Inquiry

Onora O'Neill was one of seven philosophers giving evidence at the Leveson Inquiry into press ethics. In her written statement, she called for the current Press Complaints Code to be re-written claiming it was "not merely ineffective but defective" and said that journalists and editors should fully disclose their financial, commercial and property interests to demonstrate their capacity to be independent when reporting. The written and oral evidence by philosophers is available at: <http://bit.ly/lev2012>

Elizabeth Anscombe

Emily Thomas on one of the Cambridge greats

Elizabeth Anscombe (1919–2001) was one of the most significant philosophers of the twentieth century, known not just for her academic work, but also for her attachment to trousers, cigars and monocles. She spent most of her professional career at Cambridge, and held the Chair of Philosophy in the Faculty from 1970 until her retirement in 1986. Anscombe made significant contributions to ethics, philosophy of mind and metaphysics; she also acted as literary executor and translator for the work of her close friend Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein is reported to have disliked academic women in general, but Anscombe was the exception, and in recognition of her position in his affections he called her 'old man'. Anscombe has also been dubbed 'Dragon Lady' and—as we will see—in the course of her career she certainly did not shy away from controversy.

An example of how her philosophical views led her into controversy is her development of a Catholic principle known as the 'doctrine of double effect'. Anscombe's views on this doctrine are drawn from her famous and influential monograph *Intention* (1957) but she developed them in several further pieces, including "War and Murder" (1961). The doctrine draws a distinction between the *intended* outcomes of an action, and the unintended but *foreseen* ones. It holds that this distinction can be morally relevant, such that it is morally worse to intend harm rather than to foresee it. Consider a doctor administering morphine to a terminally ill patient, an act which will shorten the patient's life. The doctor may be intending the patient's death, or the doctor may be intending to deliver pain relief with the foreseen, but unintended 'double effect' of the patient's death. One might argue that, in the former scenario, the doctor is morally culpable, whilst in the second scenario the doctor is not. Anscombe certainly took this view, and she applied the doctrine to a number of contemporary issues.

Consider, for example, Anscombe's view of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War. When it was proposed that Oxford should give President Harry Truman an honorary degree, Anscombe opposed the move because of his role in the bombing. In a privately circulated pamphlet (later



G.E.M. Anscombe. Photo: B.J. Harris

published), entitled *Mr. Truman's Degree* (1956), Anscombe writes:

In the bombing of these cities [Hiroshima and Nagasaki] it was certainly decided to kill the innocent as a means to an end. And a very large number of them, all at once, without warning, without the interstices of escape or the chance to take shelter... Choosing to kill the innocent as a means to your ends is always murder... I intend my formulation to be taken strictly; each term is necessary. For killing the innocent, even if you know as a matter of statistical certainty that the things you do involve it, is not necessarily murder. I mean that if you attack a lot of military targets, such as munitions factories and naval dockyards, as carefully as you can, you will be certain to kill a number of innocent people; but that is not murder.

We can read this passage in light of the doctrine of double effect. Anscombe is distinguishing between the military strategist who intends to kill the innocent, and the strategist who intends some other

effect—such as destroying a munitions factory—but realises that this will entail the double effect of killing innocents. Anscombe is arguing that the actions of the strategist are morally worse in the first scenario, and further that Truman is akin to the first strategist: he *intended* to kill the innocent.

Whether or not Anscombe is correct about Truman's motivations, her views on the matter are very much in line with her more general philosophical principles. It is worth noting that, despite her efforts, Truman *was* awarded the degree, although Anscombe did succeed in pushing the motion to a vote. And her pamphlet is now a classic of moral philosophy.

Anscombe's work has been extremely influential. Her work on intention in particular, is regarded as a

landmark in philosophy of mind: just last year a new collection of essays appeared on it, and a number of influential philosophers including Michael Thompson (University of Pittsburgh) explicitly see themselves as following her. Anscombe is a systematic, original and brilliant thinker, and there is no doubt that her work will continue to be discussed for a long time to come.

Emily Thomas (Christ's College) is a PhD student in the Faculty.

Your comments and contributions are always welcome. Please send them to the Editor at:

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