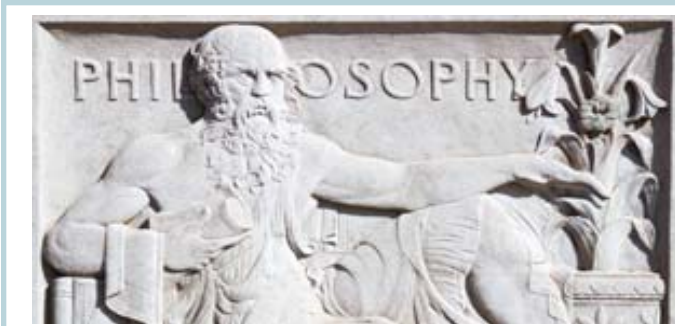


Michigan Philosophy News

Fall 2012

for friends, alumni, alumnae of the Department of Philosophy, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor



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Dear Friends of Michigan Philosophy,

Loyal readers of the *Michigan Philosophy News* will recognize a new format this year. Instead of a single extended centerpiece in the form of a faculty article developing a research theme, we feature a number of shorter “field reports,” meant to convey the range of departmental goings-on this year. This range includes (but is not limited to!) undergraduate course development, the co-curricular innovation of Philosophy Movie Night at the Michigan Theater, “The Science of Ethics” project, and PENGUIN, a graduate student initiative to teach philosophy in the Detroit public schools. Also in this year’s *MPN*, the Directors of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies report directly on their spheres. The only task this leaves the Department Chair is to deliver an overview of events and developments since the last *MPN*, and to express thanks to all of those who help to make philosophy at Michigan what it is. This I proceed to do.

Faculty and Staff News

Although we have no new full-time faculty to introduce, we have two “dry” appointments to announce, two visiting professors to welcome, and two faculty returning in newly elevated positions to celebrate.

“Dry” appointments are faculty working full-time in other units, but ready and able to contribute to Departmental life, for instance by



teaching cross-listed courses, advising graduate students, or initiating collaborative exchanges. Effective September 1, SCOTT HERSHOVITZ (Law), and EZRA KESHET (Linguistics) join Philosophy as dry appointments. A mainstay of Ethics Lunch and the organizer of a major 2009 Law and Philosophy conference held at UM, Scott is working to establish an interdisciplinary program in Ethics and Law. Ezra’s expertise in semantics, syntax, pragmatics, and discourse complements our own faculty interests in linguistically-informed philosophy of language. This synergy was on display in the graduate seminar “Discourse Constraints on Anaphora” Ezra co-taught with Eric Swanson in 2009. We are thrilled to be able to recognize the value Scott and Ezra add to our department by these dry appointments.



Ezra Keshet

Winter semester 2013, we welcome two distinguished visiting faculty. Visiting for the whole semester is Professor DERRICK DARBY, who holds appointments in both Philosophy and Law at the University of Kansas, where he is establishing a Center for the study of justice and inequality. These are among the topics he will engage in courses for both undergraduates and graduate students here, as well as in public talks for the Philosophy Department and for the Program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. Visiting for an action-packed three weeks in March will be TIMOTHY WILLIAMSON, Wykeham Professor of Logic at Oxford University. Timothy will conduct an intensive graduate seminar on his forthcoming book, *Modal Logic as Metaphysics*. Seminar participants will do extensive reading in advance of, and extensive writing in the wake of, his visit. We all look forward to welcoming Derrick and Timothy to Angell Hall.



Eric Swanson

Some of our faculty begin the academic year with new job titles. Having flown through the tenure and promotion process, Assistant Professor ERIC SWANSON has become Associate Professor Eric Swanson. And JIM JOYCE, hitherto an unmodified Professor, has become Cooper Harold Langford Collegiate Professor of Philosophy. Congratulations, Eric and Jim!

All of our faculty continue to contribute to the profession along myriad dimensions. Here is a sample. ELIZABETH ANDERSON is directing UM’s new program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. GORDON BELOT labored heroically on the program committee for the 2012 meetings of the Philosophy of Science Association. On sabbatical this year with the help of a Michigan Humanities Award and a Fellowship from the American Council of Learned



Jim Joyce

Societies, VICTOR CASTON is writing a book on early Stoic theories of mental representation and content. (Victor won, but had to decline, three other competitive fellowships.) ALLAN GIBBARD's *Meaning and Normativity* is an imminent release of Oxford University Press. ISHANI MAITRA also has a book forthcoming from OUP, *Speech and Harm: Controversies over Free Speech*, which she co-edited with Wellesley professor Mary Kate McGowan. PETER RAILTON brought down the house with his presidential address at the 2012 Central Division Meetings of the APA. LARRY SKLAR's *Philosophy and the Foundations of Dynamics* is in production at Cambridge University Press. JAMIE TAPPENDEN co-edited a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, dedicated (as we all should be) to truth and values. BRIAN WEATHERSON is scheduled to give his inaugural lecture as Marshall M. Weinberg Professor of Philosophy on November 14, 2012.



None of the faculty accomplishments chronicled above, or the graduate student and undergraduate accomplishments chronicled below, would be possible without the help and support of the Department's extraordinary staff. Starting in 2006, MAUREEN LÓPEZ served as head of that staff, aka our Key Administrator. Maureen put the *key* in Key Administrator. She brought to her role a

panoply of skills and a galaxy of connections, gathered during pre-Philosophy stints in the Departments of Psychology and Anthropology, as well as the office of the Dean of LSA. (She recently astonished me by reporting, in all apparent earnestness, that we philosophers were the easiest group of faculty she's ever dealt with.) Maureen's expertise, versatility, and good nature have kept our department running smoothly, both from day to day and from year to year. Maureen retired May 1, 2012. She has moved to Texas to be closer to her family, which grew on March 31st by the addition of a grandson, her first. We wish her the best!

And we welcome new Key Administrator LORI SCOTT. She is adept at the position, having served for 3 years as the key ad for the UM Linguistics Department. Lori brings over 30 years experience in education, both in the classroom and on the administrative side, to the post. We are already benefiting from her resourcefulness and expertise, and look forward to working with her down the road.



Special Events

2011-2012 was another event-filled year. We had colloquium talks from Jason Turner (Leeds University) on Tractarian geometry; Carina Fourie (University of Zurich) on social inequality; Tommie Shelby (Harvard) on justice, self-respect, and the culture of poverty; Liz Camp (Penn) on figurative speech in antagonistic contexts; Jeff Russell (Oxford) on possible worlds and the objective world; and Steffi Lewis (Princeton, NJ) on David and the Christians (which was based on her late husband David's correspondence with famous philosophers about God). Verity Harte (Yale) gave talks on the *Philebus* and the *Republic* in our classical philosophy series. In a variation on the standard format of that series, the Department helped to sponsor a conference entitled "Our Ancient Wars: Rethinking War through the Classics."

Held in March, the conference's program ran from live theater performances to panel discussions featuring combat veterans to academic talks of a more conventional stripe.

Also in March John Broome, White's Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford University, delivered the Tanner Lecture, "The Private and Public Morality of Climate Change," to an audience of over 400 who braved a tornado watch to attend. The lecture itself was followed by a lively Q&A period, ranging from questions about whether species diversity had on its own an intrinsic moral worth to questions about personal identity, and in particular about criteria of individuation for future occupants of the planet. The Q&A was brought to an abrupt halt by the announcement that, because a large funnel cloud had touched down in nearby Dexter, Michigan, the tornado watch had been promoted to a tornado warning. John Broome and his audience were hustled by campus security into the basement of the Michigan League, where in a hot and occasionally windswept food court, the discussion of the Tanner Lecture continued until the all-clear was sounded 90 minutes later.



John Broome (center) continues discussions in the Michigan League basement.

Also in March, and equally splendid, though less meteorologically challenged, was the 2012 Weinberg Symposium in Cognitive Science, organized by the Department of Linguistics and dedicated to the topic of bilingualism. Five distinguished linguists and the philosopher Gil Harman (Princeton) gave talks on a mutually illuminating collection of topics, including bimodal bilingualism (as when a language user acquires both a signed language, such as ASL, and a spoken one, such as English), language mixing, and child bilingualism. One astonishing disclosure is that infants can by the age of nine months distinguish between the sounds of Norwegian and Japanese. Another astonishing disclosure: so can rats! The 2013 Weinberg symposium, organized by the Department of Psychology and entitled "Rethinking Rationality and its Bounds," proposes to bring together experts in cognitive psychology, behavioral and neural economics, game theory and neuroscience to address the nature of rational behavior in light of well-known results which suggest that our actual responses depart from the optimal ones predicted by arm-chair theories of rational choice.

Appreciation

Even part way through this catalog of goings-on, the debt of gratitude we owe our donors is apparent. Donors help us to maintain the outstanding faculty whose exploits are chronicled in these pages. The Weinberg Professorship gift makes possible the distinguished chair in philosophy whose inaugural lecture, and occupant, we celebrate this November. The Malcolm L. Denise Philosophy Endowment, honoring Theodore Denise, supports faculty recruitment, and the Nathaniel Marrs Fund promotes

faculty retention. Donors help us to support, and to recognize, outstanding students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Particularly instrumental here are the Weinberg Endowment for the Frankena and Stevenson Prizes, and the Weinberg Endowment for Philosophy. Donors help us to enrich the student experience, for instance, through sponsorship of graduate student editors for the *Philosopher's Annual*. Donors help us to participate in sustained and thoughtful interdisciplinary interactions, for instance, through the Weinberg Fund for Philosophy and the Cognitive Sciences. In the present economic climate, maintaining a competitive philosophy department serving the constituency of a public university is no mean feat. I like to think that we're pulling it off. I know that, if we are pulling it off, it's only with the help of the interest and support of readers of the *MPN*. We are grateful to *all* of you. Those of you who have supported the Department financially this past year, we acknowledge on pp. 10 and 11 of this newsletter. If you would like to appear on the list next year, the enclosed card affords you one way to do so. (You can also donate on-line through our home page: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/philosophy/>.)

Yours,



Laura Ruetsche
Professor and Chair



Graduate News

By Tad Schmaltz, Director of Graduate Studies

Although jobs in philosophy continue to be difficult to secure, our recent PhDs are doing remarkably well. See the Recent Graduates section of the newsletter for details.

Meanwhile, our continuing graduate students are collecting an impressive record of professional accomplishment. With apologies to those whose accomplishments I omit, here are some examples of students who have received extra-departmental awards: CHIP SEBENS has completed the second year of a three-year National Science Foundation Fellowship. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) provided funding for CHLOE ARMSTRONG, STEVE NAYAK-YOUNG and PATRICK SHIRREFF. ALEX SILK received funding to participate in an NEH Summer Seminar, whereas DAN SINGER received funding to participate in an NEH Summer Institute. WARREN HEROLD and Alex Silk were successful in a university-wide competition for the 2012-13 Rackham Predoctoral Fellowships. Rackham also chose Warren Herold for its Outstanding Graduate Instructor Award, and ROHAN SUD for a Research Grant. ROBIN ZHENG has been accepted into the Rackham Public Humanities Institute. Our former student NATE CHARLOW won honorable mention for the Rackham Outstanding Dissertation Award.

For some time our students have served as co-editors who seek to

identify for *The Philosopher's Annual* the ten best articles published in philosophy each year. Starting this year, funding for these positions is provided by Richard and Carolyn Lineback and the Philosopher's Information Center. Chloe Armstrong, BILLY DUNAWAY and Robin Zheng were the 2012 co-editors.

There were several graduate students recognized for excellence with departmental awards. Billy Dunaway received the Charles L. Stevenson Prize for excellence in a dossier, and Chloe Armstrong received the Department's John Dewey Prize for excellence in teaching. Summer Fellowship recipients include PAUL BOSWELL, CAT SAINT-CROIX, STEVE SCHAUS and DAMIAN WASSEL (all Weinberg Summer Fellows), and Patrick Shirreff (Haller Summer Fellow). Warren Herold was chosen as the Weinberg Dissertation Fellow. Cornwell Fellowships have been awarded this academic year to Billy Dunaway, Cat Saint-Croix and Dan Singer.

This year the Spring Colloquium was organized by NILS-HENNES STEAR and BRYAN PARKHURST, on the topic, "The Aesthetic and the Ethical". The conference featured speakers Anne Eaton (Illinois-Chicago), Noel Carroll (CUNY), Matthew Kieran (Leeds), Paul Taylor (Penn State). Our graduate students have once again been active contributors to the philosophical community. The following have papers accepted or forthcoming: DAN PETERSON in *Synthese*, ADAM RIGONI in the *Washington and Lee Law Review* and (with Rich Thomason) in the *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, JON SHAHEEN in the *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, Alex Silk in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, and WILL THOMAS in the *Michigan Law Review* (which was awarded the Allen Lewis Thomas award, for the year's outstanding student publication). Our students have also presented research in several different venues, including international conferences in Australia, Germany, Great Britain and Sweden, and in North America at the APA Eastern Division Meetings, the Rocky Mountain Ethics Conference, and the USC/UCLA, CUNY and Princeton-Rutgers Graduate Conferences.

Finally, this year our graduate students planned and piloted an initiative to bring philosophy to the Detroit public school system. Members of the steering committee for this PENGUIN initiative made several visits to the Henry Ford Academy School for Creative Studies to lead discussions of the *Euthyphro* and of various ethical issues including trolley cases. There are plans to continue and expand PENGUIN next year.



University of Michigan
2012 Philosophy Spring Colloquium

The Aesthetic & The Ethical

March 30: Forum Hall, Palmer Commons
7pm-8:30pm
Paul Taylor (Penn State)
Noel Carroll (CUNY)

March 31: Koenzel Room, Michigan Union
10am-4pm
Matthew Kieran (Leeds)
Kendall Walton (Michigan)

April 1: Forum Hall, Palmer Commons
10am-6pm
Daniel Jacobson (Michigan)
Anne Eaton (Illinois - Chicago)
Peter Railton (Michigan)

Funded by the Dept. of Philosophy and the Institute for the Humanities

sites.lsa.umich.edu/springcolloquium2012

PENGUIN

By the PENGUIN Steering Committee: Kimberly Chuang, Charles Sebens, Jonathan Shaheen, Damian Wassel, Robin Zheng

Philosophers ENGaged with Urban Institutions (PENGUIN) was founded in 2011 with a very simple mission: to bring philosophy out of the university classroom and into the community, with special focus on targeting students that may otherwise lack access to education in philosophy. Our motivations were twofold. On the one hand, we believe that we can offer students unique opportunities to develop skills that will serve them academically, intellectually, and personally. On the other, we also believe that these students have much to offer us: since philosophy concerns itself with making sense of the human experience, we depend on insights gained from engaging in dialogue with diverse perspectives and critical viewpoints. Moreover, in a climate where it has become increasingly common to refer to “the crisis of the humanities”, we believe that initiatives such as this one have become correspondingly more important for demonstrating that philosophical methods remain highly applicable for successfully navigating life in a modern society. As John Dewey, a former chair of the Department of Philosophy at Michigan, once wrote: “Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men.”

An initial meeting, which included visits from Michael Seigfried, founder of the Columbia University Philosophy Outreach Program, and William Copeland, an M.A. of the department and community organizer in Detroit, was attended with widespread interest and support among graduate students and faculty. These graduate students and faculty volunteered to teach and facilitate discussions with students on a broad array of topics, including the problem of evil, Zeno’s paradoxes, personal identity, animal research, and distributive justice. We then established a partnership with the Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies, a public academy for middle- and high- school arts and design students located in Dearborn. Damian Wassel and Jonathan Shaheen, who served as the main instructors, piloted the program in late March of 2012 and led sessions until the end of the school year in June.

PENGUIN began by meeting once a week as an after-school program. After only a few meetings, however, the Henry Ford Academy invited the program to meet twice a week during the school day. Throughout the course of the term, students read and discussed philosophical texts on a range of topics including freedom, Plato’s *Euthyphro*, and utilitarianism. In fact, some students reportedly so enjoyed discussing trolley problems that they requested a full-time philosophy teacher! Responding to such student enthusiasm and the continued success of the program, the Henry Ford Academy has now proposed that PENGUIN offer a full introductory philosophy course to 11th and 12th grade students during the 2012-13 school year. The course, which will meet three times a week, is projected to begin in late October. PENGUIN is currently developing a curriculum for the course, with plans to dovetail with the upcoming College and Literature, Science, and Arts theme semester for Winter 2013 on “Understanding Race”.

We plan to go digital next year producing an online newsletter.

Please be sure to send us your email address so we can notify you when

Michigan Philosophy News is published next fall.

Email us at philosophy.staff@umich.edu.

Undergraduate News

By Elizabeth Anderson, 2011-12 Director of Undergraduate Studies

AY 2011-12 saw the graduation of 40 philosophy concentrators and 35 philosophy minors. During the 4-5 years most of these students were working toward their degrees, members of our Department introduced 10 new undergraduate courses, on topics ranging from Gender and Science through Political Economy to the Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics. A field report on one new course—Philosophy and Science Fiction—follows. Another field report concerns another novel undertaking: philosophy movie night.

Although the vibrancy of our undergraduate community is a collective effort involving faculty, graduate students, staff, and the undergraduates themselves, the Department is fortunate to be able to recognize outstanding individual achievements. This year’s Frankena Prize, awarded annually to an undergraduate for excellence in the concentration, goes to MATTHEW MORTELLARO. Haller Term Prizes are awarded to undergraduate students for outstanding overall performance in an upper-level philosophy course. Winners are selected by the Philosophy Undergraduate Studies Committee on the basis of final grades and recommendations from instructors. The Haller Term Prize for Fall recognized SHAI MADJAR, for his work both in Peter Railton’s course, “Topics in Ethics: Agency, Emotion, and Value” and in Matt Evans’ course “Philosophy of Mind.” The Haller Term Prize for Winter went to ANTHONY BRYK for his work in “Philosophy of Plato” with Evans. The Haller Paper Prize is awarded periodically for essays of exceptional merit written in upper-level Philosophy courses. This year, a Hall Paper Prize recognized ABRAHAM MORRISON for his paper “Knowledge, Reasons, and Rationality” written for Jim Joyce’s PHIL 443 course, “Foundations of Rational Choice Theory”. All of these prizes are made possible by endowments.

Our undergraduate’s accomplishments also range further afield. Some examples: NAOMI SCHEINERMAN presented papers at Northwestern and the University of North Carolina. JONATHAN WOLGIN presented one paper and commented on another at a conference at Eastern Michigan University. WILLIAM HOCHEIMER and Shai Madjar also presented papers at the Eastern Michigan conference. NOËL GORDON, a Moral and Political Philosophy Minor, was awarded a 2012 Truman Scholarship, which recognizes college juniors for their potential to contribute significantly to public service.

UM now has even more to offer its undergraduates. The Department of Philosophy is pleased to announce the inauguration of a new interdisciplinary program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE). PPE is an undergraduate concentration administered by Philosophy, with the participation of the Departments of Political Science and Economics. Philosophy took the initiative in proposing PPE, which was approved by the three departments last year and won final administrative approval this July. PPE offers students a rigorous program of study in political economy, investigating phenomena at the intersection of politics and economics, combining formal methods such as game theory and statistics with normative theory. Interest in PPE programs is growing nationally, although there are still only a few such programs in the U.S. We believe UM, as a

world leader in interdisciplinary research, is in an excellent position to offer a leading PPE program. UM boasts numerous faculty members working on all aspects of political economy, including theories of freedom and equality, property, human rights, global justice, international trade, immigration, tax policy, political party formation, government regulation, and constitutional development. We thought it was time for us to offer undergraduates the opportunity to take advantage of UM's strengths in interdisciplinary research in our three departments. Because of the demanding nature of the curriculum, with numerous prerequisites and rigorous training in both quantitative methods and writing, admission to the concentration is by application only. Elizabeth Anderson, the Director of PPE, taught the gateway course "Introduction to Political Economy" to the PPE concentration in Winter 2012. We are pleased to welcome our first class of 18 PPE concentrators this Fall.

We are hopeful that in short order we will be participating in another interdisciplinary concentration: Cognitive Science. Integrating the disciplines of Linguistics, Philosophy, and Psychology, the Cognitive Science Concentration is designed to offer students four distinct but complementary tracks, developing perspectives on cognition from the standpoints of decision, computation, language, and philosophy. Our own Chandra Sripada joins representatives from Linguistics and Psychology on the steering committee.

*Sarah Moss joined the Department in 2009, the same year she completed her PhD at MIT. A winner of the 2011 Rutgers Young Epistemologist Prize, she has papers published or forthcoming on topics ranging from probabilistic models of updating and communication to Wittgenstein's color incompatibility problem. One of her present research projects is to understand the rational constraints the past beliefs of persisting agents exert on their present beliefs. Sarah's research propels her teaching, which is innovative, engaging, and rigorous. Here are the comments she delivered to the audience at the Michigan Theatre after the Department's screening of *Memento*.*

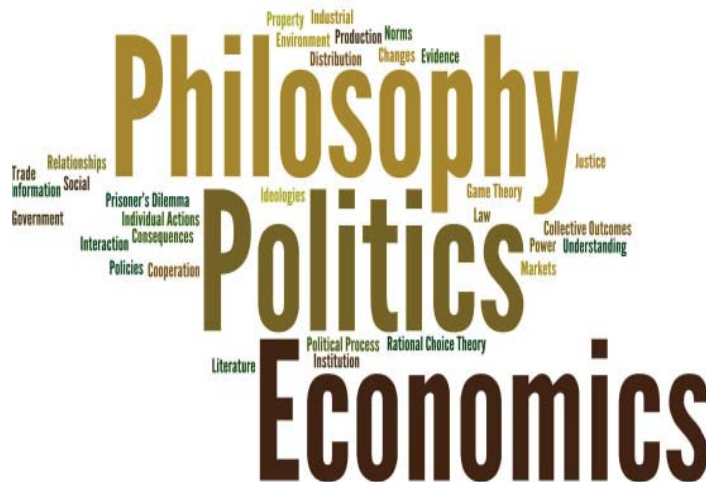


The film *Memento* and some introductory philosophical questions about desire satisfaction

By Sarah Moss

Christopher Nolan's 2000 film *Memento* is the sort of film that calls for a long post-mortem. Even after we reconstruct its plot in chronological order—spoiler alert: plot reconstruction to follow!—we are confronted with several difficult philosophical questions about choices made by its protagonist, and thereby indirectly confronted with questions about choices we make ourselves.

Told straight, the narrative of *Memento* is as follows: before the film takes place, burglars assault our protagonist Lenny and his diabetic wife. His wife recovers completely, but Lenny loses his ability to make new lasting memories. His wife is so distraught that she uses Lenny to commit suicide by asking him to inject her with repeated doses of insulin. Lenny has no lasting memory of these events, becoming convinced that his wife was killed by an intruder



who was in fact never captured by police. A corrupt police officer named Teddy helps him find that intruder and murder him.

Over the course of the film, Teddy uses Lenny to kill a drug dealer, by convincing Lenny that the dealer is the intruder who assaulted and killed his wife. Just afterwards, he tells Lenny the truth: that his wife survived the assault, and that his search for vengeance is in vain. This angers Lenny, inspiring him to write down the license plate number of the car Teddy drives, knowing that this will lead his future self to suspect that Teddy is the intruder who assaulted and killed his wife. As the film unfolds, we see Lenny suspect, pursue, and finally murder Teddy.

Lenny is a fascinating protagonist. For starters, his actions illustrate some very basic distinctions that we often make in introductory philosophy classes—most notably, the distinction between having a particular desire be satisfied, and merely believing that a particular desire is satisfied. These states usually go together, i.e. usually either a desire is satisfied and you believe that it is satisfied, or a desire is not satisfied and you believe that it is not. But Lenny often finds himself in less ordinary states, namely the state of falsely believing that a desire is satisfied, or the state of falsely believing that a desire is not satisfied.

For example, Lenny wants to kill the intruder who was in fact never captured by police. This is not a desire about what he himself believes, but rather a desire about the external world. Before the film takes place, Lenny satisfies this desire—but he soon forgets that it has been satisfied. Similarly, after Teddy comes clean, Lenny wants revenge for having been used in a drug bust and for Teddy's brutal honesty. As the film unfolds, he gets that revenge—while forgetting that he ever wanted it. These predicaments raise an important question: is it rational to pursue goals, even when you know that you will have no clue about whether you have achieved them? The character Natalie presses a skeptical answer: "even if you get revenge, you're not going to remember it." Lenny resists. "It doesn't make any difference whether I know about it," he explains. "Just because there are things I don't remember doesn't make my actions meaningless. The world doesn't just disappear when you close your eyes, does it?" Lenny is articulating a philosophical position: there are ends we care about not because achieving them will make us happy, but rather only for their own sake.

Conversely, can it be rational to pursue merely believing that you have achieved certain goals, even when you have not actually achieved them? Lenny suggests it can be. When Lenny writes Teddy's license plate number down, he knows that later he will at least have the satisfaction of thinking that he has avenged his wife's murder, and that is part of what motivates him to deceive his later self. He asks: "do I lie to myself to be happy?" And he answers: "in your case, Teddy, yes, I will." In a nutshell: writing down the license plate number simultaneously commits Lenny to both sorts of false belief about his own desires. He will later get revenge on a corrupt police officer, rather than getting revenge on his wife's killer. And yet he will believe that he is getting revenge on his wife's killer, rather than getting revenge on a corrupt police officer. Lenny knowingly and willingly enters both states of false belief.

After studying the choices that Lenny makes, we may answer just the same sort of questions for ourselves. For instance: which state of false belief is better, all things considered? Think for just a moment about something you want. Suppose you can only pick one: either your desire will be satisfied while you do not realize that it is satisfied, or you will think it is satisfied when it isn't.

Which would you prefer? Would your answer change, depending on what desire you called to mind, or is one state of false belief always better than the other? And how exactly would you justify your answer? Suppose you would rather that your desire itself be satisfied. Is it really reasonable to care about the world being one way rather than another, when that fact makes no difference



at all to your experience? "I prefer the option that makes me less happy." Does that declaration not at least sound puzzling, if not irrational? On the other hand, if you would rather have the delusion that your desire is satisfied, are you not moved by recent criticism—think of *The Matrix*, for example—suggesting that this delusion is not worth valuing?

And to end with just a few more twists in our philosophical plot: what if you are choosing on behalf of a friend, rather than yourself? In other words, suppose your friend wants something. You can either satisfy her desire, or make her believe that her desire is satisfied, but not both. Which do you choose? Does choosing for another person instead of yourself have any impact on your answer, or your justification for that answer?

Finally, notice that even though Lenny is happy to deceive his future self, he is much less willing to deceive his current self. After shooting the drug dealer, he is genuinely concerned that he has killed the wrong person. "He's not the right guy," Lenny worries.

Teddy dismisses his concern: "He was to you. Come on, you got your revenge. Enjoy it while you still remember." But Lenny resists. When you choose between unknowingly having a desire satisfied and falsely believing that a desire has been satisfied, does it matter whether you are choosing on behalf of your current self or your later self? In this respect, is your later self more like your current self, or more like another person? The film does not prescribe answers to these questions, but it does provide vivid illustrations that may help us as we reason about exactly what is valuable about the satisfaction of our desires.

When freshly-minted Princeton PhD David Baker joined our faculty in 2008, he was returning to his alma mater. Baker graduated in 2003 from the UM, where he majored in physics and philosophy, and won the Elsa L. Haller Prize twice. His commitment to our undergraduate curriculum and to those who pursue it is deep-seated and genuine. Expressions of that commitment include stalwart service on our Undergraduate Studies Committee, a perennial presence as a Faculty Marshall at graduation, and a wide undergraduate teaching portfolio. Below Baker describes a first year seminar he introduced in 2009—one of a dozen new courses piloted by members of our faculty since 2008.



Science Fiction and Philosophy

David Baker

It's safe to say that no field of scholarship can match philosophy when it comes to the centrality and widespread use of thought experiments. And no field of literature indulges in thought experiments the way science fiction does. Moreover, the hypotheticals that show up in science fiction are often markedly philosophical: can a computer program be a person? If another person with your memories and personality does something wrong, should you feel guilty?

Since the earliest science fiction greats like H.G. Wells and A.E. van Vogt began wrestling with philosophical ideas in their work, philosophy has only become more central to science fiction. When I first set out three years ago to teach a course in science fiction and philosophy, I found enough philosophical meat in a single anthology of stories—Gardner Dozois's *The Best of The Best*—to fill an entire semester, with three of my favorite novels and a couple of films added to the mix.

As an example of how philosophical these stories can be, consider "Daddy's World," a short work by Walter Jon Williams. A father whose son is dying of cancer scans the child's brain and creates a computer program modeled after the boy's mind. The real-life child dies, but the artificially intelligent program is raised in a virtual environment to think he is the real son. After he learns his true nature and becomes depressed, the father simply resets the program to a point in time before the truth was discovered. Every plot point in this story raises new questions in ethics, philosophy of mind and the metaphysics of personal identity. For the students, it's like reading Parfit's *Reasons and Persons* in the form of an exciting piece of fiction. When I supplement the story by assigning passages from Parfit, the students are already mentally

warmed up and ready to entertain Parfit's ideas.

This underscores one of the reasons I love teaching this course. In my experience, science fiction fans make wonderful philosophy students, because they're accustomed to entertaining unusual and challenging hypothetical cases. Not every introductory philosophy student has an easy time taking examples of human fission or fusion, or Descartes' evil demon, seriously. The stories serve to make vivid the conceivability of these out-of-the-ordinary cases.

The format for the course is extremely discussion-focused. Every story is assigned with a set of two to four discussion questions that explicitly raise some of the philosophical issues present in the narrative. Sometimes I bring up additional, related hypotheticals in the questions. For example, when students watch the film "Minority Report," in which people who are destined to commit murder are imprisoned before they have the opportunity to kill, I ask whether the students would accept this practice if the punishment were more lenient. What if people were simply held long enough to ensure the safety of their presumptive future victims?

This semester I'm trying out a couple of new ideas for the course. For example, the students' first assignment will be to grade a set of three short sample papers. There's been a lot of ink spilled on guides for students writing their first philosophy paper. My hope is that applying all this advice to a sample paper before writing one of their own will help them fully internalize it, as well as acquaint them with the grading standards they'll be held to. I'll also be experimenting with short comprehension quizzes to test the students' understanding of the issues raised by the fiction. This is something I'd like to try out with an eye toward future semesters, when the course's size will likely increase from 25 students to 70 or more, in response to student demand.



A 2005 Rutgers PhD, David Manley spent four years as an assistant professor at USC before joining our faculty in 2009. David's active research areas span the collection of inter-related subfields known as "the core". His contributions to metaphysics include an influential set of papers, some authored with Ryan Wasserman, on dispositions, as well as work on meta-metaphysics. His contributions to epistemology address a priority and self-locating belief. Below he describes a recent contribution to the philosophy of language.

The Reference Book

By David Manley

This past spring saw the publication of *The Reference Book*, which

I co-authored with John Hawthorne of Oxford University. Our topic is reference in both language and thought. In language, a distinction is often made between genuinely *referential* expressions and those that are *about* objects only in some looser sense. In thought, there is a corresponding distinction between a thought that is loosely about an object, and one whose bond with an object is robust enough for it to count as *singular*. It is widely held that the discovery of these two categories is a landmark achievement of twentieth-century analytic philosophy.

Our discussion begins with Russell's famous contrast between logically proper names and other denoting terms. We then look at a variety of semantic ideas that have been associated over the years with referential terms-- the contemporary successors of Russell's logically proper names. (For example: object-dependence, rigidity, and the idea that some propositions literally contain objects.) To these semantic ideas, Russell and others added a requirement that a special epistemic or causal *acquaintance* relation that must hold between a subject and the object she refers to, whether in thought or in language. In the first part of the book (Chapter 1-4), we argue that, while the semantic ideas just mentioned may indicate the presence of an important linguistic kind (referential terms) and an important cognitive kind (singular thoughts), these are not constrained by any kind of acquaintance requirement.

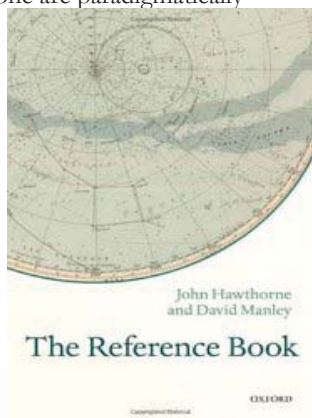
The second part of the book (Chapter 4-6) is about the semantics of various noun phrases in natural language that are used to talk about particular individuals. Our investigation begins with an examination of *specific* uses of indefinite descriptions, such as when one uses an expression like 'a senator' with—as one commonly says—'someone specific in mind'. We argue that the linguistic phenomena associated with specific uses of indefinites are best explained by a view on which specific uses of indefinites are quantifier expressions whose domains are contextually restricted down to a single individual. On our view, this causes specific uses of indefinites to exhibit some of the characteristics of referential terms.

Turning to definite descriptions, we note that they require specific restriction as a matter of convention: this is what allows the use of 'incomplete descriptions' (like 'the table', since everyone knows the world contains many tables). We make a tentative case for a view on which definites are like specific indefinites in that they are existential quantifier phrases whose domain is presupposed to be restricted to a single individual (or, in the case of plural definites, a single plurality). We hold that definites differ from specific indefinites only in that, to use a definite properly, the property supplied to restrict the domain must be *candid*: that is, it must not itself concern the speaker's use of the noun-phrase (as in *whoever the speaker intends to be talking about*). This conventional rule operates as a *presupposition* rather than as a contribution to the truth-conditions of sentences involving definites. We also propose a similar view about demonstratives: they differ from the foregoing descriptions only in their presuppositional profile.

In the final chapter, we focus on proper names and their various uses. We consider both the predicative view of names (on which names always function as predicates) as well as the orthodox view (on which many uses of names are paradigmatically referential tags). We reject both views in favor of a new alternative that preserves the virtues of both accounts: subject-position uses of names typically involve a covert quantifier and specific restrictor,

but the predicative content of the name is suppressed to the level of presupposition.

The upshot of Chapters 4-6 is a unified account of four noun phrase types, according to which none are paradigmatically referential, but all exhibit features associated with reference. This picture challenges the standard view on which there is an important semantic rift between definite and indefinite descriptions on the one hand, and names and demonstratives on the other. In the Afterword, we draw out some implications of the proposed semantic picture for the traditional categories of reference and singular thought.



When Dan Jacobson became Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan in 2009, he started his third academic stint in Ann Arbor. A product of the Department's graduate program, he earned his PhD in 1994, and spent a semester here as a visiting professor in 2007. Dan's interests are far-ranging, and include ethics and moral psychology, political philosophy, aesthetics, and J.S. Mill (watch the Routledge Philosophers Series for Dan's Mill volume!). He is the project leader of the Science of Ethics, a three-year project supported by an \$850,000 grant by the John Templeton Foundation, the largest in the history of the Department. Here Dan describes the project's multifold contributions to philosophy at Michigan and beyond.



The Science of Ethics Project

By Daniel Jacobson

The Science of Ethics Project is a three-year collaborative enterprise centered in the Michigan Philosophy Department and supported by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. I serve as Project Leader, and my co-author, Professor Justin D'Arms of Ohio State University (UM Ph.D. 1995), helps coordinate the grant's activities. UM Philosophy and Psychiatry Professor Chandra Sripada is another major participant in the project.

The mission of the project is to engage the burgeoning field of empirical ethics while critically examining its philosophical implications. The UM Philosophy Department is an ideal home for such an investigation due to its history of engagement with moral psychology and various forms of philosophical naturalism, originating in Charles Stevenson's work on emotivism and the dynamic function of language, and Richard Brandt's account of cognitive psychotherapy as a test for the rationality of preferences. More recently, current department members Allan Gibbard and Peter Railton have continued this tradition by developing groundbreaking approaches to moral philosophy that are each, in a different fashion, richly informed by empirical

work. In addition, Elizabeth Anderson draws deeply on the social sciences in her work on political philosophy, and Sarah Buss's work explores the moral psychology of agency. So the Science of Ethics project continues a long-standing Michigan philosophical tradition.

The empirical ethics movement has reconceived moral psychology, traditionally considered a branch of philosophy, as a thoroughly empirical enterprise. Scientific research has added greatly to our knowledge of human nature, and the empirical ethics movement rightly criticizes aprioristic philosophical accounts of moral psychology, but practitioners of empirical ethics sometimes overreach in two crucial respects. First, they draw controversial philosophical conclusions with inadequate appreciation of the deepest ethical questions. Second, their emphasis on unconscious and eccentric factors in moral reasoning threatens to undermine the possibility of human agency. The empirical ethics movement has seized attention with its ambitious answers to some of moral philosophy's most central questions. But even if the science is correct, these philosophical conclusions do not clearly follow from the scientific evidence. It is too often assumed that descriptive accounts of what people feel and how they think settle normative issues of how we should feel and think—questions that are at the heart of the capacity for moral reasoning and action.

The Science of Ethics Project aims to take a skeptical and often critical, but fair and open-minded look at the normative implications drawn from recent work in empirical ethics. To do so, it brings together philosophers with differing perspectives to engage in collaborative research. The Project champions an alternative conception of moral psychology by developing a middle ground between aprioristic philosophical accounts, which ignore the vital humanistic questions, and the empirical ethics movement, which sometimes begs them.

The project supports the research for two books in progress: *Rational Sentimentalism*, a collaborative project of mine and Justin's, and *Self and Self-Control* by Chandra. In addition, the project funds two major workshops in Ann Arbor. The first workshop, on Moral Psychology and Human Agency, took place from June 18-27, 2012. The workshop hosted 15 philosophers from across the country and featured two intensive daily sessions, each dedicated to one paper in progress. In addition to Michiganders Chandra, Peter and myself, participants included Justin, Nomy Arpaly (Brown), Selim Berker (Harvard), Terence Cuneo (Vermont), Julia Driver (Washington University), Pamela Hieronymi (UCLA), Guy Kahane (Oxford), Don Loeb (Vermont), Heidi Maibom (Carleton University), Shaun Nichols (Arizona), Andrea Scarantino (Georgia State), Tim Schroeder (Ohio State), Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (Duke), and David Velleman (NYU). The papers given at the workshop will be published in a volume by the same name, which Justin and I will edit.

The second workshop, on Human Nature and Moral Knowledge, will take place in June, 2013. The grant will also support a public outreach program by offering prizes for works on its theme that appear in the popular press. An essay of mine intended primarily for non-philosophers, "Can Our Capacity for Moral Reasoning Be Strengthened?", was recently published at the Templeton Foundation site, Big Questions Online: <http://www.bigquestionsonline.com/content/can-our-capacity-moral-reasoning-be-strengthened>.

RECENT GRADUATES

AARON BRAMSON defended his dissertation – *Evolution of Prosocial Behavior through Preferential Detachment and Its Implications for Morality* – under the supervision of Scott E. Page (complex systems) and Peter Railton (co-chairs), Allan Gibbard, Kenneth Kollman (political science) and Rick Riolo (complex systems). Aaron completed a unique Rackham Student Initiated PhD Degree Program in the Departments of Philosophy and Political Science.



STEPHEN CAMPBELL defended his dissertation—*Prudential Value and the Appealing Life*—under the supervision of Allan Gibbard (chair), Elizabeth Anderson, Peter Railton, Sarah Buss, and Scott Hershovitz. In the dissertation, he offers and defends a new analysis of prudential value and examines its implications for various philosophical debates. Steve has accepted a two-year Andrew W. Mellon postdoctoral fellowship in Philosophy and Environmental Studies at Coe College.



IAN FISHBACK defended his M.A. philosophy thesis – *The Common Defense Paradigm: A Moral Approach to the Culpable Threat Problem* – under the direction of Elizabeth Anderson (chair) and Peter Railton. The thesis argues that the right to self-defense and the duty to other-defense can only be understood in relationship to each other, and that, once this is properly understood, the morality of war is a closer fit with mainstream intuitions than contemporary just war theorists claim. He also defended his political science thesis - *Torture, Regime Type, and Achieving Victory in War* – under the direction of Allan Stam (chair) and Robert Mickey. The thesis argues that torture is never a rational strategic choice for liberal democracies. Ian is now a philosophy instructor at the United States Military Academy, West Point.



NEIL MEHTA defended his dissertation - *A Subjective Representationalist Approach to Phenomenal Experience* - under the supervision of Eric Lormand and Andy Egan (co-chairs), Peter Railton, Victor Caston, and George Mashour (neuroscience). Revised chapters from this dissertation have been accepted for publication at Philosophical Studies and Pacific Philosophical Quarterly. Neil has accepted a position as assistant professor at Yale-NUS College.



SVEN NYHOLM defended his dissertation – *On the Universal Law and Humanity Formulas* – under the supervision of Elizabeth Anderson and Sarah Buss (co-chairs), Peter Railton, and Donald Regan. The dissertation argues that by maxims fit to serve as universal laws, Kant means basic guiding principles in accordance with which we can preserve and fully realize our distinctive nature or, as Kant also calls it, our humanity. That is why, in choosing our maxims on the basis of their fitness to serve as universal laws, we treat the humanity in each person as an end: we govern ourselves in ways intended to both preserve and fully realize the humanity in each person. As of April, Sven is (the German equivalent of) an assistant professor at the University of Cologne in Germany.



DANIEL J. SINGER defended his dissertation - *Doxastic Normativity* - under the supervision of James M. Joyce (Chair), Allan Gibbard, Sarah Moss, and Chandra Sripada. His work is on the source and nature of norms for belief, and the dissertation explores some of the benefits of understanding belief as a normative notion. He also uses some non-standard techniques for exploring philosophical questions, including agent-based computer modeling. In January 2013, Daniel will be an Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania.



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