



Philosophy at Cambridge

Newsletter of the Faculty of Philosophy

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From the Chair

Rae Langton



Credit: Newnham College

Rae Langton, Chair of Faculty

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our Newsletter, though Tim Crane is a hard act to follow, and we miss him. It has been an eventful time, but there is much to celebrate. We are delighted to welcome two new University Lecturers: Jessie Munton, in Philosophy of Mind and Epistemology; and Julia Borcherding, in Early Modern Philosophy. We also welcome Jo H Marcus, Casimir Lewy Librarian and Newsletter Editor. Last time we reported our memorial event for Casimir Lewy, and it has been fascinating for me to learn more about him and the history of our unique Library, created with significant alumni support, and so vital for our students. (For staff and student news see p. 8). On the research front, there have been some exciting initiatives and awards (see p. 8). We received a glowing report by an independent panel (leading a 'Strategic Research Review') who

were 'highly impressed with the sense of dynamism across the Faculty', said our 'high international ranking is clearly merited', and we are 'a genuinely world-leading group of researchers, of which the University can be proud'. They also noted some challenges due to our small size, but it was good to have their assessment, as well as their advice. We are working on a diverse range of topics, and you will get a taste of some of them in the pages ahead.

There are wider political uncertainties, significant to the University as well the nation, whose themes have been reflected in recent Faculty activities. Onora O'Neill spoke on 'Ethics for Communication in a Digital Age' at the Routledge Lecture 2019, arguing that digital technologies have failed to fulfill their democratic promise, because prevailing communicative norms are inadequate, and readily

Upcoming Faculty Events

Alumni Festival 2019

28 September 2019

'If your symptoms are influenced by your attitude, does this make them psychosomatic?' with **Richard Holton**. This builds on his 2018 Uehiro lectures (see p. 2). For further information go to www.alumni.cam.ac.uk/events/alumni-festival-2019.

Festival of Ideas 2019

18 and 25 October 2019

'Climate Conversations', with the **Faculty of Philosophy** in collaboration with **Extinction Rebellion Cambridge**.

24 October 2019

Panel discussion on 'Hate Speech, Xenophobia, and Trolls', with **Rae Langton** (Philosophy), **Mary Beard** (Classics), **Andy Martin** (Modern and Medieval Languages), and journalists **Sean O'Grady** and **Kuba Shand-Baptiste** (*The Independent*).

For further information and booking go to www.festivalofideas.cam.ac.uk.

For information about future Faculty events go to www.phil.cam.ac.uk/events.

bypassed through anonymity. At the 2018 Alumni Festival I spoke on 'Post-truth as Post-democracy', where the audience contributed their own views (see p. 5). The uncertainties are spurring new alliances, e.g. a newly-forged partnership between Cambridge and Ludwig Maximilian University (Munich): we are looking into collaborations in moral psychology, decision theory, Kant, and philosophy of physics. Whatever the future holds, we'll be able to face it with energy and ideas, and with the support of our friends and alumni—and for this we are very grateful.

Non-Categorical Thought

Arif Ahmed



Arif Ahmed

Many of the most important things we say and think are not *about* reality. Or not in the straightforward way that many statements of everyday life and natural science are about it. When you say that the M11 connects Cambridge to London or that people evolved from apes, you are talking about reality. But what about the moral thought that stealing is *wrong*? Or the modal thought that two and two *necessarily* make four? Or the conditional thought that *if* stealing apples is wrong *then* so is stealing oranges?

These thoughts seem to owe their rightness to facts for which nature lacks room. Mackie made vivid how uncomfortably the metaphysical inertia of brute facts sits with the motivational magnetism that anything worth calling a *moral* fact would have to exert. Hume pointed out the total absence of ‘must-ness’ from any experience: ‘green’ describes how some things look; but ‘necessarily green’ doesn’t describe how anything *could* look. David Lewis showed in the 1970s that no fact could possibly take the shape that any facts reported by ‘if... then’ statements would have to have.

With regards to some of these kinds of thoughts, one might say that they are false and should be discarded. Or one might say that those thoughts are really all right because they are not even *trying* to describe the facts. They are trying to do something else. Unlike the flat reports of everyday life and of natural science, they are in this sense *non-categorical*.

In March 2019 Cambridge hosted a one-day conference on the subject. It was part of the European Non-Categorical Thinking Project, in which scholars in linguistics, philosophy and psychology from Amsterdam, Cambridge, Trinity College Dublin, Leeds, Paris, Turin and more recently St Andrews have joined forces to establish what non-categorical thinking could be, if it could be anything. My own talk argued that if we distinguish subjective and objective moral obligation, plausible constraints on the former imply that nothing could answer to the latter. I therefore regard objective morality as an illusion. I also believe that what sustains it is the need to preserve certain kinds of interpersonal power-relation.

The next talk, by psychologist Ruth Byrne, reviewed and drew interesting philosophical conclusions from recent experimental work on conditional thought. Byrne argued that when we think about factual conditionals (‘If it was a good year then there were roses’) we focus on one possibility. But when we think about *counterfactual* conditionals (‘If it had rained then the match would have been cancelled’), we think about multiple possibilities. She formulated a proposal about how in the second case we keep track of such possibilities.

Philosopher Max Jones examined possible evolutionary explanations of counterfactual thought. These explanations undermine the idea that counterfactual thought can support knowledge of possibility and necessity. But on Jones’s view what this shows is only that the evolutionary account was itself misguided.

Philosophers John Divers and Shyane Siriwardena also discussed modality, arguing against recent attempts to connect modal thought with objective probability. Their argument supported Quine’s view that modal thought, particularly concerning

My own talk argued that if we distinguish subjective and objective moral obligation, plausible constraints on the former imply that nothing could answer to the latter.

‘metaphysical’ possibility and necessity, has no place in a scientifically mature vision of the universe.

Logician Vincenzo Crupi turned back to conditional thought. His talk described three ways of interpreting ‘if’ and categorised the often-surprising logical differences between them. There is an intimate connection between this subject and the idea, central to empiricism, that a datum can *confirm* a scientific theory to a greater or lesser extent. The session concluded with a lively discussion of Crupi’s own proposals for measuring confirmation.

If Mary met every king or every queen of Europe and Mary met the king of Spain, does it follow that Mary met every king of Europe? Anyone who studied first-year logic at Cambridge will see immediately that it doesn’t. But almost everyone else, when asked, will say that it does. In the final talk linguistics expert Salvador Mascarenhas cited this fallacy, and the empirical studies connected with it, as evidence for his own novel model of human reasoning. Mascarenhas sees reasoning as a process in which we test a specific hypothesis rather than just ‘updating’ in accordance with the Bayesian model.

In addition to what I learnt from the other speakers I ended the day with a general conclusion. Progress in philosophy is most likely when it engages with other fields of enquiry. Philosophically, the most fruitful kind of ‘interdisciplinarity’ – as in this event – involves, not appropriating questions that other disciplines already address, but rather redirecting their methods towards the basic and vital issues that have always animated our subject.

Arif Ahmed is a Reader in the Faculty.

‘Illness and the Social Self’

Richard Holton at the 2018 Uehiro Lectures

This lecture series, hosted by the Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics in Oxford, asked me to ‘bring the best scholarship in analytic philosophy to bear on the most significant problems of our time’. A tough call, but my hope was that investigating the role of the social in three pressing mental health problems—dementia, addiction, and psychosomatic illness—might go some way to fitting the bill.

Start with dementia. On a broadly Lockean picture of personal identity, as memory is lost, so is the person. That is a common

Vitalism in Early Modern Philosophy

Julia Borcharding and Matthew Leisinger

Descartes is famous for dividing the world in two, distinguishing the mechanistic realm of extended bodies from the mental realm of thinking minds. This distinction often frames the philosophical narratives that we tell about the early modern period: dualists face the challenge of explaining the apparent interaction between mind and body, materialists must explain how bare matter in motion could give rise to thought, idealists cut the Gordian knot by declaring that all is mental, and so on.

One difficulty with this story is that it obscures an important family of views that enjoyed considerable support throughout the early modern period. Sometimes dismissed as an outmoded relic of the Renaissance, early modern vitalism was in fact a rich and influential philosophical movement that rejected the mechanistic worldview that Descartes was so instrumental in promoting. While disagreeing about some of the details, early modern vitalists were united by a commitment to the irreducibility and universality of life throughout the physical world. Some were dualists. The 'Cambridge Platonists' Ralph Cudworth and Henry More, for example, posited immaterial, 'plastic' powers responsible for animating the world of passive matter. Others were monists. Anne Conway and Margaret Cavendish, for instance, argued that all substance is essentially alive and perceptive and, consequently, viewed the difference between mind and body as merely one of degree rather than one of kind. But all, whether dualist or monist, agreed that mechanism had to be rejected as an irremediably impoverished account of the created world.

The story of early modern vitalism is beginning to receive greater attention. This March, with the generous support of the Faculty of Philosophy, the Faculty of Divinity, the Cambridge Centre for the Study of Platonism, Emmanuel College, the Mind Association, and the British Society for the History of Philosophy, we hosted a workshop entitled 'Vitalism in Early Modern Philosophy' in Emmanuel College. It brought together a diverse group of scholars to examine vitalism as a philosophical movement in the early modern period, stretching from its early manifestations in Francis Bacon and



Anne Conway in a detail from Samuel van Hoogstraten's 'Perspective View with a Woman Reading a Letter', courtesy of Mauritshuis, The Hague.

Jean Baptiste Van Helmont to its influence on John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The workshop ended up focusing in particular on the philosophy of Anne Conway, whose *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* is not only an essential text of early modern vitalism but also an important part of a now-emerging canon of early modern women philosophers. As the workshop forcefully brought to light, early modern vitalism was both a worthy opponent for and an important corrective to early modern mechanism. Its proponents are more than deserving of our continued scholarly attention.

Julia Borcharding is a Lecturer in the Faculty. **Matthew Leisinger** is a Junior Research Fellow in Emmanuel College.

Credit: Peterhouse



Richard Holton

description of what happens with dementia. But dementia doesn't bring a simple destruction of memory. The problem, at least initially, is one of access: many memories can be brought back with prompting and scaffolding, which thoughtful family and friends will naturally offer. Others always have some role in maintaining our identity, but in dementia their role becomes central.

Now consider addiction. Recent work there has stressed the importance of cues that trigger desire. Such cues are frequently social. Rather than thinking of desires as originating from within, their driving force often comes from without; again the construction of the self, in this case its desires, turns out to be social. Two consequences follow. One concerns the authority of desire: maximising desire-satisfaction seems a less obvious goal, once we understand the cue-dependence

of desires. Another concerns responsibility: the provision of cues is akin to pollution, for which the provider, rather than the recipient, may bear primary responsibility.

Finally, consider psychosomatic illness. Many illnesses have been thought, controversially, to have a psychosomatic component. If we can distinguish organic and mental illness, psychosomatic illness might be the latter, masquerading as the former. But if the mental is physical, hence organic, this will not help.

Alternatively, psychosomatic illness might be those whose symptoms are influenced by patients' attitudes. But if you aggravate a bad back by refusing to exercise, mistakenly thinking it's dangerous, your symptoms are influenced by your attitude but are surely not psychosomatic. Perhaps there is no sharp cut-off; and any hard and fast distinction here is more a reflection of our social attitudes than of any underlying condition.

Richard Holton is Professor of Philosophy in the Faculty.

Philosophy and Model Theory

Tim Button

You probably know the game 20 Questions. Your friend thinks of an object, then you have twenty yes/no questions to try to figure out what that object is.

Once you've played the game a few times, you might find yourself pondering: *Why twenty questions? How many questions do I really need? Ponder that for a bit longer, and you'll probably end up asking two more precise questions about the game:*

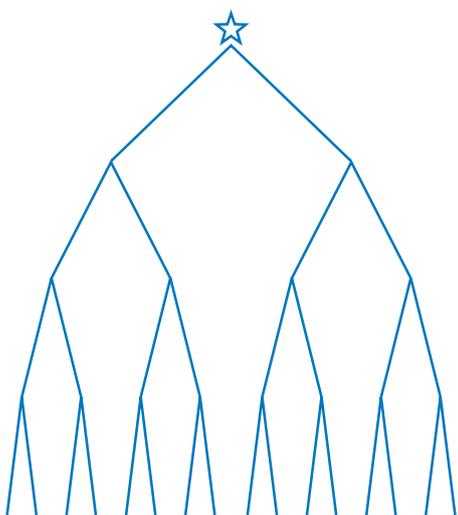
Question A: *What's the smallest number of questions I might ask, and happen to figure out what the object is?*

Question B: *What's the smallest number of questions I would need to be allowed to ask, to be sure that I can figure out what the object is (no matter what it is)?*

Question A has a simple answer: *One*. You could start the game by asking, 'are you thinking of the bell on the desk of the Casimir Lewy Library?' Granted, that would be an *odd* opening question. Still, if the answer is 'yes', then you got lucky.

Question B is rather harder. To begin tackling it, let's make the setup easier, and suppose that your friend agrees to choose her object from a predetermined list of just 16 objects. In that case, you need only 4 questions to be certain you can figure out which object she chose.

To see *why*, try thinking of the possible games of 20 Questions as a Christmas tree. You start at the top of the tree, beside the ornamental star, and begin asking your questions. Let's say that you follow the *left* branch of the tree if the answer is 'yes', and the *right* branch if the answer is 'no'.



Each path, from the star down through the branches of the tree, represents a possible pattern of answers. After 4 questions, there are 16 different paths through the tree. So, since your friend has agreed to choose from a list of 16 objects, by selecting your questions wisely, you can ensure that each of the 16 objects is uniquely associated with some branch on the tree, i.e. with some unique possible pattern of responses to your questions.

Now let's think about what happens as we allow your friend to choose from a longer list, and for you to ask more questions. After 20 questions, you have a tree with 2^{20} – i.e. just over a million – paths. So, with 20 well-chosen questions, you can handle a list with just over a million items on it. And generally, with n questions, you can handle a list with 2^n items.

When selecting an object for 20 Questions, most people choose celebrities, or animals, or landmarks, or whatever. But now imagine playing 20 Questions against a *mathematician*, who tells you that she will choose some *infinite mathematical structure*. As usual, your aim is to ask questions, to figure out *which* structure she has in mind.

What is 'an infinite mathematical structure'? Well, that's a system, comprised of infinitely many mathematical objects, related to one another in certain distinctively mathematical ways. For example, the *integers* (i.e. the positive and negative whole numbers, together with zero) constitute an infinite mathematical structure: there are infinitely many of them, and we can characterise the relations between them in terms of +, ×, and <. Equally, the *rationals* (i.e. anything which can be expressed as a fraction) constitute an infinite mathematical structure. But there are plenty of other structures: e.g. the rationals but without the number $\frac{1}{2}$; the structure which consists of seventeen distinct *copies* of the integers; or whatever.

Your task, to repeat, is to ask questions and work out which structure your friend has in mind. So, how *many* questions do you need to ask? As in the non-mathematical version of the game, we can break that thought down into two parts.

Start with Question A: *What's the smallest number of questions you would need to be allowed to ask, to be sure that you can figure*

out the structure? Sadly, the answer is: *No number of questions can suffice*. Not even some infinite number will do. There are just too many structures.

Now Question B: *What is the least number of questions you might ask, and happen to figure out the structure?* Naïvely, the answer should be: *One*. After all, you might start the game by asking, 'are you thinking of the integers?' And you might just get lucky.

But suppose that your friend tweaks the rules of the game slightly. In the tweaked game, you're banned from using shorthand phrases like 'the integers', or 'the rationals'. Instead, all of your questions have to be phrased *solely* in terms of how the elements of the structure relate to one another. (To illustrate: maybe you've figured out that the elements of your friend's structure are arranged as a line. Then you could ask 'between any two elements, is there always another element?' If your friend is thinking of the integers, she'll have to say 'no'; if she is thinking of the rationals, she'll have to say 'yes'.)

This tweak to the rules changes the answer to Question B in a dramatic way. Given the tweak, no matter how lucky you get, *no number of questions will allow you to figure out what structure she has in mind. You literally can't win.*

This fact follows from a mathematical result which I'll revisit below. But it is *deeply puzzling*. Our game began, even before any questions were asked, with our mathematician friend thinking of some *particular* structure. We now know that she cannot articulate *which* structure she has in mind, just by saying how the elements of that structure relate to one another. Well then: How on Earth did she come to think of *that particular structure* in the first place? Clearly not by articulating how its elements relate to one another; so, *how?*

Last year, Sean Walsh and I published *Philosophy and Model Theory*. The 'philosophy' bit should ring a bell; 'model theory', perhaps not.

Model theory is a branch of pure mathematics which studies mathematical structures. It has powerful tools for describing such structures. And they also have a precisely defined notion – *satisfaction* – which they use in place of the intuitive idea that a sentence can be *true* (or *false*) in

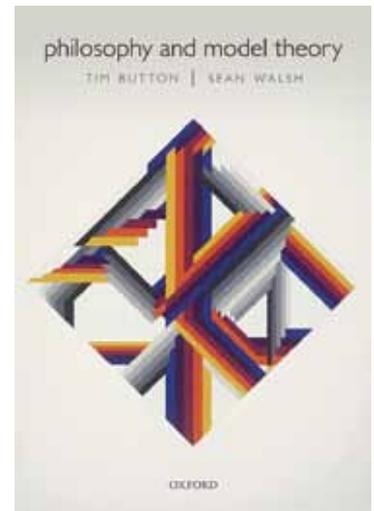
a structure. (As e.g. the sentence ‘between any two elements, there is another element’ is *false* in the integers, but *true* in the rationals.) A structure which satisfies some sentences is also said to be a *model* of those sentences. Hence the name, *model theory*.

Back to 20 Questions. When you phrase your questions in terms of how the elements of the structure relate to one another, the answers you get tell you which sentences are *true* (or *false*) in a structure. In the model theorist’s terms, you are learning which sentences the structure *satisfies*. Now, here is the first deep result of model theory: *if some infinite structure satisfies some sentences, so too do infinitely many other structures*. This is known as the Löwenheim–Skolem Theorem. (I can’t prove it here, but one proof involves thinking more about (Christmas) trees, as above.)

This result explains why you *can’t* win the tweaked version of 20 Questions. And, more generally, it forces us to confront the question: *How could we ever come to think about a particular mathematical structure?*

(Not by listing what the structure satisfies; so, how?) This is a deep philosophical question associated with model theory. And ultimately – according to Sean and me, at least – it forces us to reexamine the very idea of ‘thinking about a mathematical structure’, and hence to re-examine what it means to engage in *mathematical thought*.

This is just one of the deep philosophical issues raised by model theory. There are many others. And philosophers routinely employ model theory throughout their work. But, when Sean and I set out to write *Philosophy and Model Theory*, no one had yet offered a systematic treatment of either the philosophical *uses* of model theory, or the philosophy *of* model theory. We have aimed to do both; to trace the dialectical contours of those points where philosophy and model theory meet one another. But we present our book, not as a final word on what philosophically inclined model theorists and model-theoretically inclined philosophers should do. Rather, it’s an invitation to join in.



Tim Button was, until recently, University Senior Lecturer at Cambridge and a Fellow of St John’s College. His book *Philosophy and Model Theory*, written with **Sean Walsh**, was published by Oxford University Press in 2018.

‘Post-truth as Post-democracy’

Rae Langton at the Alumni Festival, September 2018

‘We’ve entered a post-truth world and there’s no going back’ said the *Independent* in 2016, when ‘post-truth’ became the ‘word of the year’ for some dictionaries. That phrase and others like ‘fake news’ and ‘alternative facts’ have been much in the air since then. At this Alumni event we gathered for a lively discussion about the role of truth and knowledge in a democracy. Have recent political events landed us in a ‘post-truth’ world? Those in the audience were canvassed for their views after the lecture, and their engagement made it an especially memorable event.

Our theme was ‘post-truth as post-democracy’. Abandoning truth would be the death of democracy, not a healthy free speech free-for-all, I argued. The basic idea, to oversimplify: democracy depends on choice, and choice depends on knowledge. That is a familiar thought, with some philosophical roots in J. S. Mill and Immanuel Kant. Reports of the death of truth have fortunately been somewhat exaggerated (to borrow a line from Mark Twain). No-one is actually giving up on truth, for mundane matters of telling the time, or finding a venue for dinner. So ‘post-truth’ involves something else: not caring enough about truth, or being swayed by irrelevant factors—‘objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief’, as the Oxford Dictionaries put it. But this can indeed damage the democratic process, and we discussed some examples from recent US and UK political communication.

Some say free speech is about saying whatever you like, but according to Mill, truth is what gives free speech its point. We need free speech, because otherwise we are ruling out sources of truth, or knowledge: we can learn from hearing true, or partly true, opinions, and from contesting false ones. And why does knowledge matter?

Partly for its own sake, as part of our ‘mental well-being’, for Mill. And also, to bring in Kant, because when we choose to do something, we need to know what we’re doing. A familiar application is the ‘informed consent’ expected in medical contexts. If you go in for a procedure with the deceived impression it’s a minor biopsy, and it’s actually an amputation, then something has gone wrong. If you didn’t know, it wasn’t fully your choice. Should the same apply to politics, to our votes in elections and referenda? Is a deceived choice not fully a choice?

When these questions were put to the Alumni audience, most (57%) disagreed with the journalist who said, ‘We’ve entered a post-truth world and there’s no going back’ (25% agreed, the remainder were in neither camp). Several agreed with ‘we’ve entered a post-truth world’, but not the second part: they hoped for a way of going back. A large majority (87%) agreed that ‘fake news is a serious threat to democracy’ (7% disagreed, the remainder neither). When asked about ‘informed medical consent’, nearly all (96%) agreed that ‘a patient’s genuine choice depends on their doctor telling the truth’ (1% disagreed, the remainder neither). When asked about ‘informed voting’, most (82%) agreed that ‘a citizen’s genuine choice depends on politicians and media telling the truth’ (2% disagreed, the remainder neither). Sample comments: ‘a citizen has a duty to think for themselves’, ‘we expect politicians and the media to lie’, ‘emotion necessarily enters into decision-making’, ‘debate is essential’, ‘taken away: the idea of knowing truth as freedom’. The positive comments were much appreciated: ‘I love the Philosophy lectures, the Alumni Festival needs more of them’, ‘Thought-provoking, enlightening’, and (a favourite) ‘Hi I’m 13 and you made me feel like I want to do this when I’m older, so thank you... my Mum is an alumni’.

Philosophy and Minorities (MAP)

Azita Chellappoo



Azita Chellappoo (left) and Laura Brassington (right) organisers of the 'Power and Identity' Map Conference 2018

The Cambridge chapter of Minorities and Philosophy has been running since Michaelmas 2017 (after a decision to transform the Cambridge Women in Philosophy group to a MAP chapter). Our goals are to address minority issues in the profession, provide a space to discuss theoretical issues regarding philosophy of gender, race, sexual orientation, class, disability, native language, etc., and highlight philosophy done from minority perspectives. We also aim to foster a community of students and staff of marginalised identities in the discipline in Cambridge. Our events are open to all, and we encourage participation from a range of Faculties, Departments, and Centres, including Philosophy, History and Philosophy of Science (HPS), Classics, and Gender Studies.

Over the past two years we have held film screenings, hosted speakers, and held mentoring events. We have hosted talks on antiracism, feminism, and multiculturalism, and we have run a reading group on the intersection of gender, race and disability with philosophy of science. We appreciate the generous support from the Faculty of Philosophy, the Department of HPS and the Faculty of Classics.

In June 2018 we held a conference on 'Power and Identity: Philosophical Reflections on Liberation', with a mix of invited speakers and students from Cambridge and beyond. We ended with a round table discussion on diversity and 'decolonisation', led by individuals active in curriculum efforts within and beyond Philosophy.

In Michaelmas Term 2018 Dr. Paulina Sliwa, from the Philosophy Faculty, gave a talk on the topic of moral testimony and 'hermeneutical advice'. Some philosophers have complained that moral testimony can do cognitive but not emotional work: we can learn the right thing to do, but not how to feel about it. This overlooks the importance of a different kind of advice, which can help us to *make sense* of our moral experience. When we take this into account, it becomes clear that moral testimony can change hearts as well as minds, argued Dr. Sliwa.

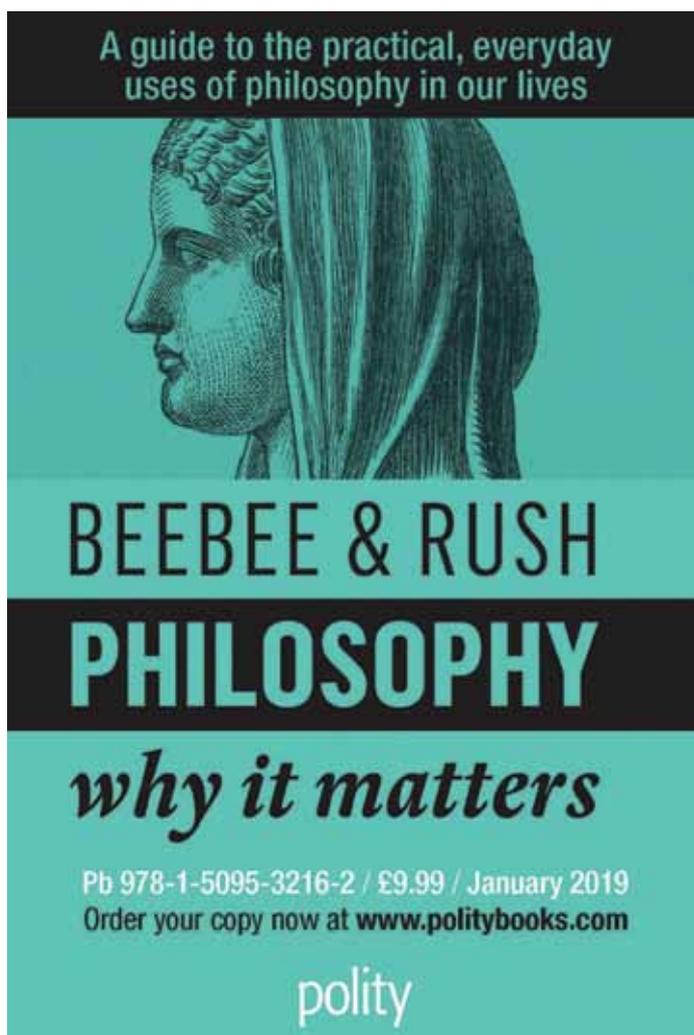
We also held a round table discussion on the topic of sexual harassment, led by a panel which included Dr. Marta Halina from HPS, Philosophy postgraduates, and others. This was a productive discussion, looking into possible explanations for sexual harassment in academia, its possible contribution to the underrepresentation of women, and the institutional barriers that could make it harder to hold sexual harassers to account. Practical advice was shared during an open discussion at the end.

Towards the end of Michaelmas term, we ran a mentoring event led by Dr. Rosie Worsdale, a postdoctoral researcher from CRASSH, along with minority background postgraduates from Philosophy and HPS, who shared their experiences, discussing their personal career path so far, what made them decide to pursue academic research, the obstacles they have faced as minorities in the field, and dealing with 'imposter syndrome', a pattern of self-doubt to which members of minority groups can be more vulnerable. Again, practical advice was shared during an open discussion at the end.

In the year to come we plan to continue hosting speaker events, as well as panel discussions and events that will bring students of marginalised identities together to share their work and experiences.

Azita Chellappoo (Wolfson) is a PhD Student in History and Philosophy of Science and Co-organiser of the Cambridge chapter of Minorities and Philosophy.

For more on Cambridge MAP see: <https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/seminars-phil/cambridge-MAP>. Background information on women in Philosophy can be found at <https://www.bpa.ac.uk/resources/women-in-philosophy/wip-committee>.



Sharon Krause on the Emancipation of Nature

Maxime Lepoutre

During her stay as Faculty Visitor, Professor Sharon Krause of Brown University delivered two papers in which she outlined a distinctive environmentalist ideal. Environmental justice, according to Krause, requires both developing political institutions that prevent human beings from dominating nature, and cultivating an ethos of respect for nature.

In 'Environmental Domination and the Politics of Eco-Emancipation', Krause argues for 'ecological emancipation', the liberation of nature from domination by human beings. Domination is the condition of being at the mercy of another: a person is dominated when her well-being depends on the unchecked or arbitrary decisions of others. The concept of domination has long been central to the republican tradition of political thought. For republican theorists, it is inherently wrong for one person's will to be subjected to the unchecked decisions of another. Depending on the good grace of a master or despot, however benevolent or enlightened they may be, degrades one's status and jeopardises one's freedom. Democracy is a way of counteracting this domination: when everyone has a vote over decisions that affect them, those decisions are forced to track their concerns, and are therefore no longer arbitrary.

While Krause concurs with the idea that domination is wrong, she contends that republicans have applied this idea too restrictively. By focusing exclusively on domination of people by people, republicans have overlooked the way in which non-human living things too can be dominated. Human beings habitually use and disrupt nature in ways that are limitless and unconstrained. In fact, our domination over nature is so deeply entrenched that we find it hard to imagine that things could be otherwise. This fatalism is precisely what Krause wants us to resist. In this, her project bears similarities to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Rousseau argued that interpersonal inequalities between human beings, far from being natural, are the product of contingent social practices and institutions. Having de-naturalised interpersonal inequality, Rousseau paved the way for thinking about how, with different social practices, equality could be restored. In the same way, Krause emphasises that our exercise of limitless and unconstrained power over nature

is in no way 'natural' or 'inescapable'. It results from the way our political and social institutions are currently arranged—and these could be arranged differently.

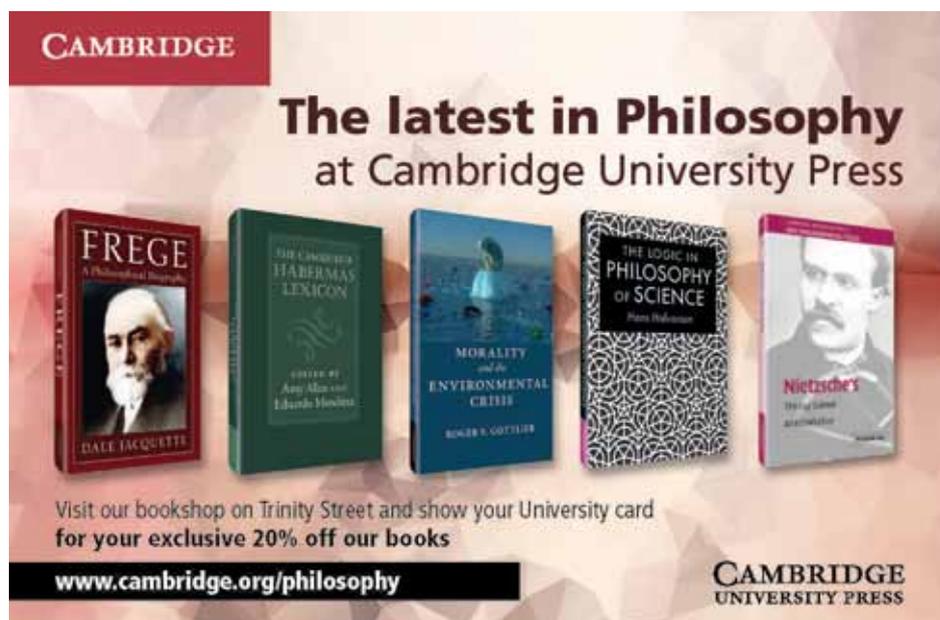
What could it mean to protect nature from domination? The idea might seem puzzling. The standard democratic solution for counteracting domination is to promote the contestation of power through universal suffrage and public deliberation. But oaks cannot vote, and cats aren't fond of public speech. Instead, then, Krause advances two alternative solutions. The first is to constrain and regulate the systems of economic production that incentivise the limitless exercise of power over nature. The second is eco-constitutionalism: enshrining basic protections for nature in constitutions, which take key features of nature's well-being out of the fray of democratic politics.

In 'Political Respect for Nature', Krause moves beyond the question of how we should restructure political institutions, to the issue of what ethos or attitudes we should cultivate towards nature. Here, Krause draws on Kant's idea of respect. Respect, for Kant, requires treating persons 'never merely as means, but also as ends in themselves'. It is disrespectful, in other words, to treat others simply as our tools or instruments. As in her discussion of domination, Krause argues that Kant applies this idea too restrictively. For Kant, the basis for respect is rationality, which involves the ability to consider and adopt ends for oneself. But non-rational living beings too

are owed respect. They too should not be regarded as mere instruments for our use.

What is the basis for this respect? Why is it wrong to see trees as mere timber? While they may not be able to consider and adopt ends, animals and plants nevertheless have internal goals, ways of flourishing and developing, which 'exceed the purposes of others'. It is better for a pine to flourish than to wither, and what it means for a pine to flourish is independent of—and sometimes enters into conflict with—the uses we have for it. Krause presses this point by bringing the Kantian tradition into closer dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas. For Levinas, what grounds the need for a moral response is not something as lofty as rationality: it is the mere 'alterity', or otherness, of living beings—the fact that they have modes of flourishing that differ from, and are irreducible to, our own. By thus expanding our understanding of familiar ethical ideals—Kantian respect as well as freedom from domination—Krause opens us to a new and unsettling way of thinking about nature and the demands it makes on us.

Maxime Lepoutre (PhD Trinity, Cambridge 2018) is a Postdoctoral Prize Research Fellow in Politics at Nuffield College and the Department of Politics and International Relations, Oxford. **Sharon Krause** is Royce Family Professor of Teaching Excellence and Professor of Political Science at Brown University, Providence.



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The advertisement features five book covers: 'FREGE: A Philosophical Biography' by Dale Jacquette; 'THE CAMBRIDGE HABERMAS LEXICON' edited by Amy Allen and Eduardo Mendieta; 'MORALITY and the ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS' by Robert S. Gottler; 'THE LOGIC IN PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE' by Peter Hahnemann; and 'Nietzsche's THE LAST SUPPER' by Alexander D. M. Sison.

People

Faculty and Staff News



Welcome to **Julia Borcherding**, who joined the Faculty as University Lecturer in 2018. She works mainly in Early Modern Philosophy, especially Leibniz and the Cambridge Platonists.



Welcome also to **Jessie Munton**, who joined the Faculty as University Lecturer in 2018. She works mainly in Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Perception and Epistemology.

Welcome to temporary lecturers **Matt Bennett**, **Owen Griffiths** and **Shyane Siriwardena**, who joined us in 2018; and **Tom McClelland**, **Maeve McKeown** and **Alexander Roberts**, who joined us in 2019.

Welcome to **Spencer Johnston** as British Academy Research Fellow; **Yang Liu** as Leverhulme Early Research Fellow; **Tushar Menon** who joins us as British Academy Research Fellow in 2019; and our greatly valued Junior Research Fellows (currently 8) at a range of Colleges.

Welcome to **Jo Harcus** who has joined as our new Librarian and Newsletter Editor, and to **Anna Simpson** on the admin team, both in 2018.

Congratulations to **Tim Button**, who in 2019 takes up a position as Lecturer at University College London; and **Tom Dougherty** who in 2019 takes up a position as Associate Professor at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Warmest thanks and good wishes to both.

Congratulations to **Frisbee Sheffield**, who in 2019 takes up a position as University Lecturer in Classics at Cambridge; **Shyane Siriwardena**, appointed to a Lectureship at Leeds Trinity University; and **Rob Watt**, to a Lectureship at Trinity College Oxford.

Congratulations to **Jenni Lecky-Thompson**, our former Librarian and Newsletter Editor, who in 2018 took up

the position of Head of Library Services at Trinity Hall.

Congratulations to postdoctoral researchers and research fellows: **Dragos Calma**, appointed to University College Dublin as Associate Professor; **Rachel Fraser**, to University of Oxford as Associate Professor; **Louise Hanson**, to University of Durham as Associate Professor; **Remco Heesen**, to University of Western Australia as Lecturer; **Carlo Rossi**, to a position at Universidad Adolfo Ibañez, Chile; and **Bernhard Salow**, to University of Oxford as Associate Professor.

Student News

The Craig Taylor Prize for best performance in the Tripos for Part IB was awarded to **Stella Rhode** (Trinity Hall) in 2017–18 and **Margaret Long** (Pembroke) in 2018–19; and for Part II to **Micaela Solis** (King's) in 2017–18, and **Le Yu** (King's) in 2018–19.

In postgraduate news, the Matthew Buncombe prize for best overall achievement in the MPhil was awarded to **James Adams** (St John's) in 2017–18, and in 2018–19 to **Emma Curran** (Trinity Hall) and **Paula Keller** (Newnham), shared. **Alex Moran** (Queens') was awarded a MIND studentship, and **Li Li Tan** (St Catharine's) a Jacobsen studentship, both in 2018–19.

Philosophy Tripos and MPhil graduates have recently accepted offers to pursue PhDs at a range of leading institutions including Oxford, UCL, Harvard, MIT, Stanford, the Humboldt University, as well as Cambridge.

In Memoriam

We are very sad to report that **Margrit Edwards** passed away in December 2018. Margrit was Principal Secretary in the Faculty for almost 16 years, before retiring in 2012.

Your comments and contributions are always welcome. Please send them to Jo Harcus, Editor, at:

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email: jmh225@cam.ac.uk

Promotions, Honours and Awards

Congratulations to **Clare Chambers** who was promoted to Reader in Political Philosophy in 2018, **Rae Langton** who was appointed Knightbridge Professor in 2017, and **Paulina Sliwa** who was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2017.

Arif Ahmed was awarded a Leverhulme Research Fellowship in 2018 for his project 'The Value of the Future'. He has also been awarded a grant by the Effective Altruism Foundation, starting in 2019.

Tim Button's *Philosophy and Model Theory* (with **Sean Walsh**) was chosen for a 2019 American Philosophical Association Symposium and a 2020 'Author-meets-Critics' session.

Clare Chambers was awarded the American Political Science Association David Easton Award 2018 for her book *Against Marriage: An Egalitarian Defence of the Marriage-Free State*. She was awarded a major Leverhulme Research Fellowship in 2018 for her project 'Intact: The Political Philosophy of the Unmodified Body'.

Tom Dougherty was awarded a Marshall Fellowship in 2018 at the Murphy Institute, University of Tulane.

Richard Holton delivered the Uehiro Lectures in Practical Ethics in 2018 at the University of Oxford, on 'Illness and the Social Self'.

Rae Langton was elected to the Academia Europaea in 2017. She delivered the H.L.A Hart Memorial Lecture in 2019 at Oxford, on 'Reimagining Free Speech'.

Professor Emerita **Onora O'Neill** was awarded the Berggruen prize in October 2017 for a lifetime's work on trust.

Huw Price was appointed in 2018 to lead the strategic development of the Ada Lovelace Institute, whose mission is to ensure data and AI work for people and society.

Paulina Sliwa was awarded a Leverhulme Research Fellowship in 2018 for her project 'Telling right from wrong: moral testimony and moral knowledge'.