PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY

Semester A 2000-2001

All talks to be held on **Thursdays** in room M1, Wall Hall Mansion

Please Note: the **4.00** sessions are **research seminars** aimed at **philosophy staff and research students**. They assume a near-professional competence and may not be suitable for undergraduates. Anyone is welcome to sit in, but do not be surprised if it all goes over your head. The **8.00** sessions are intended for **undergraduates**.

Oct. 5th **Dr. Daniel Hutto**, University of Hertfordshire

**4pm Reason Explanations and the Limits of Theory**

In 1986, Gordon advanced a version of the simulation theory. At its core was the idea that in everyday life understanding the thought and action of others is mediated through a process of imaginative transformation. This formed the basis for a radical challenge to the orthodox view that commonsense psychology is essentially a theoretical enterprise - one which depends on the application of general rule-based knowledge about the kinds of mental states people tend to form and act on, in various circumstances. Thus, it was with a glance toward these ideas that Stich and Nichols once challenged a famous remark of Fodor's by claiming that, "The theory-theory is not the only game in town, but it is the only other game in town." (Stich and Nichols 1992: 46). My thesis, however, is that neither simulation nor theory can adequately account for our ability to deal with the hard cases of reason explanation. For although the standard criticisms of the limits of simulation ought to be accepted, it is not the case that theoretical knowledge is either necessary or sufficient when it comes to dealing with the hard cases. Yet, given that such cases are a central part of the home turf of commonsense psychology, this reveals the true limits of theory. I conclude that if some version of a simulation account can perform the job of explaining how we deal with the easy cases successfully, but no theory can deal with the hard cases, we have good reason to reject theory-theory full stop. We should instead seek a kind of hybrid account, with simulation at its base, which would provide a radical alternative to unadulterated versions of both simulation theory and theory-theory.

Oct 12th **Professor John Haldane**, University of St Andrews

As well as being Professor of Philosophy in the University of St Andrews, John Haldane is also Senior Fellow in the Centre for Philosophy and Public Affairs. Currently he is also Stanton Lecturer in the University of Cambridge. He has published extensively in the fields of philosophy of mind, history of philosophy, and social and political philosophy. Recent publications include "A Return to Form in the Philosophy of Mind" *Ratio*, 1998; "The State and Fate of Contemporary Philosophy of Mind" *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 2000; and "The Future of the Philosophy of Mind" *Mind and Language*, 2001.

4pm The Examined Death

Wittgenstein wrote that "death is not an event in life". Starting from that observation, and considering what it is that one witnesses when one sees a death, an argument suggests itself to the conclusion that the death of a human person is the death of a human body. Understood non-reductively, as it must be to capture the appropriate epistemology, a question remains of whether, if any activity of the living person is not essentially exercised through the body, that activity might continue post-mortem. However, activity requires an agent, and so this speculative possibility seems to require the existence of a continuing subject - the soul. Thomas wrote that "my soul is not me" [*anima mea non est ego*] but most attempts to steer a course between soul-body dualism and materialistic monism have proved unsuccessful. Here a further possibility is identified involving the idea of virtual substances.

8pm Is Political Philosophy in Retreat?

The publication in 1971 of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* marked the beginning of a period of revival of political and social philosophy. In the following years authors such as Robert Nozick, Michael Walzer, Thomas Nagel, Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre advanced the debate about the character of the basic framework within which deliberation about policies and institutions might now be conducted. By stages, however, their various projects have slowed and to some extent have gone into retreat as they feel the force of pluralism and relativism. I shall discuss these issues by way of presenting the background to two recent works: Stuart Hampshire's *Justice is Conflict* and Alasdair MacIntyre's *Dependent Rational Animals*.

Oct. 19th **Dr. Brendan Larvor**, University of Hertfordshire

4pm Naturalism and Cognitive Science

Philosophical Naturalism urges us to look to the natural sciences for answers to our philosophical questions. But the sciences have presuppositions of their own. If the philosophical question in hand lies among the presuppositions of the relevant science, then that science cannot pretend to answer it without begging the question. This thought frames the question: "Is all human cognition calculation?", which I discuss with reference to cognitive science and empirical psychology.

8pm What is the point of going to university?

Caroline Bird argued in the 1970s that for most students in the US, college education is a waste of time and money. In Britain the rate of university participation has risen from about 10% of school-leavers to about 30%--not yet as high as the US, but high enough to make it worth while examining her argument.

Oct. 26th **Professor Andrew Bowie**, Royal Holloway, London

Andrew Bowie is Professor of German at Royal Holloway, University of London. His books include: *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester U.P. 1990, new revised edition 2000); *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (Routledge 1993); ed. and trans. F.W.J. von Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge U. P. 1994); *From Romanticism*
to Critical Theory. The Philosophy of German Literary Theory (Routledge 1997); (ed.) Manfred Frank, The Subject and the Text (Cambridge U. P. 1997); ed. and trans. F.D.E Schleiermacher. Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Texts (Cambridge U. P. 1998). He is also author of many articles. He is at present writing books on Music, Meaning and Modernity, on crossing the divide between European and analytical philosophy, and an introduction to German Philosophy from Kant to Habermas.

4pm Schleiermacher and Post-Metaphysical Thinking

This paper looks at the relationship between the almost wholly ignored philosophy of Schleiermacher in relation particularly to the work of Habermas and Rorty. The paper concentrates on the question of truth and the consequences of the abandonment of the correspondence theory of truth, arguing that many of the most significant contemporary moves in the arguments about this topic were already made by Schleiermacher, and that this fact must change many images of the history of modern philosophy.

8pm Continental versus analytical philosophy?

I will discuss the nature of the divide between analytical and continental philosophy and look at some of the ways in which this divide is now disintegrating.

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Nov. 2nd Dr. Jane Singleton, University of Hertfordshire

4pm Internal Reasons, External Reasons and Morality

Bernard Williams argues that all reasons are internal reasons. This means that for something to be a reason for A it must be connected in some way with A's motivational set. External reasons are reasons whatever A's motivational set. If Williams' position is held then moral reasons will not apply to A unless they happen to be connected with what A cares about. I shall argue that moral reasons can be said to apply to A independently of whether or not they are connected to A's motivational set.

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Nov. 9th Dr. Jeanine Grenberg, St Olaf College, Minnesota and Visiting Fellow, University of Hertfordshire

Dr Grenberg, an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at St Olaf College, is spending the next year and a half on research leave funded by the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Association of University Women. She is the author of articles on the nature of moral motivation in Kant, and is currently writing a book on humility-its sordid history and the need for its rehabilitation, the latter of which she undertakes with the help of Kant.

4pm Finite Agency

As part of my study of humility, I am interested in what kind of being would reasonably have humility at the centre of virtue. My suggestion is that finite agents are such beings. Much has been said of late about the dignity of rational agency and the respect it grounds, but little of its finitude. In this paper, I draw a picture of such agency, focusing not only on its dignity, but also its corruption and finitude. What does it mean to be a finite, yet dignified agent?
8pm Humility as a virtue?

I will introduce a discussion of the virtue of humility, asking you questions such as—what you consider it to be, whether you want to be humble yourselves, why/why not, and in the process get to some main ideas of my current work.

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Nov. 16th Dr. Anthony Rudd, University of Hertfordshire

4pm Warming up the cool place: Wittgenstein, Kierkegaard and the idea of philosophical neutrality

In his recent book *Philosophy's Cool Place*, D. Z. Phillips argues that both Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard are anti-metaphysical thinkers, who replace the foundationalist project of finding a validating basis for our practices which is external to those practices, with an alternative conception of philosophy as conceptual clarification. However, it is unclear what this might involve. I argue that Phillips’ own conception is in important respects continuous with the foundationalist ambition, and that he offers a distorted account of Kierkegaard's - and perhaps Wittgenstein's - philosophical significance.

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Nov. 23rd Professor Joe Cruz, Williams College, Massachusetts

Joe Cruz received a Ph.D. in Philosophy and Cognitive Science from the University of Arizona. After three years teaching in the Cognitive Science School at Hampshire College, Cruz has recently joined the Philosophy faculty of Williams College. His main areas of research are epistemology, the philosophy of psychology, and developmental issues in cognitive science. He is the co-author (with John Pollock) of *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), which is both a treatise on their own account of epistemic justification as well as an introduction to the contemporary literature. Cruz is currently working on several papers investigating the foundations of psychological explanation and the appropriateness of using cognitive research in attempts to naturalise epistemology.

4pm The failure of naturalised epistemology

I will use psychologistic naturalism to refer to the epistemological view that maintains that theories of justification or rationality must incorporate or accommodate the results or methods of scientific psychology. Psychologistic naturalism is the pre-eminent version of epistemic naturalism in the contemporary literature and virtually all epistemologists that identify themselves as naturalists subscribe to a psychologistic version. Psychologistic naturalism, it is thought, holds the promise of integrating questions about the normative relation between evidence and belief with an acceptable physicalist, causal conception of our mental life. I aim to reveal a pernicious tension that arises in psychologistic naturalism. Any epistemological theory that makes a robust appeal to cognitive psychology will run afool of a crippling circularity. This is because cognitive psychological explanations appeal to inferential relations between the contents of mental states, and these inferential relations rely on a normative conception of epistemic propriety for their intelligibility.

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8pm In defence of cognitive psychology

In reaction to the exuberance of popular books on cognitive science such as Pinker's *How the Mind Works*, Jerry Fodor has recently offered a pessimistic assessment of cognitive psychology in its current form (*The Mind Doesn't Work That Way*, MIT Press, 2000). While Fodor has traditionally been a champion of the representational theory of mind coupled with classical computationalism, he
now significantly qualifies his position by arguing that that cannot be the whole story of the cognitive mind. The heart of Fodor's criticism is that cognitive psychology does not have the resources to explain the parts of thinking requiring computation over the whole cognitive corpus. In this talk, I will outline Fodor's new challenge to cognitive psychology, and offer several replies open to the philosopher of psychology. My wider aim is to clarify cognitive psychological explanations of global or holistic inference and to show that the theoretical apparatus of contemporary psychology has more resources at its disposal than it is being given credit for. This talk will be appropriate for students of philosophy, psychology, or computer science.

Nov. 30th Professor D. Z. Phillips, University College Swansea and Claremont Graduate University, California

D. Z. Phillips is Rush Rhees Research Professor at University of Wales, Swansea and Danforth Professor of Philosophy of Religion at Claremont Graduate University, California. He has published widely in philosophy of religion, ethics, and philosophy of literature. He is the author of *Introducing Philosophy* (Blackwell), and his latest books newly published are *Philosophy's Cool Place* (Cornell University Press), and *Recovering Religious Concepts* (Macmillan).

4 pm Kierkegaard and Loves that Blossom

I examine Kierkegaard's claim in *Works of Love* that love of the neighbour is the highest form of love. I argue that Kierkegaard does not do justice to erotic love and friendship and that his appeals to love of the neighbour do not answer the loss which may be experienced in loves of the other kind. Other religious responses are more appropriate.

8 pm Theism Without Theodicy: On the problem of evil

I argue that philosophers of religion are often insensitive in their treatment of the problem of evil. I give ten reasons for thinking so and suggest other religious responses to human suffering.

(N. B. First year students should note that this topic is highly relevant to the 'Philosophy of Religion' section of the Semester B 'Philosophical Explorations' module. Indeed, this speaker's writing on this very topic is amongst the themes of that module.)

Dec. 7th Peter Goldie, King's College, London

Peter Goldie read Philosophy at University College London from 1990 to 1993, after a career in the City of London. He then went to Balliol College Oxford to read for the BPhil and then for his DPhil, which he completed in 1997. His thesis, supervised by Bernard Williams, was on emotion, mood and character. He was a lecturer at Magdalen College Oxford for two years before moving to King's College London as a Lecturer in 1998. His main philosophical interests are in ethics and the philosophy of mind. Recent Publications include *The Emotions: a Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

4 pm Telling a Story: Narrative, Focalisation and Explanation in Commonsense Psychology

What is involved, as part of our everyday discourse, in giving a satisfying explanation of someone's thoughts, feelings or action? I will argue that it is a mistake to think that explanation in commonsense psychology should comply with what is expected of a good scientific explanation; rather the requirement is more along the lines of what is expected of a good story. I try to show how
the audience's imaginative grasp of the focalisation (a term borrowed from narrative theory) of one or more of the people involved enables the satisfaction of what it demands of everyday explanation: the demand is that the audience's interest and emotions be engaged by enabling it to 'take sides'. I try finally to show that this is not crazy post-modern heresy: there is still a place for the notion of truth and falsity in the stories that we tell about ourselves and others.

8 pm Itches and Desires to Scratch

If I have an itch, do I necessarily have a reason to scratch? If I am hungry or thirsty, do I necessarily have a reason to eat or to drink? Some philosophers think the answer to these questions is Yes. This is a not uncommon picture of bodily impulses: they are desires, and once we are 'assailed', by them, we have a good reason to act to satisfy them (although there could be a better reason not to): it is thus that they are sometimes dubbed reason-providing desires. I will try to show that this is a false picture. I will try to put forward an alternative picture of our bodily impulses which does not, on the one hand, characterise them as necessarily reason-providing, but which also does not, on the other hand, characterise them as alien 'inclinations', to be at all times held under suspicion, or even condemned outright, by reason.

The programme of talks will resume in Semester B.

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PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY

Semester B 2000-2001

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1 Feb The talks originally scheduled for this date by Dr. S. Panneerselvam (University of Madras, India) cannot go ahead as unfortunately illness has prevented the speaker from making his trip to the U.K. Thus the Semester B programme will start next week.

8 Feb Jamie Turnbull, University of Hertfordshire

4pm Making Sense of Indirect Communication

In his book Kierkegaard's Fragments and Postscript: The Religious Philosophy of Johannes Climacus C. Stephen Evans tells us that the concept of indirect communication "has inspired a great deal of confusion on the part of Kierkegaard commentators". True as this may be, I do not think that Evans' analysis of indirect communication helps us out of this confusion. On the contrary, by examining Evans' distinction between direct and indirect communication I argue that his is one more confused way of thinking. I end by considering what a more satisfactory account of indirect communication would have to show.

8pm The Birth of Nietzsche's Tragedy

In this paper I examine Nietzsche's claim in The Birth of Tragedy that "only as an aesthetic phenomenon is existence and the world eternally justified". In doing this I try and determine just what kind of 'justification' an aesthetic point of view can give to life. I argue that close attention to what Nietzsche says about the effect that tragedy had on the Greeks provides a novel suggestion as to what it might be like to see the world from an aesthetic point of view.

15 Feb Sacha Stephens, University of Hertfordshire

4pm On Concepts
22 Feb Dr A. D. Smith, University of Essex

David Smith has taught at Essex since 1980. He has published numerous articles in the history of philosophy (e.g. on Aristotle and the Enlightenment period), philosophy of mind, action theory, perception, and semantics/philosophical logic. His last publication was in Mind last year on 'Space and Sight', and he has another coming out in the next issue of Philosophy and Phenomenological Research on 'Perception and Belief'. About two years ago he finished a large book on perception, which is due to be published by Harvard University Press; and he has just finished a manuscript for Routledge on Husserl's Cartesian Meditations.

4pm Husserl and Heidegger: Where's the Disagreement?

It is commonly thought that one of the most significant shifts in the history of twentieth-century philosophy was made by Heidegger in rejecting Husserlian transcendental phenomenology and replacing it with existential phenomenology. Since such later philosophers as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty follow the latter course, Husserl is supposed to have been 'overcome'. I argue that all the supposedly distinctive features of existential phenomenology, or at least those which are supposed to mark a radical break with Husserlian phenomenology, are already exemplified in Husserl's writings. The idea that Husserl is a theory-oriented 'Cartesian' dominated by 'presence' and without an appreciation of the unique nature of 'Dasein' and the way the latter is pre-theoretically involved with the world, is a complete myth.

8pm The Argument Against Direct Realism from Double Vision

I run through the argument from double vision, pointing out that it has some affinity with the Argument from Illusion and some with the Argument from Hallucination (which it is important to distinguish). I argue that the argument is a very serious one indeed, and that it is not clear how to answer it. More particularly, it presents a real problem for my own attempt to vindicate Direct Realism in my forthcoming book.

1 March Dr John Lippitt, University of Hertfordshire

4pm 'For example...': Particularity and narrative example in Kierkegaard and Winch

In this paper, I shall try to relate the significance of Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling as an ethical text to aspects of the debate between generalism and particularism. I shall read the Fear and Trembling portrait of 'faith' as an acceptance of our finite, vulnerable humanity in the face of constant temptations to transcend or reject it - including those 'ethical' temptations which rely upon placing the general or 'universal' as 'higher' than the concrete or particular. But what does such an embrace of particularity amount to, and what wider resonances of ethical import does it have? Here, I consider Peter Winch's discussion of a particular variety of first-person practical judgments, the significance of which typically comes to light in moral dilemmas. I'll aim to show why what we discover about ourselves in such dilemmas has normative force. Finally, I shall consider the significance of the fact that such dilemmas are typically illustrated in literary narratives. I shall aim to show what is wrong-headed about Onora O'Neill's criticisms of Winch under this aspect, and thus to defend Winch's and Kierkegaard's assumptions about the moral salience of literature.
8 March Richard Menary, University of Hertfordshire

4pm The pragmatics of cognition

Recently in cognitive science it has been claimed that some actions are part of cognition (Clark and Chalmers, Kirsch and Maglio). However, I shall argue that the cognitive status of these acts is compromised if we describe them merely causally. The pragmatics of cognition requires a semiotic analysis based in the work of Peirce and Vygotsky.

15 March Professor Tom Sorell, University of Essex

Tom Sorel's main interests are Hobbes and Descartes, epistemology and philosophy of science, moral theory and applied ethics. He studied at McGill University as an undergraduate and received both the BPhil and the DPhil at Oxford, where he was a Canada Council, Quebec Government and Graduate Scholar at Balliol. He held lectureships at Balliol, St. Anne's and Queen's College, Oxford, before joining the Open University in 1979, and coming to Essex in 1992. In 1996-97 he was Fellow in Ethics at Harvard University. He is the author of: Hobbes (1986); Descartes (1987); Moral Theory and Capital Punishment (1987); Scientism (1991); (with John Hendry) Business Ethics (1994); and Moral Theory and Anomaly (1999). He is the editor of The Rise of Modern Philosophy (1993) and The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes (1996); Health Care, Ethics, and Insurance (1998); (with R Ariew and John Cottingham) Descartes: Background Source Materials (1998); Descartes (1999) and (with John Rogers) Hobbes and History (2000). He is beginning to write about anti-Cartesianism in 20th century philosophy.

4pm Self-reference, certainty and what might be salvageable in Cartesianism

Two Wittgensteinian lines of thought imply that neither Cartesian self-reference nor the Cartesian thoughts that express demonic deception are possible. I shall claim that self-reference is difficult for any theory to make sense of, and that some uses of 'I' seem to drive us back to the Cartesian model. These are not central uses of 'I', but they do not seem to be uses we can either ignore or accommodate in a simple account of self-reference. These uses do not reveal the 'real' or metaphysically most important reference of 'I', as Descartes claims, but they are not convincingly discounted either as cases of philosophically inspired misuses of 'I'. They leave a Cartesian residue in the theory of self-reference. According to Wittgenstein's On Certainty there are sentences that appear to have ordinary truth conditions, that appear to be open to negation and to assertion, but that in fact cannot be treated as if they might be false by speakers of a language. These sentences include many that the sceptical possibilities of Meditation One require us to treat as false. Although this line of thought is plausible for some sentences, it can be questioned in a way that allows us to rediscover some of the Cartesian motivation for resorting to the sceptical possibilities.

8pm The Nolan principles and the ethics of public life

Can there be an ethics of public life in general? According to the Committee set up in 1994 under Lord Nolan, there can be. In its first report, the Nolan Committee made recommendations about the standards of conduct to be observed by MPs, Cabinet Ministers and high civil servants, but it also formulated a set of seven principles which it claimed were applicable far more widely. I deny that the principles work even in the area of public office-holding. But in claiming as much, I do not want to say that prescribing new Nolan principles would be a straightforward piece of applied philosophy. It would not even be desirable to replace Nolan's seven with another seven, for it is a mistake to think that public life is unitary or that its moral risks are. It is a mistake, accordingly, to
look for a small number of generally applicable principles. Even standards of conduct for a well-defined group like MPs are hard to formulate in such a way as to seem informative and comprehensive at the same time. It is better for the standards to reflect well-defined risks that turn out to be transitory and even parochial than for them to respond to something like the eternal risks of political life in the abstract. This is a philosophical conclusion, but acting on it means arriving at standards that do not sound like timeless philosophical precepts.

22 March Dr Stephen Mulhall, New College, University of Oxford

Stephen Mulhall is Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at New College, Oxford. His publications include On Being in the World: Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects (Routledge, 1990), Stanley Cavell (OUP, 1994), Heidegger and Being and Time (Routledge, 1996) and, with Adam Swift, Liberals and Communitarians (Blackwell, 2nd ed. 1996). His forthcoming books are Inheritance and Originality: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Kierkegaard (OUP) and On Film (Routledge).

4pm 'The Yearning Expectation of Creatures': Heidegger on non-human animals

In this paper, I argue - against the recent criticisms of both Heideggerian and non-Heideggerian commentators (Krell and Macintyre) - that Heidegger's treatment of nonhuman animals in his lectures on 'The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics' is neither anthropocentric nor humanist, but rather constitutes a powerful acknowledgement of Dasein's indebtedness to its own animality, and hence of Dasein's embodiedness.

8pm Clint Eastwood in the Line of Fire of the Camera

This paper offers a reading of Wolfgang Petersen's 1993 film In the Line of Fire, which argues that its central duel between the Clint Eastwood and John Malkovich characters is also a study of two conflicting conceptions of acting (the cinematic and the theatrical), and hence of the relationship between human beings and their projections on film - an issue which casts light on certain (perfectionist) ethical dimensions of human existence as such.

29 March Professor Andrew Bowie, Royal Holloway, University of London

(Postponed from last semester)

Andrew Bowie is Professor of German at Royal Holloway, University of London. His books include: Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche (Manchester U.P., 1990, new revised edition 2000); Schelling and Modern European Philosophy (Routledge, 1993); ed. and trans. F.W.J. von Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy (CUP, 1994); From Romanticism to Critical Theory. The Philosophy of German Literary Theory (Routledge, 1997); (ed.) Manfred Frank, The Subject and the Text (CUP, 1997); ed. and trans. F.D.E Schleiermacher Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Texts (CUP, 1998). He is also author of many articles. He is at present writing books on Music, Meaning and Modernity, on crossing the divide between European and analytical philosophy, and an introduction to German Philosophy from Kant to Habermas.

4pm Schleiermacher and Post-Metaphysical Thinking

This paper looks at the relationship between the almost wholly ignored philosophy of
Schleiermacher in relation particularly to the work of Habermas and Rorty. The paper concentrates on the question of truth and the consequences of the abandonment of the correspondence theory of truth, arguing that many of the most significant contemporary moves in the arguments about this topic were already made by Schleiermacher, and that this fact must change many images of the history of modern philosophy.

8pm Continental versus analytical philosophy?

I will discuss the nature of the divide between analytical and continental philosophy and look at some of the ways in which this divide is now disintegrating.

EASTER BREAK

26 April Dr Jim Urpeth, University of Greenwich

Jim Urpeth is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Greenwich. His PhD (University of Essex, 1989) considered Heidegger's conception of the relation between language and being. He co-edited (with John Lippitt) *Nietzsche and the Divine* (Clinamen Press, 2000) and has published papers on themes in the thought of Kant, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Bataille, Foucault and Deleuze. He is UK editor of the *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*. His main research interests are in aesthetics and philosophy of religion and he is currently writing a book on themes in aesthetics from Kant to Deleuze and planning another that will attempt to elaborate a non-reductive materialist conception of the nature of religion.

4pm Feeling Divine: A Sketch of a Materialist Ontology of the Sacred

From many traditional philosophical and theological perspectives a relation of irreconcilable exclusion is posited between the religious and material spheres. This is particularly evident in the 'reductive' naturalistic accounts of the nature of religion that characterise the secular age. This paper considers a possible alternative - instead of a materialist explanation of religion, a conception of matter as inherently 'religious'. If plausible this would make possible not merely a non-reductive materialist account of religion but also provide a distinctively 'religious' perspective for contemporary critique in general. The philosophical trajectory underpinning this project originates in Kant and unfolds through Nietzsche toward Bataille, Foucault and Deleuze. It emphasises the constitutive status of affectivity, desire and value and seeks to elaborate an immanent conception of transcendence disclosed through impersonal modes of feeling.

8pm On religious experience

Traditionally the 'argument' for the existence of God 'from religious experience' has always had, when compared to its ontological, cosmological and teleological cousins, an 'intuitive appeal'. Nonetheless it has always been regarded as flawed on epistemological criteria and of dubious authority given the alleged pathologies and irrationalities of its sources. This paper will reconsider the plausibility of this 'poor relation' among the traditional 'proofs'.
3 May Dr Paul Coates, University of Hertfordshire

4pm Representation and Presentation: Sellars and the Nature of Experience

In this talk I look at different ways in which the nature of perceptual experience has been construed by philosophers, and defend a view which is close to Sellars' neo-Kantian account. Perceptual experiences are in some ways parallel to thoughts, in so far as both states represent features of the world. But extreme representational theories (such as Armstrong's) which try to analyse perception solely in terms of belief fail to capture adequately the way in which perception involves something more than mere belief. As Sellars points out, it is difficult to see how the addition of another conceptual item can account for the difference between seeing and merely thinking of. Recently variants of the representational account of perceptual experience have been defended by writers such as Harman, Tye and Dretske, who sometimes appeal to the different "manner" in which perceptual experiences represent. I argue that such attempts also fail to account for the way in which the sensory aspect of experience involves something that is present to the subject. Moreover, they fail on their own terms to resolve the problems of qualia, because they do not attend sufficiently to the difference between the intentional object of experience, and the material object that is perceived.

10 May Professor Christopher Hookway, University of Sheffield

Before becoming a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Birmingham in 1977, Christopher Hookway obtained a PhD in the philosophy of mind and language at Cambridge. He stayed at Birmingham for seventeen years before moving to Sheffield in 1995. Although he has kept up his interest in issues about mind and language, writing a book on Quine: Language, Experience and Reality (Polity Press, 1988), the focus of his research has moved towards epistemology and the American pragmatist tradition. Peirce (Routledge, 1985), was a general study of the work of Charles Peirce, the first of the pragmatists, written for the Arguments of the Philosophers series, and his most recent book returns to that topic - Truth, Rationality, and Pragmatism: Themes from Peirce (OUP, 2000). His current research is concerned with the nature of our epistemic evaluations of beliefs and hypotheses, emphasising the importance of states analogous to ethical virtues for the theory of knowledge and the role of emotions in our practice of epistemic evaluation. This is a return to issues he discussed in Scepticism (Routledge, 1990). (Address: Department of Philosophy, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN. Email c.j.hookway@sheffield.ac.uk)

4pm Emotions and Epistemic evaluations

We are familiar with ways in which our emotions can interfere with our attempts to be rational in our beliefs about our surroundings. This paper will defend the view that they can also contribute to the rationality of our beliefs and that appropriate emotions and sentiments may even be necessary conditions for the possession of justified beliefs and knowledge. The paper will use some examples to make this suggestion attractive, attempt to argue for the stronger claim that emotions are a necessary condition of epistemic rationality and draw out some implications of the view for some familiar questions in the theory of knowledge.

8pm How to answer a question

When we carry out investigations - in philosophy, in the sciences, in everyday life - we pose problems or ask questions; and we try to find the solutions to our problems or the answers to our questions. Philosophers have said very little about what is involved in understanding a question, or about what makes something an answer to a question. In this talk I shall look at some examples - mostly of 'who' questions - and I shall show that issues about how we understand and answer questions are much more puzzling than we might expect. And I shall suggest that they raise some
very important issues about how we are able to understand each other and understand our surroundings.

The programme of talks will resume in Semester A 2001/2.

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Staff/Postgraduate seminar

and

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Feb 3rd

Prof. John Haldane, FRSA, FRSE, University of St. Andrews

John Haldane is Professor of Philosophy, and Director of the Centre for Philosophy and Public Affairs, at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and an executive council member of the Royal Institute of Philosophy. In 1999-2002 he will be the Stanton Lecturer in Philosophy and Religion at the University of Cambridge and in 2003-4 he will be Gifford Lecturer in Natural Theology at the University of Aberdeen.

He has published over 120 academic papers covering areas such as: the history of philosophy, philosophy of the mind, metaphysics and moral and social philosophy. He is the co-author of Atheism and Theism, in the Blackwell 'Great Debates in Philosophy', and a volume of his essays entitled Faithful Reason will be published by Routledge in 2000. He is currently writing An Intelligent Person's Guide to Faith for Duckworth.

He has edited several volumes for Blackwell, OUP and CUP (most recently Philosophy and Public Affairs (CUP, in press) and special issues of the Philosophical Quarterly, Modern painters and the Monist. He was one of the editors of the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy and he is on the editorial boards of numerous international journals including: the American Journal of Jurisprudence, Cambridge Studies in Philosophy, Environmental Values, Ethical Perspectives; the Journal of Philosophy of Education, and Medieval Philosophy and Theology.
In addition to his academic work, he also writes for newspapers and periodicals and appears often on radio and television. He has been a frequent writer for the international Catholic weekly the *Tablet* and has contributed a monthly 'Credo' column in the London *Times*. More recently he has become an occasional essayist for the (Glasgow) *Herald* newspaper. He also writes art reviews and articles for *Art Monthly*, *Burlington Magazine*, *Modern Painters*, *Tate* and other art journals. In 1992 he was a member of the Victim Support Working Party on Victim Compensation, from 1996-98 he was a member of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics Working Party on Genetics and Mental Disorder, and he is currently a member of the Philosophy, Law and Religious Studies peer review panel of the UK National Arts and Humanities and Research Board.

4pm

**Insight, Inference and Intellectualism**

It has sometimes been asked why the problem of induction is only a modern one. Why, if it is as large and intractable a difficulty as philosophers since Hume have assumed, did the ancients and medievals not encounter it? When, for example, Aquinas observes the necessity of induction for knowledge and says that it involves passing from particulars to universals, why does he not see the problem that has exhausted so many philosophers? After all, in the De Veritate and elsewhere he argued in opposition to the doctrine of innate ideas in its Platonic form, and insisted that knowledge is rooted in experience; but experience teaches the fallibility of generalisation and prediction. Admittedly the scope of empirical speculation was more limited in the pre-modern age and the folk science of familiar, middle-sized objects highly reliable. Even so, the possibility of counterexample could always be envisaged and philosophers in every age have been interested in determining methods of reliable belief formation. These factors cast doubt upon one of the most commonly cited explanations of why the problem of induction is not ancient. I shall be concerned with developing another answer and in doing so will connect it with concerns in contemporary philosophy in particular with ideas associated with Quine and McDowell.

8pm

**The Silencing of Religion and The Prospects for Religious Philosophy**

For his 1999 Edinburgh Gifford Lectures, Charles Taylor chose to speak on the theme Living in a Secular Age. He described his project as follows: "I want to examine what it means to live in a secular age ... Put simply: why was it so difficult - almost impossible - not to believe in God in 1500, while in many milieu today that is easy, and it is often faith which is hard?". Readers of *Sources of the Self* will not be surprised to learn that Taylor's examination takes the form of looking at the history of ideas and the ways in which those ideas shape, and are shaped by social practices and institutions. There is, of course, an implied context in all of this. Taylor has in mind, principally, liberal democratic western societies. As we know, however, there are many hundreds of millions of religious believers throughout the world and many of them live in Europe and North America in the midst of what is held to be post-modern secularity. Even so, the suggestion of a felt difficulty of belief in an intellectual milieu is certainly worth exploring. My own interest is related to this, but I am concerned with the exclusion or the silencing of religion within philosophy rather than with its general absence from intellectual culture.

FEB 10th
Dr. Brendan Larvor, University of Herfordshire

4 pm

What is Dialectical Philosophy of Mathematics?

The late Imre Lakatos once hoped to found a school of dialectical philosophy of mathematics. The aim of this paper is to ask what that might possibly mean. But Lakatos's philosophy has serious shortcomings. The paper elaborates a conception of dialectical philosophy of mathematics and considers the work of three philosophers who in some measure fit the description.

Feb 17th

Dr. Brendan Larvor, University of Herfordshire

8 pm

How to Read

The humanities disciplines are distinguished by especially intimate relationships with texts. This sort of advanced literacy may be fostered by drawing models from the intellectual resources of philosophy. Here I freely adapt some ideas from Aristotle to produce a highly portable reading-schema.

Those who came to Cumberland Lodge will have heard this already, but I will use a different set of examples.

Feb 24th

Dr. Daniel Hutto, University of Hertfordshire

4 pm

From Logical Form to Forms of Life

This paper challenges the orthodox view that Wittgenstein moved from realism, in his early phase, to anti-realism (or idealism) in his later writings on the basis of changes in his views concerning that which governs sense. For although there is an important shift in his philosophy on this issue as he abandons logical form in favour of forms of life, the orthodox reading misrepresents the nature of this transition. Far from being a shift rooted in a change in his views about language, Wittgenstein’s understanding of the nature of language emerges from the wider application of his philosophical method. To see this we must regard his later work as emerging from the wider application of the method he began to employ in the central sections of the Tractatus. Seen in this light, his characteristic method of doing philosophy - that of removing misleading philosophical pictures by means of elucidation - was initially restricted to the logical sections of the Tractatus, and it is not until the later writings that this method is applied to all forms of symbolism. Once this is fully appreciated, we can see why his views on realism/idealism actually remained constant during both
periods. That is to say why he refused to endorse either.

Mar 2nd

**Richard Menary, King's College London**

4pm

**Externalism and Peirce's Semiotic**

The paper provides a Peircean analysis of the externalist claim that the content of thoughts and utterances is dependent upon features of the world external to the individual. Most attempts to vindicate this externalist claim have involved dyadic theories of content fixation, which are all problematic. Peirce's theory of signs is triadic and involves an interpretative component missing from dyadic theories. We shall see that the triadic semiotic liberates us from crass dyadic forms of externalism.

8pm

**Peirce and Wittgenstein On The Proper Form of Doubt**

"I was dealing with the kind of extreme doubt which, as I frequently stressed, is metaphysical and exaggerated and in no way to be transferred to practical life." Descartes' form of doubt is metaphysical, so what account can we give of doubt as it occurs in 'practical life?' Wittgenstein and Peirce provide two serious and important accounts of the proper form of doubt. The paper compares and contrasts their accounts.

Mar 9th

**Dr. Michael Esfeld University of Hertfordshire**

4pm

**How a Social Theory of Meaning can be connected with Realism**

Contrary to what is claimed in the literature, a social theory of meaning is committed neither to a social relativism nor does it have any sort of an idealistic implication. Such a theory of meaning can be seen as being about our epistemic access to a world that is causally and ontologically independent of the social practices which determine meaning. If these social practices are conceived in terms of open-ended I-thou relations between individuals, we avoid any reduction of what is correct in our thoughts about the world to social facts. The upshot is a pragmatic realism: pragmatic, because the meaning of our thoughts is determined by social practices; a realism, because whether or not our thoughts about the world are true supervenes on the way the world is.
Mar 16th

**David Arnaud and Tim Lebon, Society for Consultant Philosophers**

David Arnaud began his working life as a peripatetic music teacher before being drawn to academic study. He graduated from Middlesex Polytechnic with a First in Philosophy and following this he has spent many years teaching Philosophy and Psychology at different Universities (Middlesex, Cincinnati and Greenwich) and Further Education Colleges (City and Islington, and Harrow). While doing this teaching he took an MSc in the Psychology of Education in which he investigated how students dealt with a course covering issues in practical ethics, concentrating in particular on their ability to deal with arguments about abortion. Following this he helped to found the Society for Consultant Philosophers and has been engaged in trying to think through how philosophy can be used to help individuals and organisations in their everyday lives. Recently he has been particularly concerned to try to find ways to allow people to think more wisely about ethical issues that they face. These reflections will be published in an upcoming series of articles co-authored with Tim LeBon.

Tim Lebon graduated from Oxford with a first in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, after which he continued his research into ethics at London University, focussing on R.M. Hare's attempt to resolve moral arguments by an appeal to different levels of moral thinking. Having spent over 10 years in the "real world" as an I.T. consultant he returned to philosophy a number of years ago, lecturing at Regent's College, London and the City Lit. He has also run the London Group of the Philosophical Society of England, one of the pioneers in pub philosophy and is a practising philosophical counsellor. He has written regularly for Philosophy Now and The Philosophers' Magazine and is editor of Practical Philosophy, the journal of the Society of Consultant Philosophers. He is currently working on a book entitled Philosophy for counsellors and psychotherapists.

4pm

**Practical Session on Wiser Ethical Decision Making**

8pm

**When is an ethical decision wiser?**

These two sessions - which are intimately related - offer some reflections on what makes dealing with ethical issues difficult for both our emotions and our reason, and how to try and cope wisely with these difficulties. Part of the aim is that the participants get a taste for what it is to actually be a 'practical philosopher'. It is envisaged that this will be something from which even first years without much experience in philosophy could gain something.

Mar 23th

**Dr. Paul Coates, University of Hertfordshire**

4pm
Wittgenstein on Rule-Following

Kripke's discussion of Wittgenstein and the rule-following considerations has been criticised on the grounds that it does not accurately reflect Wittgenstein's views on meaning, and indeed misrepresents his approach to philosophical issues. Kripke is in fact careful to point out that his discussion of the sceptical paradox about meaning may not capture Wittgenstein's intentions. Nevertheless, the paradox that Kripke outlines is a powerful one, and any satisfactory account of meaning should be able to provide a adequate response to it.

In Wittgenstein's own treatment of meaning and understanding, he emphasises the fact that '...everything lies open to view ...what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us.' (PI 126); the importance of what is on 'the surface' is one of the central points that Wittgenstein makes in these sections. But the contrast between what is hidden, and what is open to view, is itself problematic. Some writers, I suggest, have misinterpreted this distinction. We need to first clarify what entitles us to say that some state, process or feature is perceived, and how this connects with the distinction that is sometimes drawn between theory and observation. These points in turn have implications for attributions of understanding to a subject. Drawing upon Wittgensteinian materials, I explore two possible ways of construing meaning and understanding. Both interpretations, I suggest, face serious difficulties in resisting the sceptic's attack, despite the attempts by supporters of Wittgenstein to show that his view is not threatened by the paradox.

Easter Holidays

May 4th

Dr. Charles Conti, University of Sussex

email: C.C.Conti@sussex.ac.uk

Dr Conti is the posthumous editor of the work of Austin Farrer, and has produced five collections of Farrer's ancillary writings, including lectures and essays on philosophy, theology, and Biblical studies, as well as sermons. His own research on Farrer's metaphysical theism culminated in his book *Metaphysical Personalism* (OUP, 1995), which argues that there is more to be derived from applying person-constructs to the traditional concept of God than the being-nomenclature of onto-theology. He is the founder-member of the 'International Personalist Forum' and the 'Society for the Study of Farrer's philosophical theology'.

4pm

Theology as a Form of Projection

This paper considers a 'theory' of language which, if correct, would make it less easy to dismiss the idea of God as a reductive projection. I use a combination of Feuerbach and Lacan to offer a more positive account of religious 'projection'. The God-construct, I maintain, represents a highly personalised form of conscious self-awareness.

8pm
To be announced
(possibly on Gillian Rose's Kierkegaard)

May 11th

Dr. William Child, University of Oxford

Dr Bill Child is a Fellow and University Lecturer in Philosophy at University College Oxford. He studied Philosophy and Politics as an undergraduate, having been excited by discovering from the 1970s TV series 'Men of Ideas' that there was an academic discipline that discussed the sort of abstract and foundational questions that strike most of us in reflective moments. He wrote his doctoral thesis whilst a Fellow of All Souls College Oxford, and has held his present post since 1989. His main research interests are in the philosophy of mind and Wittgenstein's philosophy. His book *Causality, Interpretation and the Mind* (OUP 1994) examines the interpretationist approach in philosophy of mind and its compatibility with the basic intuition that we understand the mind in causal terms. More recently, he has published papers on Donald Davidson and on Wittgenstein.

4pm

Pears's Wittgenstein

Does Wittgenstein's later philosophy contain really satisfying arguments against Platonism? Does it embody a form of modest Platonism (or common-sense realism?) that allows us to navigate between the extremes of constructivism and Platonism - does it avoid both the idea that 'the criteria of identity of objects and their types are simply imposed on us' and the idea that those criteria are entirely the products of our own minds? And is there a tension between Wittgenstein's own reliance on the idea that language rests on a network of natural, pre-linguistic connections and his avowed philosophical internalism? These questions are thrown up in David Pears's too-little-discussed study of the development of Wittgenstein's philosophy - *The False Prison*. The papers offers some answers.

8pm

Other minds and mirror neurons

Where do our concepts of mental states come from? Many philosophers think that such concepts are theoretical: the idea of a mental state is the idea of a state that causally explains observed behaviour. Others think that our mental concepts are fundamentally introspective: we get the concepts of the various kinds of mental state from our own, first-person awareness of being in those states. But we cannot introspect others' minds. So, on this view, how do we ever get the idea that others have minds too? There is evidence that observation of another person's intentional actions causes neuronal activity in the observer that mirrors the neuronal activity involved in her own intentional actions (hence, the idea of mirror neurons). It has been suggested that that could help to solve our problem. I argue that it cannot.

There will be a [conference](#) on this very topic in Germany later this year.
May 18th

Dr. Charles Pidgen, University of Otago

Charles Pigden was born in 1956, the year of 'Jailhouse Rock', the Suez Crisis and the Soviet Invasion of Hungary. He was brought up near Dunstable and acquired an interest in philosophy via the works of the Roman politician and part-time philosopher, Marcus Tullius Cicero and the British philosopher and part-time politician, Bertrand Russell. He read philosophy at King's College, Cambridge and went on to do a PhD at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. After a year of unemployment in Thatcher's Britain (an experience he could have done without), he returned to the Antipodes and a job at the University of Otago in New Zealand (the southernmost university in the world) where he is now senior lecturer. He has published on a wide variety of topics ranging from conspiracy theories of history to the philosophy of mathematics but his principle interests are meta-ethics and the philosophy of Bertrand Russell. His chief publications in metaethics are 'Geach on "Good"', 'Anscombe on "Ought"', 'Logic and the Autonomy of Ethics' and the chapter on 'Naturalism' in Peter Singer's *Companion to Ethics*. He has edited a collection, *Russell on Ethics*, designed to rehabilitate Russell's reputation as an ethical theorist, and he is currently working on a two-volume work, tentatively entitled *The Reluctant Nihilist* and *Living the Noble Lie* which attempts to prove a) that all moral judgements are false but b) that we need to believe them anyway.

e-mail:  charles.pigden@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

4pm

Nietzsche, Nihilism And The Doppelganger Problem

A popular argument against nihilism or the error theory goes something like this: 1) If nihilism is correct, we ought (in some sense) to give up morality. 2) But it is not the case that we ought to give up morality. Therefore 3) nihilism is not correct. (Blackburn and Wright.) I defuse this argument with a little help from Nietzsche. I return the compliment by rescuing Nietzsche from an objection and saving him from an error. Meta-ethical nihilism (which Nietzsche espouses) faces another problem (the Doppelganger Problem). It can't be the case that all moral judgements are false. For if "X is right" is false, its negation is true and its negation is a moral judgement. This problem CAN be solved. But TRUTH nihilism (the doctrine that all truths are false), with which Nietzsche at least flirted, also faces a Doppelganger problem and this problem CAN'T be solved. Thus I save Nietzsche as a meta-ethicist whilst refuting him as a metaphysician. P>8pm

Truth In Fiction

'It is directly evident', says Virginia Woolf, 'that [Dostoyevsky] is the greatest writer who ever lived.' Indeed it is. And one's natural inclination is to say that this is partly because of the psychological insights contained within his work. But why should we suppose that the psychological opinions of novelists and playwrights - even the very greatest - are worth taking seriously? It is not as if they have access to well-tested THEORY of human nature! What makes matters worse is that the EXPLICIT psychological theorizings of even the greatest novelists are often false bordering on the absurd. For example the political (and hence moral and psychological) opinions of Dostoyevsky as set fort in his forth in his *Diary of a Writer* consist of a villainous stew of reactionary Russian chauvinist sentiment spiced with an unpalatable mysticism. If we knew him merely as a journalist we would have to say that he was a ratbag, a tiresome and unbalanced fanatic, whose views cannot be too soon forgotten. But how can the same person be at once a genius and a ratbag? How can the man whose official opinions are such silly, shallow and malodorous stuff appear in his creative persona as he purveyor of profound insights? I endeavour to solve these problems by using a) simulation theory and b) the critical theory of Mikhail Bakhtin.
Return to philosophy main menu or Philosophy Centre.

Disclaimer - this link refers to an important message which should be read in conjunction with this information.
Staff/Postgraduate seminar
and
PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY
Second Semester 1998-1999
All talks to be held in room M5, Wall Hall Mansion

Feb 4th

Prof. Gregory McCulloch, University of Birmingham

GREGORY McCULOCH was educated at Leicester University and Oriel College, Oxford. He held lectureships at Leicester (1983--7) and Nottingham (1987--95) before being appointed to the chair in Birmingham in 1995. He has written three books and around 60 articles and shorter pieces, mostly on the philosophies of mind and language, and on Sartre. He is currently working on a book on the phenomenology of content, which combines analytical and existentialist themes. (Address: Department of Philosophy, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT. E-mail: g.w.mcculloch@bham.ac.uk).

4pm

IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH STICKING PINS IN BABIES?

There certainly would be if it hurt them, and probably is anyway. But it doesn't hurt them, because there is no experience without thought and babies can't think. Illustrated with reference to dogs, cockles, oysters and heat-seeking missiles.

8pm

THE DEMONIC DILEMMA

The real problem for Descartes in the First Meditation is not knowledge but intentionality itself: not how we could know about the world but how we could even think about it. This claim is briefly defended then the moral is applied to various kinds of brains in vats. I hope to make palatable the conclusion that they have no mental life worthy of the name.
FEB 11th

Chon Tejedor Palau, University College London

CHON TEJEDOR-PALAU was born in 1970 in Valencia, Spain. She did her undergraduate degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Oxford, and then her MPhil in Philosophy at University College London. She is currently finishing her PhD thesis on Wittgenstein at UCL, under the supervision of Professor Malcolm Budd. She has taught at University College London, King's College London and the University of Hertfordshire. She is the author of "La Crítica de Wittgenstein al Escepticismo: Moore y Sobre la Certeza" ("Wittgenstein's Critique of Scepticism: Moore and On Certainty"), published in the Philosophy journal of the University of Madrid (Anales del Seminario de Metafísica - 1996). Her main areas of interest are the Philosophy of Wittgenstein, Ethics, Political Philosophy and the Philosophy of Mind.

8 pm

WITTGENSTEIN ON SCEPTICISM

In On Certainty, Wittgenstein puts forward an original argument against scepticism about the material world. It has been claimed, however, that its effectiveness depends, in great part, on the validity of his later views on the relationship between language and the world. Given this, how convincing is really his critique of scepticism?

Feb 18th

Professor John Dupré, Universities of London and Exeter

John Dupre was born in England in 1952 and studied philosophy at Oxford and Cambridge. He taught for fifteen years at Stanford University in California, from where he returned to the U.K. two and a half years ago to take up posts at Birkbeck College, London, and the University of Exeter. The central focus of his research has been in the philosophy of science, with special interests in the philosophy of biology and of economics. He is the editor of The Latest on the Best: Essays on Evolution and Optimality (MIT, 1987) and author of The Disorder of Things: Metaphysical Foundations of the Disunity of Science (Harvard, 1993) as well as numerous articles in books and journals.

4pm

ON THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A MONISTIC ACCOUNT OF SPECIES

Philosophers and biologists argue interminably about what makes a group of organisms a real species. In the past I have argued that none of these answers works in all biological contexts, and we should settle for a pluralistic conception of the species. In this paper I argue for a perhaps more radical if minimally monistic view of the species category: the species is simply the lowest level taxonomic category used for conveying biological information; but there is no theoretical uniformity to the groups that constitute species.
8 pm

**COULD THERE BE A HUMAN ESSENCE?**

This talk will give a negative answer to the above question. Considering various different motives there might be for distinguishing some feature or features of humans as essential, and various possible connotations of such claims to essentiality, it will be argued that all the resultant essentialist claims are either trivial or false.

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Feb 25th

**Dr. Daniel Hutto**, University of Hertfordshire

4pm

**EVEN FURTHER BEYOND PHYSICALISM**

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Mar 4th

**Dr. Richard Ashcroft**, University of Bristol

Richard Ashcroft is Lecturer in Ethics in Medicine in Bristol University's Medical School. He studied mathematics and history and philosophy of science at Cambridge, where he did a PhD on ethics and scientific research. He did post-doctoral work on ethics of clinical trials at Liverpool University before taking up his present appointment. His main research interests are in medical research ethics, decision-making, and justice in health care. Once upon a time he was a postmodernist, but the world kept bumping into him.

4pm

**The Ethics of Disbelief: Treating patients under uncertainty**

The favoured method of evaluating the effectiveness of treatments in medicine is the Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT). Since its inception, the RCT has been controversial in some quarters, for apparently it sacrifices the interests of present patients for the good of future patients. Its defenders, on the other hand, have argued that if we are ignorant or indifferent as to the relative merits of two treatments (even where one is a null or placebo treatment), then we are morally justified, indeed obliged, to administer treatments through an RCT. This defence rests on a string of claims about knowledge, which I will discuss critically in the light of Isaac Levi's work on knowledge and decision theory.

8pm

**The theory of irrational choice**

Medical ethics grants primacy to the principle of patient autonomy. Even where patients choose "oddly", so long as they have the "capacity" to make this sort of choice, we must respect their
choices. However, it seems natural to say that choices which are frankly irrational make respect for autonomy absurd or even cruel. This claim has received a lot of attention in discussions of mental illness, suicide, and religious beliefs bearing on medical treatment. Yet these situations seem "essentially contested". In this paper I will examine whether another form of irrationality, arguably more widespread, is easier to demonstrate and more troubling. Formal instrumental rationality (FIR) is usually thought essential to choice, while being neutral as regards the "rationality" or otherwise of values and preferences. What if we had systematic failures of FIR? What would this imply about our autonomy?

Mar 11th

**Dr. Sarah Hutton**, University of Hertfordshire

4pm

**GOD AND THE LIBERATION OF WOMEN**

Ethical and religious arguments in Mary Wollstonecraft and some predecessors.

Mar 18th

**Dr. Anothony Rudd, University Bristol**

Anthony Rudd studied philosophy at Cambridge, St. Andrews and Oxford, and, after a spell working in the Law, returned to philosophy, receiving his PhD from Bristol in 1997, for a thesis on Wittgenstein and Scepticism. Since then he has alternated between researching in the United States, and teaching in the Philosophy Dept in Bristol. He is the author of *Kierkegaard and the Limits of the Ethical* (Clarendon press, 1993) and of various papers, and has current research interests in aspects of both analytic and Continental philosophy.

4pm

**Is Idealism Obviously True? (And Physicalism Obviously False?)**

A number of philosophers (including Berkeley and Schopenhauer) have claimed that, once properly understood, idealism is in some sense self-evident. Few contemporary philosophers are inclined to see it that way. I investigate why idealism may come to seem self-evident; why the proposition "I can only perceive what I perceive" may be seen not as a banal tautology but as expressing a deep, substantive insight. In the course of so doing, I hope to suggest an understanding of consciousness which would also explain the apparently intractable nature of the dispute between physicalists and their opponents and which would show that, even if idealism is not obviously true, physicalism (by which I mean radical i.e. reductive/eliminative materialism) is obviously false.

8pm

**Philosophy and the Paranormal**
Many philosophers and scientists dismiss the notion of the paranormal out of hand. Such dismissals are often not based on any close study of the empirical evidence. Regardless of what this evidence may show (I have no particular opinion on that) are there good philosophical reasons for discounting in advance reports of paranormal happenings? I shall argue that there are not, and in so doing I will try to expose certain confusions surrounding the notion of a scientific law, and also provide a critique of Hume's classic but - I shall argue - much overrated 'Essay on Miracles'.

Mar 25th

Alan Clifford, University of Essex

4pm

KANT, NIETZSCHE, AND THE MORAL IMAGE OF THE WORLD

Easter Holidays

April 22nd

Dr. George Pattison, University of Cambridge

Dr. Pattison's present post is: Dean of Chapel at King's College, Cambridge. His recent publications include: Anxious Angels: A Retrospective View of Religious Existentialism; 'Poor Paris!': Kierkegaard's Critique of the Spectacular City; The End of Theology - and the Task of Thinking about God. I am currently working on a volume on the later Heidegger for the Routledge Guidebooks in Philosophy series.

4pm

THE NEED OF PHILOSOPHY

The paper will examine Heidegger's understanding of philosophy as set out in 'What is Called Thinking', with particular reference to his views (a) on the need for philosophy in the situation of modernity and (b) on the nature of philosophical enquiry.

8pm

THE LATE HEIDEGGER: NAZI, MYSTIC, POET OR PHILOSOPHER?

An attempt to find a perspective for fruitful reading.
April 29th

John Lippitt, University of Hertfordshire

4pm

KIERKEGAARD, TRANSFORMING VISION AND THE COMIC

May 6th

Mr. Peter Byrne, King's College London


4pm

FEMINISM AND DECONSTRUCTION

The subject of this talk is the process of deconstruction as practised by feminist thinkers on leading notions of traditional Western thought. The concept of God is selected. Feminists see this concept as a mask for and valorisation of the male desire for power. They thus give a motive-based analysis of its origins. Various obligations upon anyone giving a deconstruction of an idea are set out and then it is shown that the typical feminist critique of the concept of God does not meet these obligations. The relation between the notion of God in Western philosophy and theology, on the one hand, and various concepts of power, on the other, are set out. It is shown how the notion of God is in fact a rich source for a critique of corrupt, oppressive forms of power. It is not therefore a necessary expression of love of those forms.

8pm

BYRNE ON MURDOCH

In The Sovereignty of the Good and Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals Iris Murdoch sets out to show how the notion of Good might serve as a substitute for the traditional notion of God which is shorn of the former's 'supernaturalism' while avoiding the reductionism of accounts of God as merely a human projection or ideal. The paper has two main aims. The first is to display how Murdoch moves from a phenomenology of morality to a religious interpretation of it. The second is to show how her account falls decisively short of preserving any kind of religious realism. In the latter task, particular emphasis is placed on her analysis of evil, her indebtedness to Freud and her insistence on the ability of natural science to describe fully what makes the world behave as it does Murdoch's metaphysics of morals is thus argued to be fundamentally flawed.
May 13th

Dr. Jane Singleton, University of Hertfordshire

4pm

Virtue Theory and Principles

To what extent can an ethics of virtue accommodate rules or principles? An examination of the role of principles in ethics is perhaps indicative of a reconciliation between virtue ethics and principles rather than an opposition between an ethics of virtue and ethics of principles.

Return to philosophy main menu or Philosophy Centre

Disclaimer
PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY

Semester A 1997-1998

All talks to be held on Thursdays in the staffroom, Wall Hall Mansion

THURS. 16th OCT

4 pm BRENDA LARVOR, University of Hertfordshire

THURS. 23rd OCT

DR. DAVID LAMB
University of Birmingham

Dr. Lamb is Reader in Philosophy in the Department of Biomedical Science.

4 pm Decisions to Withhold Futile Therapy: Professional Responsibility or a Denial of Patient Autonomy?

M5 This paper explores the notion of futile therapy and treatment options which are considered "medically inappropriate" with reference to recent case studies concerning the withholding of life-supporting therapy. The problem to be addressed is whether decisions to withhold therapy are an acceptable feature of clinical judgement.

5.30 Dinner

8 pm Is Anyone There? A Philosophical Examination of Claims Concerning the Existence of Extraterrestrial Intelligence

M5 This paper evaluates the philosophical status of NASA's exobiology programme and provides a response to recent attempts to resolve Fermi's paradox regarding the lack of substantial evidence of extraterrestrial life.

THURS. 30th OCT

4 pm SUE WILSMORE, University of Hertfordshire

M5 Folk Psychology and Connectionism
THURS. 4TH DECEMBER

4 pm TONY MCWALTER, MP, University of Hertfordshire

M5 Folk Psychology and Connectionism

THURS. 8TH JANUARY

DR. FILIP BUEKENS

University of Tilburg, Netherlands

Dr. Buekens is a Lecturer in philosophy of language at the University of Tilburg, the Netherlands. His main publications include two books (in Dutch) on Davidson's

4.00 Supervenience, Identity, and Causal Efficacy

M5 Most attempts at defining or elucidating 'weak' or 'strong' supervenience make use of various forms of physical indiscernibility.

5.30 Dinner

8.00 The Genesis of Meaning

M5 In 'Meaning Revisited', a reconsideration of his famous views on meaning, H.P. Grice has put forward the thesis that natural meaning

THURS. 15TH JANUARY

4:00 After Virtue: Slow Reading Group

M5 chapters 10-12
PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY
Semester A 1996-1997

All talks to be held on Thursdays in the staffroom, Wall Hall Mansion

THURS. 17TH OCT

STEPHEN MUMFORD
University of Nottingham

Stephen Mumford’s academic interests fall into two main areas.

4.00 “Conditionals and their Dispositional Categorical M5 Distinction”

This discussion session will examine

5.30 Dinner

8.00 “Are there disjunctive and negative properties”

M5

THURS. 24TH OCT

4:00 X, University of Hertfordshire

M27

God’s Eye Ontology and Three Hard Problems of Consciousness

8:00 Film: Jarman’s "Wittgenstein"

P6

THURS. 31ST OCT

RAY MONK/ BILL BREWER/DENIS McMANUS
University of Southampton
THURS. 14TH NOV

Professor Howard Robinson
University of Liverpool/Budapest

4:00 Davidson
M5

5.30 Dinner

8:00 Vagueness
M5 This w

THURS. 28TH NOV

4:00 X, University of Hertfordshire
M27

God’s Eye Ontology and Three Hard Problems of Consciousness

8:00 Film: Jarman’s "Wittgenstein"
P6

THURS, 5TH DEC

DR. JULIA TANNEY

4:00 "Rule Following"
M5

5.30 Dinner

8:00 "Contradictory Beliefs"
M5

THURS. 9TH JAN

4:00 John Lippitt, University of Hertfordshire
M5

"Existential Laughter in Neitzsche and Kierkegaard"
THURS. 16TH JAN

PETER CLARK
University of St. Andrews

4:00 “Is Wittgenstein’s Philosophy Constructive or Desructive”

M5

This paper will consider Kenny’s conception of Wittgenstein’s philosophy as outlined in The Legacy of Wittgenstein. It will be particularly concerned with the methodological remarks in both the Tractatus and later writings.

5.30 Dinner

8:00 “Lucid Dreaming”

This talk will introduce a philosophical discussion about the nature of dreaming.
PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY

Semester B 1996-1997

All talks to be held on Thursdays in the staffroom, Wall Hall Mansion

THURS. 9TH JAN

4:00 RICHARD MENARY, Kings College, London

M5 Folk Psychology and Connectionism

In 1990 Ramsey, Stich & Garon invited us to entertain the hypothesis that connectionism might eliminate folk psychology. Their controversial characterisation of folk psychology led to a flurry of papers. In retrospect, have we come to a clearer understanding of the relation between folk psychology and connectionism.

THURS. 16TH JAN

DR. DAVID LAMB

University of Birmingham

Dr. Lamb is a Reader in Philosophy in the Department of Biomedical Science.

4.00 Decisions to Withhold Futile Therapy: Professional Responsibility or a Denial of Patient Autonomy?

M5 This paper explores the notion of futile therapy and treatment options which are considered "medically inappropriate" with reference to recent case studies concerning the withholding of life-supporting therapy. The problem to be addressed is whether decisions to withold therapy are an acceptable feature of clinical judgement.

5.30 Dinner

8.00 Is Anyone There? A Philosophical Examination of Claims Concerning the Existence of Extraterrestrial Intelligence

M5 This paper evaluates the philosophical status of NASA’s exobiology programme and provides a response to recent attempts to resolve Fermi’s paradox regarding the lack of substantial evidence of extraterrestrial life.
THURS. 30TH JANUARY
4:00 After Virtue: Slow Reading Group
M5 chapters 1-3

THURS. 6TH FEBRUARY
4:00 After Virtue: Slow Reading Group
M5 chapters 4-6

THURS. 13TH FEBRUARY
4:00 After Virtue: Slow Reading Group
M5 chapters 7-9

THURS. 20TH FEBRUARY
DR. FILIP BUEKENS
University of Tilburg, Netherlands


4.00 Supervenience, Identity, and Causal Efficacy

M5 Most attempts at defining or elucidating 'weak' or 'strong' supervenience make use of various forms of physical indiscernibility. After glancing at some definitions, I argue that they must fail if causal efficacy is supposed to be a feature of mental events. Then I elucidate Davidson's account of supervenience ('D-supervenience'), first as an abstract relation between a predicate and a set of predicates (to be illustrated by uncontroversial examples), and then as applied to the mental/physical relation. I argue that Davidson must defend that if two events are physically indiscernible in the light of a complete physical theory of the world then they must be identical in the Leibnizian sense:
physical indiscernibility collapses into L-identity. It follows that mental differences between two events logically entail physical differences. I conclude by demonstrating how the Davidsonian account of the concept can explain counterexamples to Moore's approach to supervenience of moral on natural properties.

5.30 Dinner

8.00 The Genesis of Meaning

M5 In 'Meaning Revisited', a reconsideration of his famous views on meaning, H.P. Grice has put forward the thesis that natural meaning (n-meaning) might be a predecessor of non-natural meaning. Whereas in his seminal 1957 paper and in discussions that followed it the Gricean program was presented as a attempt to define nn-meaning in terms of speaker intentions, his reconsiderations suggest that we can learn something about non-natural meaning by investigating what both types of meaning have in common. "On general grounds of economy", Grice writes, "(...) if one can allow them to be variants under a single principle, this is the desirable thing to do." He then goes on to claim that the "root idea in the notion of meaning, which in one form or another would apply to both of these cases, is the claim that y is a consequence of x. What both uses of the word 'meaning' have in common is that, on some interpretation of the notion of consequence, y's being the case is a consequence of x" (Grice 1989:292).

In this paper, I will sketch a picture of how natural meaning could give rise to nn-meaning. I follow the modernist tradition in concentrating on contours rather than details, and strive for a picture that reveals something about the way we could see relations between the emergence of nn-meaning, states of mind and communicative intentions. As such, it is an attempt to give nn-meaning a place in the natural order. The relevance of Grice's thesis is obvious for current attempts at naturalizing nn-meaning: a plausible theory of the genesis of meaning must show how nn-meaning is not an unexplainable cosmic event but a product of the various ways creatures more or less like us optimize communicative behaviour and learn to reason about the mental states that cause them.

THURS. 27TH FEBRUARY

4:00 After Virtue: Slow Reading Group

M5 chapters 10-12

THURS. 6TH MARCH

RAY MONK

University of Southampton

4:00 Thinking in Pictures: Wittgenstein, Derrida and Freud
M5 Why does Derrida want to insist on the priority of writing over speech? Why did Wittgenstein describe himself as a ‘disciple of Freud’? This paper seeks to answer both questions by considering them in relation to other, discussing both Wittgenstein and Derrida in connection with Freud’s theory of dream interpretation.

5.30 Dinner

8:00 To be Announced

M5

THURS. 13TH MARCH

4:00 DR. PAUL COATES, University of Hertfordshire

M5 A Paradox of Perceiving?

In this paper I introduce and critically examine a paradox about perceiving that is closely analogous to the paradox about meaning which Kripke puts forward in his exegesis of Wittgenstein’s views on Rule Following and the Private Language argument. Applied to vision, this paradox raises a metaphysical scepticism about which object a person is seeing when, for example, they look at an apple tree with their eyes open, etc. Objects can be seen when their appearance is distorted in various ways by illusions; so how can we answer the sceptic who suggests that the viewer is really suffering a bizarre illusion of a red car situated to the side of him, when he appears to be seeing a green apple in front of him? The sceptic is not concerned with epistemic problems about how we know which, if any, object the subject is seeing; he is raising the deeper question of what fact of the matter underlies a person’s perceptual relation to the physical world, and in virtue of which that person may be justified in arriving at a perceptual belief about their environment.

Of the different issues raised by the sceptic, I focus on the question of what grounds the perceiving relation, and canvass a number of possible proposals in answer to it. I concentrate on two views in particular: the Disjunctive View and the Causal Theory of Perception. Although, as I acknowledge, the Causal Theory is not without its difficulties, I suggest that the real moral of the paradox of perceiving is that it allows us to understand why the Disjunctive view completely fails to provide a coherent positive account of what perceiving is.

THURS. 17TH APRIL

PROFESSOR ADAM MORTON

University of Bristol

Professor Morton’s publications include Frames of Mind (1980), Diasters and Dilemmas (1990) and Philosophy in Practice (1996). He is a co-editor (with S. Stich) of Benacerraf and His Critics (1996) and is currently preparing a new edition of A Guide Through the Theory of Knowledge.
4:00 Expression as Simulation:

M5 Making sense of something like Wittgenstein's "expressivist" attitude to ascriptions of states of mind.

5.30 Dinner

8:00 Practical Bullsit Detection

M5 Why its time for a comeback of something like old-fashioned positivism.

THURS. 24TH APRIL

4:00 JOHN LIPPITT, University of Herfordshire

M5 A funny thing happened to me on the way to salvation: Climacus as humorist in Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript

Increasingly, commentators are considering it fruitful to make comparisons between the ethical, religious and methodological approaches of Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein. Within this context, James Conant has argued, in a series of articles, that the 'revocations' made of the Concluding Unscientific Postscript and the Tractatus by their respective authors means that we should view these texts as containing 'simple nonsense'. In opposing this view in the case of the Postscript, I firstly criticise the reading of that text's 'revocation' which leads Conant to his conclusion. Next, I aim to show why we would better understand the revocation's significance if we paid close attention to two factors: the pseudonymous author Johannes Climacus's description of himself as a 'humorist'; and, more importantly, what the text tells us about 'humour' as an entire existential life-view; one given much less attention in Kierkegaard scholarship than the much better-known 'aesthetic', 'ethical' and 'religious' views of life.

THURS, 1ST MAY

MICHAEL LOTTI

University of Wales, Swansea

4.00 Conant’s Reading of Kierkegaard

M5 This paper shows 1) how Conant and Weston's interpretations of Kierkegaard are faulty methodologically and 2) how their reading of the Postscript cannot be reconciled with the actual text.

5.30 Dinner

8:00 Forgetting About Existence
M5 I will try to say something about Kierkegaard's notion that won't depend upon any particular textual knowledge (it's from the Postscript).

THURS. 8TH MAY

4:00 DR. JANE SINGLETON, University of Hertfordshire

M5 Generalism, Particularism and the Role of Moral Principles

In this paper I shall be arguing that moral principles do have a role to play in moral decisions and I shall be describing what I take that role to be. In the course of this task, I shall argue that there is effectively no difference in the role played by moral principles in non-subsumptive generalist accounts and particularist accounts that allow a place for moral principles.
PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY

Semester A 1995-1996

All talks to be held on Thursdays in the staffroom, Wall Hall Mansion

THURS. 12TH OCT

4:00 Dr. Paul Coates, University of Hertfordshire
M27
“Prediction and the Myth of Expertise”

8:00 Film: “Sophie's World”
P6
Venue to be Announced

THURS. 19TH OCT

Harry Lesser

University of Manchester

Harry Lesser's academic interests fall into two main areas – ancient philosophy and contemporary moral and political philosophy, especially medical ethics. His latest publication is an article in The Journal of Applied Philosophy, 1995 on the moral lessons of the Holocaust. He is currently working on an article on Levinas for a forthcoming collection of papers.

4.00 “Discussion: Teichman on Freedom of Speech
M27 and the Public Platform”

This discussion session will examine J. Teichman’s “Freedom of Speech and the Public Platform: in Journal of Applied Philosophy, 1992, no.1.

5.30 Dinner

8.00 “Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom”
Harry Lesser will consider whether academics (or students) have any special rights or duties with regard to freedom of speech over and above those possessed by all citizens (or that should be possessed by all citizens). Conrad Russell’s Academic Freedom (Routledge, 1993) is relevant.

THURS. 2ND NOV

Dr. Keekok Lee

University of Manchester

Dr. Lee is mainly interested in environmental philosophy, but also in social philosophy, philosophy of law, ethics and philosophy of science. Her major publications include: A New Basis for Moral Philosophy (1985); Social Philosophy and Ecological Scarcity (1989); The Positivist Science of Law (1989); The Legal-Rational State: A Comparison of Hobbes, Bentham and Kelsen (1990). Her major forthcoming publication is The Natural and the Artefactual: The Implications of Science and Technology for Environmental Philosophy.

4:00 Is There a Need to Re-invent Nature?

M27

Nature has been pronounced dead both empirically (see Mckibben’s End of Nature) and conceptually (see, for instance, Callicott, ‘La Nature est Morte’ (1992), “The Role of Technology in Evolving a Concept of Nature” (1994)). But is nature dead? In any case, what is nature? Different senses of ‘nature’ will be examined. In the light of that clarification, the paper will argue that there is one important sense of nature which has to be defended, namely, that embedded in the distinction between the natural and the artefactual. The paper will also argue for the necessity of ontological dyadism while dispensing with ontological dualism.

5.30 Dinner

8:00 How not to Confuse Nature with Culture

This will, through the use of some cases, show the confusions that can arise when people fail to distinguish between nature and culture. It will also show that philosophical confusion can lead in this context to outlandish behaviour!

THURS. 9TH NOV

4:00 Dr. Daniel Hutto, University of Hertfordshire

M27

God’s Eye Ontology and Three Hard Problems of Consciousness

8:00 Film: Jarman’s “Wittgenstein”
THURS. 16TH NOV

J.E.R. Squires
University of St. Andrews

Roger Squires has been the Chairman of the Philosophical Quarterly (since 1992) and its executive editor (since 1987). His interests concern the philosophy of Wittgenstein, the philosophy of mind (particular issues concerning mental illness and dreaming), and epistemology. His publications include: “The Problem of Dreams”, Philosophy, 1972, “Narayana’s Dream”, Cogito, 1994, and “Dreamtime” in the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1994.

4:00 “Is Wittgenstein’s Philosophy Constructive or Desructive”

This paper will consider Kenny’s conception of Wittgenstein’s philosophy as outlined in The Legacy of Wittgenstein. It will be particularly concerned with the methodological remarks in both the Tractatus and later writings.

5.30 Dinner

8:00 “Lucid Dreaming”

This talk will introduce a philosophical discussion about the nature of dreaming.

THURS. 23RD NOV

4:00 John Lippitt, University of Hertfordshire
M27

“Existential Laughter in Neitzsche and Kierkegaard”

THURS. 30TH NOV

4:00 Dr. Jane Singleton, University of Hertfordshire
M27

“The Objectivity of Morality”
THURS. 7TH DEC

Dr. Michael A.R. Biggs

University of Hertfordshire

THURS. 18TH JAN

Professor David Cooper

University of Durham


4:00 “Self Denials: Self & Morality in Schop & Neit”

In many passages Sch & Neit seem to deny the real existence of selves and even of individuals this paper explores the pivotal place these denials have in their overall philosophies and their reasons for making these denials. It is argued that for both of them the notion of self is too invested with mistaken and dangerous moral assumptions to survive rejection of the later. It is also argued that it is not their ‘quick’ and ‘official’ arguments against selves which are crucial but their detial account of human behaviour and psychology.

5.30 Dinner

8:00 “Should Asian Philosophy have a Place on the Curriculum?”

Indian and East Asian philosophy is currently taught in hardly any philosophy departments in this country. Are there any good reasons for this exclusion? It is argued here that some at least of the reasons sometimes given for ignoring these traditons are mistaken. E.g. the assumption that Asian philosophies are really religions. I want to show that, especially in India, problems of just the kind discussed in the Western tradition were intennsily studied at least a thousand years before comparable sophisticated discussion got underway in Europe.
Disclaimer - this link refers to an important message which should be read in conjunction with this information
PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY
Semester B 1995-1996

All talks to be held on Thursdays in the staffroom, Wall Hall Mansion

Thurs, 15th Feb Dr. Tim Crane
“The efficacy of content: a functionalist theory”
“The Mechanical Mind”

Thurs 29th Feb Charles Conti

Thurs 14th March Dr. Cynthia MacDonald
PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY

Semester B 1994-1995

All talks to be held on Thursdays in the staffroom, Wall Hall Mansion

Jeff Mason "The Philosopher’s Address: Writing and the Reception of Philosophy"

Middlesex University

Thurs 30 Mar 3.45-5.30 M5

Dr. Gordon Graham "The Shape of the Past"

University of St. Andrews

Thurs 27 April 3.45-5.30 M5

Phil Soc "The Family and Society"

7.30-9.00 M3

Dr. Paul Coates "Out of the Closet and into the Mind: Who’s Still Afraid of Sense Data?"

Thurs 4 May 3.45-5.30 M5

Tony McWalter "Quantum Electrodynamics and Kant’s Theory of Causality"

Thurs 11 May 3.45-5.30 M5

Dr. Cynthia MacDonald "First Person Authority and Externalism"

University of Manchester

Thurs 18 May 3.45-5.30 M5

Phil Soc "Problems of Mental Causation"

7.30-9.00 M3
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