UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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## Oxford Philosophy 2024

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## WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF FACULTY BOARD

We welcome three new tutorial fellows to the Faculty: Beau Madison Mount (Univ) from King's College London, Jeremy Fix (Keble) from a Departmental Lectureship here at Oxford, and our first Professor of Indian Philosophy, Monima Chadha (LMH), from Monash. We also welcome David Enoch, who has joined the Law Faculty as Professor of the Philosophy of Law.

Monima Chadha's arrival, in April, came at the beginning of a term in which Indian Philosophy took centre stage. Professor Jonardon Ganeri gave this year's John Locke lectures on Indian Philosophy of Mind: 'Seeing in Sanskrit'. And the Faculty held a celebration to mark the addition of Professor Bimal Krishna Matilal to our portrait gallery. Professor Matilal was a specialist in Indian Philosophy, based at All Souls and the then Faculty of Oriental Studies. He collaborated with Professors Michael Dummett and Peter Strawson, so it is fitting that his portrait joins theirs in our collection. We were very happy to welcome members of Professor Matilal's family to the unveiling.

2023-24 also saw the first Oxford Colloquium in Linguistics and Philosophy. The Colloquium will be an annual event, bringing together faculty and graduate students from the Philosophy and Linguistics departments. The inaugural lecture was given by Professor Philippe Schenkler on Music Semantics.

In June the Institute for Ethics in AI held a conference in Athens to explore the significance of Aristotelian ethics for the ethics of AI. The event was, by all accounts, a great success. It was held at the Athens Conservatory, just beside the site of Aristotle's Lyceum, and concluded with a musical performance at the site itself.

After two decades in the Faculty, the Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics has secured a major gift from the Uehiro Foundation to endow it as an independent Institute, sitting alongside the Faculty within the Humanities Division. We are grateful to the Uehiro Foundation for their generosity. We wish well to the new Uehiro Institute and look forward to further collaboration in the future.

Finally, this year marked the retirement of Peter Momtchiloff, Philosophy Editor at OUP. Over the last 30 years, Peter has been essential in building up OUP as one of the best places to publish in philosophy. Many faculty members (myself included) have benefitted from his support. Peter will retain an attachment to the Faculty, so we look forward to continuing to benefit from his advice in future. We all owe Peter a debt of gratitude, and we look forward to working with his successor at OUP, April Peake.

**Ursula Coope**
**Professor of Ancient Philosophy**
**Professorial Fellow in Philosophy, Keble College**

Photography : Clare Williams

## The inaugural Bernard Williams Essay Prize

The inaugural Bernard Williams Essay Prize in AI Ethics was recently awarded during a special lunchtime research seminar at the Institute for Ethics in AI in Oxford. The £500 prize was awarded to Lina Alrawashdeh, with Wyatt Radzin and Chase Mizzell as proximi accesserunt receiving £250. Patricia Williams, the widow of the late Sir Bernard Williams, also gave the winner a personal gift of a copy of Williams' *Essays and Reviews: 1959-2002*.



## Linda Eggert wins Frank Chapman Sharp Memorial Prize

Linda Eggert (incoming Associate Professor of Philosophy and Tutorial Fellow at St Edmund Hall) won the American Philosophical Association 2023 Frank Chapman Sharp Memorial Prize. The prize was established in 1990 and is awarded to the best unpublished essay or monograph on the philosophy of war and peace submitted for the competition. More information about the prize and winner can be found:

**www.apaonline.org/page/2023prizes-f#sharp**



Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

## Amia Srinivasan wins inaugural Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize

Amia Srinivasan, Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory at All Souls College, was named the winner of the inaugural Nayef Al-Rodhan International Prize in Transdisciplinary Philosophy for her book entitled *The Right to Sex*. The prize, which is administered by the Royal Institute of Philosophy, was established in 2023 by Professor Nayef Al-Rodhan and rewards the most original philosophical research that transcends academic disciplines. More information about the prize can be found :

**royalinstitutephilosophy.org/book-prize/**

## Portrait unveiled of Bimal Krishna Matilal

On June 7 2024, the Faculty unveiled a portrait of Professor Bimal Krishna Matilal's to recognise his seminal contributions to Indian philosophy and to cosmopolitanism in philosophy. Matilal was the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics from 1976-1991 at All Souls College. A reception was held at Radcliffe Humanities to celebrate the unveiling, which was attended by Matilal's children Tamal and Anvita and their partners, and his two grandchildren. The 2024 John Locke Lecturer Jonardon Ganeri, Matial's last D Phil. student, spoke at the reception reminiscing about Matilal and his contribution to cross-cultural philosophy. Monima Chadha also spoke of Matilal's deep influence on contemporary philosophy in India as well as on her own research and teaching.



Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

## Lyceum Project Conference



Over 440 people, including Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, gathered in Athens on June 20th 2024 for the Lyceum Project, a conference on the ethics of AI from the perspective of Aristotle's philosophy. The conference took place at the Athens Conservatory and was organized by Oxford's Institute for Ethics in AI, in partnership with Stanford's Human Centred AI, Greece's National Centre for Scientific Research 'Demokritos', and the World Human Forum.

The conference was preceded by the unveiling of Institute Director John Tasioulas and Stanford Professor Josiah Ober's new white paper: 'Lyceum Project: AI Ethics with Aristotle', which sets out an Aristotelian ethical framework for addressing key challenges and opportunities created by the rapid development of AI technologies.



The event brought together international representatives from across academic disciplines, business, healthcare, policy, and government as well as members of the Greek public. It included rich discussions with leading academics and practitioners in AI ethics, presentations by six emerging researchers, and an address from Prime Minister Mitsotakis in which he expressed his support for an annual global AI ethics conference to be held in Athens.

The day ended with a celebration at the ancient site of Aristotle's Lyceum during which guests were invited to share their thoughts about AI ethics and to enjoy an inspiring performance of Sasha Waltz's democratic dance 'In C' by members of the Athens Conservatory's graduating class.

## John Locke Lectures, Hilary Term 2023

In Hilary Term 2023, the Faculty was delighted to welcome Professor Susan Wolf, Edna J. Koury Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Professor Wolf's lectures were originally planned for Trinity Term 2020, but they were delayed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The title of the series was *Selves Like Us*, and it covered topics such as what it is to be distinctively human, the relation between character and agency, and human freedom.



Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi



mp3 recordings of the lectures, can be found here:
**philosophy.web.ox.ac.uk/john-locke-lectures**

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

# Monima Chadha

**Professor of Indian Philosophy and Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at Lady Margaret Hall**

Monima joins the faculty from Monash University, Australia, where she was a Professor of Philosophy and Research Fellow at the Monash Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies. She did her undergraduate and master's at Delhi University, India. Subsequently she earned her Ph.D. from Monash University. Monima was the inaugural Karp fellow at the Sage School of Philosophy (2022), Cornell University, and the winner of the inaugural Annette Baier Prize (2016). Her main research interests are in the Philosophy of mind in the classical Indian and contemporary western traditions, most recently focused on the Buddhist no-self views and their implications for our concepts of subjectivity, agency, responsibility, and ethical life.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

# Jeremy Fix

**Associate Professor of Ethics and Moral Psychology and Official Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at Keble College**

Jeremy joins the faculty on a permanent basis after five years as a Departmental Lecturer in the faculty and a fixed-term Fellow at Keble College. He took his PhD Harvard University, his MA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and his AB from Colgate University. His main research interests are in foundational issues in practical philosophy, especially issues about the relationship between ethics and agency as they arise in discussions of practical reason in the Kantian and Aristotelian traditions. He also works on topics in normative ethics about the structure and significance of intimate relationships.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

# David Enoch

**Professor of the Philosophy of Law and Pauline and Max Gordon Fellow and Professorial Fellow at Balliol College**

David comes to Oxford as Professor of the Philosophy of Law in the Faculty of Law with membership of the Faculty of Philosophy. Prior to that he was a professor of philosophy and of law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (where he maintains a partial affiliation). He studied law and philosophy at Tel Aviv University and clerked for Justice Beinisch at the Israeli Supreme Court. David received a PhD from NYU in 2003 and works primarily in moral, political, and legal philosophy.

Photography:Douglas Guthrie

# Beau Madison Mount

**Associate Professor of Philosophy and Sir Peter Strawson Fellow in Philosophy at University College**

Beau joins the faculty from King's College London, where he was a lecturer; before that, he was a Junior Research Fellow at New College, Oxford, and a postdoctoral lecturer at Universität Konstanz. He received his BPhil and DPhil in philosophy from Oxford. His research focuses on philosophy of mathematics (particularly philosophy of set theory), philosophical logic, and formal metaphysics; he also has interests in epistemology, the history of seventeenth-century philosophy, and just war theory.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

Image: Taken (David Rokeby), Photography Jonathan Gröger

# RECOGNIZING KNOWLEDGE:
## INTUITIVE AND REFLECTIVE EPISTEMOLOGY

**JENNIFER NAGEL**
**PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

The contrast between the presence and absence of knowledge is deeply familiar: we encounter it in sorting friends from strangers, in struggling to learn, in hoping to forget. This contrast structures meaningful conversations, as we shift between the roles of asking and telling, guided by some intuitive sense of what the other does or does not already know. Across languages, words meaning *know* and *believe* are among our most frequently used verbs, and we switch between them swiftly and systematically. But what exactly is our system here?

Like face recognition, knowledge recognition can feel like a black box, resistant to introspection. Probing this capacity further, we can make strange patterns appear. Under the spotlight of self-consciousness, even paradigmatic cases of knowledge can on second thought start to seem dubious. Of course the person who has just glanced at a clock knows what time it is... or wait, perhaps the fact that clocks are sometimes stopped means that no one ever knows the time this way. Skeptics focus on those negative impressions, while quietists lock their sights on the positive. Others attempt to fit the whole range evenly, producing highly elaborate theories of the metaphysics of knowledge and the semantics of knowledge reports.

Instead of treating the black box of natural knowledge recognition as an oracle, we can learn more from its signals if we open it up. Indeed I think this is the best path forward to a simple, non-skeptical, 'know'-means-*know* epistemology. This path has been cleared significantly by psychological research on 'mentalizing', particularly research on how competitive animals track each other's perceptual and epistemic states. But philosophy is not restricted to following psychology's lead: I think empirical work in this area suddenly makes better sense when reinterpreted with an epistemologist's eye on the difference between knowing and just happening to be right. In any event, the basic animal system still functions in human adults, governing routine responses, but we deploy an additional 'model-based' system when the going gets tough. Paradoxical patterns of epistemic intuition can be generated when we switch between these systems, and when we push either system beyond the range of its

natural optimization.

To understand knowledge detection, it helps to have a good hypothesis about the nature of knowledge itself. I start by identifying knowledge as the state of mind whose contents must be true. This is the guiding idea of Timothy Williamson's 'knowledge-first' epistemology, but it is not an entirely new idea; we can find a precursor in ancient Sanskrit philosophy. In the Nyāya tradition, knowledge is produced not by belief-forming processes that might also yield error, but by what we now call 'factive' processes, or what Nyāya termed 'inerrant' ways of knowing. These include perception (excluding illusion and hallucination as mere pseudo-perception); inference (where anything less than sound inference from known premises is pseudo-inference), and testimony (where anything less than the word of an honest knower is pseudo-testimony).

It is sometimes suggested that the ordinary occurrence of knowledge in our imperfect species is incompatible with a factive understanding of the processes producing it. My lectures argued for the opposite: the old-school factive understanding of perception, inference and testimony is crucial in explaining both the natural occurrence of human knowledge, and our capacity to detect it. This is because both natural selection and reinforcement learning select for success, and they do so in a fashion that is not at all indifferent between actual and merely apparent success.

This approach makes sense of natural curiosity, the intrinsic desire for knowledge that is evident in many

animal species. It is not obvious how animals like rats and octopuses could be motivated to gain knowledge as such: even if there is much they need to learn, one might expect their learning to be driven by simpler incentives, such as hunger. New models in reinforcement learning have shown that agents exhibit curiosity when they are given reward for surprise, a feeling available even to unreflective animals. Surprise is a marker of an exceptionally educational experience, so a natural appetite for surprise enables a kind of meta-learning about what courses of action will be most educational. Appetite for surprise is demonstrably equivalent to a desire for knowledge gain, where knowledge gain is a cognitive adaptation to reality, producing mental states whose stable existence depends essentially on the truth of their contents. Curious creatures benefit from an internally adversarial interaction between the prediction-error correction processes of basic learning and the active surprise-seeking force of their curiosity, accelerating knowledge gain.

Social cognition is another accelerant for learning. Abilities such as gaze-tracking allow agents to use others as rear-view mirrors, reflecting patches of reality beyond their own immediate sensory fields. Knowledge detection enables agents to make vicarious use of each other's learning. A socially savvy creature who learns that another is knowledgeable in a certain zone can read its actions for cues about what is going on there. Across the board, social intelligence enables smart switching between following the lead of others and looking or thinking for oneself.

Accurate social cognition is a problem of dazzling computational complexity: somehow, creatures must learn what others can sense and know, across diverse conditions. We must do this despite the existence of some instances of 'pseudo-knowledge' that superficially resemble knowledge when seen from the wrong angle. (Coincidentally veridical hallucinations are the evil identical twins of successful perception.) Drawing on research in artificial intelligence, I argue that we map each other's 'epistemic territories' through the same domain-general learning mechanisms that support other types of intuitive cognition, such as face recognition, another domain in which we can encounter twins. Because intuitive cognition solves complex problems by means of fundamentally local calculations, occasional twins create local rather than global problems, and the volume of data available to our systems of knowledge recognition is enough to ensure that they generally function robustly, despite these local trouble spots in which knowledge is unrecognizable.

Humans are the only species to combine the accelerants of curiosity and social cognition: we are curious about

what others sense and know. This is possible for us because surprise is not just a private signal correlated with individual learning, but something we broadcast in social interaction. Like other animals, we send signals about states of the world, but unlike other animals, we also signal our learning processes, overtly expressing the surprise we feel in moments of attaining joint attention, and in gaining knowledge from conversation. Just as curiosity-driven spatial exploration leads animals like rats to construct maps of their environments, enabling model-based spatial navigation, so also the curiosity-driven epistemic interaction of humans leads us to map the perceptions and knowledge of others, enabling model-based mentalizing. As a result, where other animals are restricted to making instinctive and opportunistic use of each other's intelligence, humans can exploit each other's intelligence in deliberate and strategic ways. Matched with social partners who are doing the same thing, we see and know reality collegially, first by looking at things together, and then by actively building common knowledge. In the end, our common knowledge can even come to include how it is that we recognize knowledge itself.

**mp3 recordings of the lectures can be found here: philosophy.web.ox.ac.uk/john-locke-lectures**

# FROM
# JUST WAR
# TO JUST
# MATHEMATICS

**Elad Uzan** discusses his recent work incorporating formal methods into the consideration of issues arising in the philosophy of war.

Philosophers have long developed frameworks for guiding the ethical prosecution of wars. Over thousands of years, they have developed a considerable body of ethical and legal theory concerned itself with war. Just war theory—the most influential source of guidance for the ethical prosecution of wars—traditionally distinguishes two phases of conflict: the prelude to war, during which the decision to fight is taken, and the war itself. However, it leaves a critically important question unanswered: When should wars end?

My forthcoming book, *The Morality and Law of Ending Wars*, on which I have been working as a Marie Curie Fellow for the past two years, aims to provide the first moral and legal account of ending wars. While contemporary just war theory traces back to Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars* (1977), recent advancements and critiques of this traditional theory have emerged primarily from Oxford philosophers. I have had the privilege of collaborating with two of the world's leading philosophers of war. Drawing from the penetrating insights of Jeff McMahan's book *Killing in War* (2009), I have re-examined traditional accounts of constraints, such as those of necessity and proportionality, on the use of defensive force. Cécile Fabre's works, *Cosmopolitan War* (2012) and *Cosmopolitan Peace* (2016), have significantly shaped my views about post-war justice within the framework of just war theory.

Most would agree that aggressive wars should end immediately, but when should a defender—justly resisting unjust aggression—throw in the towel? According to the traditional theory, as long as a war is just and its means necessary and proportionate, the belligerent may continue fighting until it attains victory. The trouble is that, while wars may begin the way they always have, they no longer end as they once did. The certainty of old criteria of victory—an overt surrender by a well-defined army or state—has dissolved into the ambiguity of endless, shifting objectives, often against dispersed, unidentified enemies. Syria and Somalia have been racked by civil wars since 2011 and the 1980s respectively, and decades-old conflicts between states and non-state actors continue to occur, from Kashmir to the Gaza Strip. In some of these cases, individual groups may surrender, but there is often no organised entity that could even conceivably lay down arms. And when defeat is admitted, new entrepreneurs of violence are likely to emerge more or less immediately.

Current philosophical thinking thus focuses on a central moral question: What are the legitimate goals of war, and is the achievement of these goals proportionate to the cost incurred in achieving them? In my book, I develop a framework for the termination of conflicts that uses mathematical formalisations of moral concepts to establish the normative boundaries of defensive wars. Unlike traditional accounts of just war, in which the relentless pursuit of elusive goals extends wars and drives belligerents toward destructive, total warfare, my framework explains why, in certain circumstances, even a just war must be concluded short of achieving its aims. I show that there is always a point at which a prospective evaluation of the effects of continuing war predicts greater moral costs than gains. My framework provides criteria for determining when this point is reached. When it is, the aggressor may still have the capacity to inflict more unjust harm, but my theory implies that the defender is morally required to stop fighting.

The general conclusion of my book is that all wars, even just wars, accumulate moral costs over time and may eventually violate the requirement that the harms done by war be proportionate to the goods it secures. As wars drag on and cause more and more harm, their justifications erode and eventually expire; the additional harm required to achieve the just goal after this point means that a disproportionate total amount of harm—excessive in relation to the moral benefit anticipated—would need to be inflicted. It thus becomes impermissible to keep fighting. For instance, the initially just goal of the war might be to eliminate risk to citizens or to prevent future violence; yet, if these aims are not achieved within a certain time, and the war drags on without success, the force required to achieve them will become disproportionate.

I further argue that the law on the use of force should be sensitive to changes in the conditions of necessity and proportionality that accumulate as wars progress because its rationale is to allow states to protect themselves against aggression only as long as doing so is necessary and proportionate. If there is no such thing as a morally permissible war of unlimited duration, then the law should prohibit such wars.

Unusually for a philosopher working in these areas, I use techniques from mathematics to formalise and refine moral claims, a framework I call moral mathematics. Moral mathematics is the use of mathematical methods to tackle complex moral problems. Morality involves qualitative concepts such as good and bad, right and wrong. But morality also involves quantitative concepts, such as harming more or fewer persons and taking actions that have a greater or lesser probability of benefitting or harming others. Mathematical tools help make such quantitative comparisons more exact.

This approach makes otherwise murky problems of war precise by unifying and quantifying diverse arguments and principles concerning the permissible use of force, particularly about matters of harm, benefit, and probability, that are essential to understanding problems of necessity and proportionality. By applying mathematical rigour to complex moral problems, we can design systematic and transparent frameworks for ethical decision-making.

Moral mathematics employs numbers and equations to represent relations between human lives, obligations and constraints. Some find this approach objectionable. They contend that moral mathematics overlooks essential aspects of morality, such as concern for human life and

*My forthcoming book, The Morality and Law of Ending Wars, aims to provide the first moral and legal account of ending wars.*

also people's characters, actions, and relationships. However, ethical theories should not only assess whether an act is morally better or worse than another act but also quantify how much better or worse it is. Morality cannot be reduced to mere numbers but, without moral mathematics, its scope is limited.

While its application is highly contextual, I believe that moral mathematics allows for a coherent exposition of constraints on war and their real-world application. Consider that a defensive war becomes impermissible when it foreseeably produces harmful effects that outweigh the good effects the defender seeks to achieve. Such assessment largely hinges on our interpretation of the proportionality constraint. Proportionality can be mathematically represented by comparing the expected good and harmful effects of defensive acts, taking into account factors such as the importance of minimising harm to civilians and infrastructure, the difference between risk and harm, and the strategic value of a target. By quantifying and comparing these effects, we can assess whether defensive acts produce outcomes in which the benefit sufficiently outweighs the harm.
If just war theory is to be applicable now and in the future, we need tools for assessing the justifiability of the use

of force in current and future real-world circumstances. We need, in other words, a context-sensitive framework that can address several key questions: How should we evaluate risk in moral decision-making in war? What insights can we gain from moral mathematics? And what moral considerations should guide our choices given that present decisions now impact our future options?

Every just society needs to be concerned with preventing armed conflict and, if it fails, with conducting war in a morally permissible way. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing devastating wars between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon show how precarious the moral, political, and legal foundations of the

world order are and reveal the desperate need for careful thinking about how to prevent and, if necessary, respond to wars of aggression. As philosophers, we have a more grounded understanding of the normative flaws in individual and collective choices, allowing us to determine whether and under what circumstances wars can be just, and when an initially just war can cease to be just. We can thus help articulate the normative ideals that should guide us in deciding what kind of future we should build.

**Elad Uzan is a Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy at Corpus Christi College.**

# What's Wrong with Hypocrisy?

## Tom Sinclair

Like every other sinner, hypocrites have a special place in in Dante's hell. It's striking, though, just how deep he puts them. Weighed down by heavy cloaks, they trudge around the eighth of nine circles, even closer to Satan than the murderers.

Apart from the cloaks, this isn't just Dantean idiosyncrasy. Hypocrisy still attracts a degree of contempt that other vices—including seemingly much more serious ones—escape. Just think how much more exercised the UK public was by Boris Johnson's lockdown-violating gatherings than by apparent corruption in the public procurement of PPE (the equipment, not the degree) over the same period.

This is puzzling. On a simple understanding, hypocrisy is a matter of espousing some standard or value and yet acting otherwise. But that could just as well describe mere weakness of will, which is hardly a mortal sin. At least I hope not.

It might be supposed that the hypocrite's embrace of morality, unlike that of the weak-willed person, is distinctively insincere. Some philosophers, including Oxford's own Roger Crisp, have proposed that this is what's so bad about hypocrisy: the hypocrite claims to be moral, but does not genuinely take morality seriously.

An advantage of this proposal is that it explains why it can be forgivable hypocrisy, or even no hypocrisy at all, to pretend allegiance to a widely accepted but morally objectionable standard. Consider, for example, police officers who acquiesce in the corruption of colleagues to gather the evidence needed to blow the whistle. Whistleblowers certainly do take morality seriously, and this seems a good reason to spare them the opprobrium typically directed at hypocrites.

However, less honourable hypocrites may also take morality seriously, and be perfectly sincere in their espousals of its standards. They just have blind spots when it comes to their own conduct. At the same time, failure to take morality seriously, though clearly a moral fault, does not seem contemptible in the same way hypocrisy does. It may be unwise to trust people who openly reject morality as a mere bourgeois concern, but do we really want to consign them to the eighth circle of hell?

Instead, then, we might emphasise the element of deception that hypocrisy typically involves. After all, don't hypocrites profess commitment to a standard while concealing their violations of it? Perhaps this is what makes hypocrisy so odious.

But the merely weak-willed person, ashamed of her transgression, might also conceal violations of a standard she accepts. Meanwhile, there are brazen hypocrites, whose brazenness if anything compounds their infamy. In any case, if deception were the morally distinguishing feature of hypocrisy, then the baseness of hypocrisy would seem to be reducible to that of dishonesty. But hypocrisy and dishonesty seem importantly morally different.

The analyses in terms of insincerity and deception seem to get something right, then; yet there are doubts about whether they fully illuminate the problem of hypocrisy. Partly in response to such doubts, philosophers thinking about hypocrisy have turned their attention in recent years to the more specific phenomenon of hypocritical blame.

A hypocritical blamer doesn't just transgress the standards she affects to espouse; she blames others for their transgressions. Now, it may seem just as difficult to explain what's wrong with hypocritical blame as it is to explain what's wrong with hypocrisy more generally. After all, since those who are blamed by hypocrites really are guilty of the transgressions, the blame is surely fitting. Why, then, should there be anything amiss about it?

However, as philosophers adopting this approach argue, blaming belongs to an interpersonal practice of holding and being held to account that is itself subject to moral standards. The problem with hypocritical blame may lie in the blamer's relation to these. A leading suggestion is that hypocritical blamers offend against some fundamental principle of moral equality or reciprocity. One such principle, for instance, is that no one's interests are more or less important as such than anyone else's. Yet hypocritical blamers, by subjecting the conduct of others to criticism from which they exempt their own conduct, act as if their own interests in avoiding such criticism count for more than those of the people they blame.

Such ideas seem promising as a way to account for some of the ferocity with which we condemn hypocritical behaviour. But by confining the analysis to hypocritical blame, they miss something, too. Not all hypocrites are blamers, or even encourage blame. Think of the guru who preaches poverty and abstinence as liberation, yet privately devotes himself to wealth and pleasures of the body. The guru attracts contempt as a hypocrite even if he does not blame those who give in to temptation and discourages such blame among his followers. Meanwhile, if I suspect that I myself am a hypocrite, affirming the fundamental equality of persons while enjoying a lifestyle I fear is implicated in the harms others suffer, it isn't much reassurance to think that I can refrain from blaming others for enjoying the same lifestyle.

To my mind, what the accounts we have surveyed overlook is a key connection between hypocrisy and responsibility. However, the connection cannot

*Thinking about hypocrisy as evasion of responsibility for oneself can shed light on the common thread running through different manifestations of hypocrisy—and why it attracts such scorn.*

be simply that hypocrites fail to take responsibility for their actions. Plenty of other people do that too, and charging hypocrites only with irresponsibility disregards the crucial element of divergence between what they say and what they do.

But there is another way to make the connection. It is through moral and ethical discourse—what we affirm, what we urge others to do, what we will or won't apologise for—that we articulate and make determinate to ourselves and each other the cares and commitments that define us, working out what we stand for and indeed who we are. We thereby situate ourselves vis-à-vis each other, making known how far we can rely upon one another, and for what.

Participating in moral and ethical discourse is (or should be), then, a way of taking responsibility for ourselves. But it doesn't work that way for the hypocrite, who misrepresents the cares and
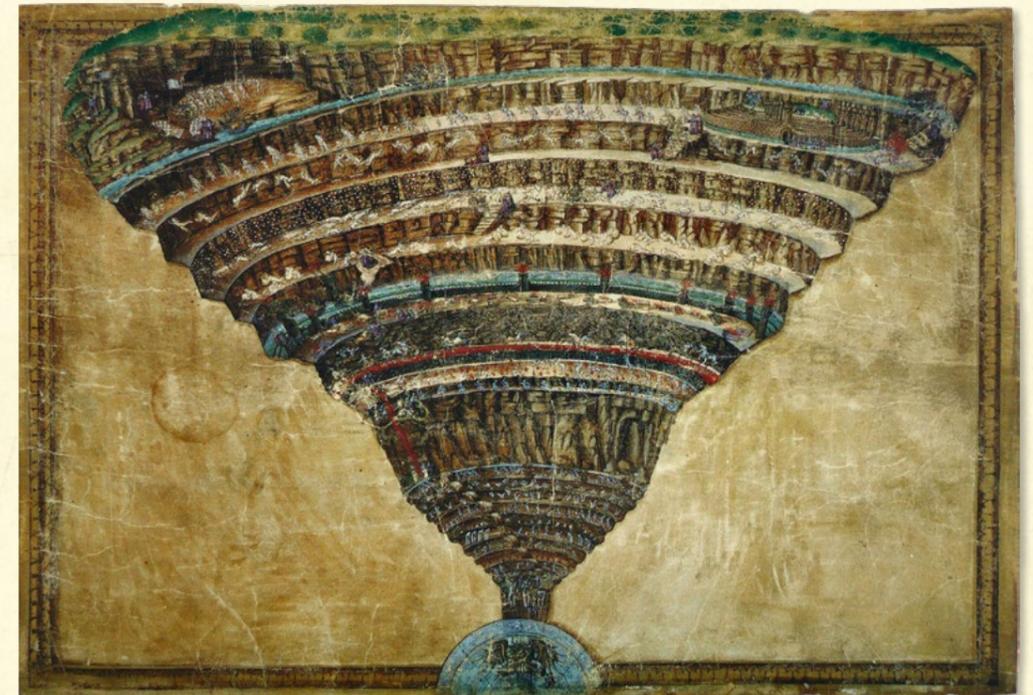

The Map of Hell by Sandro Botticelli


Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

commitments that define her, presenting a false picture of her will. Even the part of moral discourse that involves acknowledging wrongdoing is subverted by a hypocrite's expressions of remorse. Since such discourse is the only way we have of articulating and acknowledging responsibility for ourselves, or of getting others to do so, the hypocrite thereby evades that responsibility altogether.

Thinking about hypocrisy as evasion of responsibility for oneself in this way can shed light on the common thread running through different manifestations of hypocrisy—and why it attracts such scorn. Whether they are deceptive or brazen, whether they blame or not, whether it is their hypocrisy or our own that bothers us, hypocrites invite us to see them as standing for something that in the end they will not answer for. At best this evasion is infuriating. At worst, as when we accept the invitation by putting our faith in them, it can amount to betrayal, worthy of the most scathing contempt.

This account has affinities with the appeals to equality, deception, and moral seriousness. But the problem it identifies is not merely that the hypocrite doesn't treat others as equals, or that

hypocrites deceive—though both things may be true. Moreover, the problem the account identifies is not best understood, I think, as a matter of not taking morality seriously. That formulation encourages a picture of the non-hypocrite as having a specific concern with conforming to a set of moral rules or standards of virtue. But this sort of concern is, as we saw, perfectly compatible with hypocrisy.

It is closer to the truth to say that the hypocrite doesn't take people seriously, inviting or acquiescing in a fraudulent conception of herself and her relations with them, and persisting even after the fraud is obvious. Perhaps this is what proponents of the analysis in terms of moral seriousness had in mind to begin with. But when we articulate the objection to hypocrisy in terms of the evasion of responsibility and the trust that such evasions can betray, it becomes easier to see why Dante might have been right.

**Tom Sinclair is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Tutorial Fellow in Philosophy at Wadham College**

# Philosophy and the Neurodivergent

There has recently been a burgeoning interest in issues falling under labels such as 'philosophy of psychiatry', 'philosophy of mental illness', and 'mad philosophy'. The following pages highlight some of the work of this kind happening in the Oxford Philosophy Faculty.

Illustration: Sofia Jepsson

# Madpeople's Coping Mechanisms

**Paul Lodge** reports on a conference he organised with Sofia Jeppsson from Umeå University in Sweden.

'Madpeople's Coping Mechanisms' took place in the Philosophy Faculty in September 2023. It was funded by a grant from the Wellcome Trust as part of the project Renewing Phenomenological Psychopathology, based at the University of Birmingham.

The conference followed on from a series of online workshops which I had been organising with Sofia and others since 2020 called 'Philosophy of Psychiatry and Lived Experience'. In both cases the aim was to bring people with lived experience of 'mental illness' (myself included) together to learn from each other. The papers from the conference will appear in a special edition of *International Mad Studies Journal* which Sofia and I will edit.



Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

'Madpeople's Coping Mechanisms' took as its starting point the fact that madpeople/service users/psychiatric patients are a heterogenous group. There is great variety on a neurological, behavioural, and experiential level even among people with the same diagnosis; and the same treatments often have very different effects. The aim of the workshop was to move beyond diagnostic categories and statistics. Instead, it focused on the problems of madpeople/service users/psychiatric patients from the perspective of those coping with them, the strategies they have developed to deal with their experiences, and how and why these strategies have been helpful.

The presenters all had lived experience. Most were philosophers, but there was also a psychologist, a mental health worker, activists, and artists. They discussed themes such as: beginning to heal after recognising past trauma as opposed to engaging with mental health clinicians who talk of problems as stemming from inside your brain; relying on collective action and peer support instead of facing mental health problems as a lone patient; seeing the positive in, and identifying with, 'bad' psychiatric conditions like Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD); intellectual humility and embracing the possibility of error and mistakes as a way of dealing with hallucinations.

Testimony to the success of the conference and the profound importance to those working on the issues can be seen in the feedback provided by those who had given presentations:

'The conference organisers should be congratulated ... for the care they took to include academic, activist, new, and established voices. In decades of attending academic conferences, Madpeople's Coping Mechanisms had the most impact, both personally and professionally.'

'Not only did I leave with the satisfaction that I had connected with valuable allies and potential collaborators, but the very nature of the ... work that I've been doing over the past decade felt validated and nourished in a completely genuine way.'

'This conference was the first time that I had an opportunity to share ideas at the intersection of philosophy and coping with challenges posed by mental health in an environment that was clearly non-judgmental. The presence of others in the room who had similar or at least analogous experiences was exhilarating.'

**Paul Lodge is Professor of Philosophy and Professiorial Fellow in Philosophy at Mansfield College**

# Dynamics of Delusions

**Matthew Parrott** tells us about his British Academy-funded project on the nature of delusional thinking.

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

*Delusions are manifest simply in the way a person reasons, or imagines things, or makes decisions, or thinks about possibilities.*

The phenomenon of delusional thinking easily sparks the curiosity of philosophers. When told that there are people who think their mother has been replaced by some kind of imposter, or that some people think that the houses down their street are pushing thoughts into their head, philosophers are naturally puzzled. Should we take these reports at face value? Could anyone really believe these things? What sort of thought process could lead someone to develop these delusions? And how should we treat people who report these things? Should we give them medication? Should we try to show them the truth? Or should we just try to empathise in some way with their point of view?

For many years now, philosophical work on delusions has focused almost exclusively on just two issues. First, there is a debate between philosophers who think delusions cannot be beliefs because they are not sensitive to evidence, and those who think our conception of belief is wide enough to include delusions. A second debate rages between philosophers who think that simply having a very unusual experience is enough to cause delusion, and those who think that even an exceptionally strange experience could generate delusion only if there were also some additional cognitive impairments.

Lying in the background of these debates is an assumption that is, in my view, significantly impeding philosophical progress. This is the assumption that delusions are to be identified with some type of fixed state of mind, whether belief or some other type of state. This static conception of delusion is orthodoxy, but it artificially restricts theories by excluding the possibility that certain psychological processes or mechanisms may themselves be inherent features of delusional thinking, regardless of whether they result in some fixed state of mind.

The aim of my current research, which is generously being funded by a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship, is to reorient investigations into delusional thinking by exploring how we can develop a more dynamic conception of delusion. According to a more dynamic conception, delusions are manifest simply in the way a person reasons, or imagines things, or makes decisions, or thinks about possibilities.

The more dynamic conception has the following advantages over the traditional static picture. First, it rings true with many people who have lived experiences of delusions. Nearly all the people with lived experience that I have spoken to strongly resist the idea that a delusion is a fixed mental state. Instead, they insist on the enormous psychological complexity involved with the experience of delusions. They often say they can feel their delusion coming on, and that it is a condition that naturally subsides.

Second, a dynamic conception also fits better with recent work in computational psychiatry, which uses neural networks to model delusions. By setting certain values on various parameters in such a network (though not necessarily always the same ones), theorists have been able to run simulations which illustrate how the network will get stuck in a kind of attractor state—a state the system naturally progresses toward from a wide range of starting points, but cannot ever get out of. This is meant to be a model of delusional thinking. Despite its name, an attractor 'state' is really a dynamic condition of the system. It is the interplay between the various parameters that leads the system to get stuck in a delusional attractor, regardless of whether the system develops some false belief about reality.

The dynamic conception offers a new way of thinking about delusions, one which can hopefully lead to some new approaches to answering the many philosophical questions they raise. One reason that there are so many questions about delusions is that they are associated with several different conditions, including schizophrenia, dementia, and traumatic brain injury. I doubt there is a single uniform pathology present in these cases, but my hope is that the dynamic conception can help us gain a better understanding of the many different forms of delusional thinking.

**Matthew Parrott is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at St Hilda's College**

# Mental Illness *and* *the* Self

Photography : Keiko Ikeuchi

**Anna Golova** shares how her research bridges the gap between philosophy of psychiatry and ethics.

**P**eople who have been diagnosed with a mental illness may sometimes question the extent to which certain experiences are their own—'Do I genuinely not want to eat this, or is it because of my eating disorder?' 'Am I just someone who worries a lot, or is my anxiety acting up?' These are instances of 'self-illness ambiguity', a phenomenon which some philosophers of psychiatry have recently described as a 'difficulty in distinguishing one's self, or "who one is", from a mental disorder or diagnosis' (Dings and Glas 'Self-Management in Psychiatry as Reducing Self-Illness Ambiguity' (2020)).

Medical ethicists sometimes pose similar questions when assessing the autonomy of treatment decisions—'Is this decision grounded in what the person truly wants, or is it their "mental illness talking?"' Some medical ethicists worry that mental illness might affect people's ability to decide in a way that reflects their own true (or 'authentic') wishes (see Tan 'The anorexia talking?' (2003)). To address these concerns, we first need conceptual clarity about mental illness and how it can relate to the diagnosed person.

*A key goal of mine is to bridge the gap between ethics and philosophy of psychiatry.*

My research investigates this underlying relationship between mental illness and 'who someone is'. Can a conceptual distinction between self and mental illness coherently be drawn, or is there no such distinction? And what ethical implications does the answer to that question have? Some of the issues I address are:

—How should we conceptualize 'self-illness ambiguity'? What assumptions about (the separability of) self and mental illness does it rely on and are these plausible? How can mental health service users' testimonies inform this distinction?

—Can a wish that is closely related to the diagnostic criteria of a mental illness (say, a wish to end one's life in a person diagnosed with depression) nonetheless be authentic? What is it to call someone's wish a 'symptom' of their illness, and what does this mean for the autonomy of their choice? Can a mental illness be part of who someone truly is?

I investigate these questions through a series of case studies on different diagnoses, including depression and eating disorders. In doing so, a key goal of mine is to bridge the gap between ethics and philosophy of psychiatry. Ethicists have not been paying enough attention to questions around conceptualizing mental illness. By explicitly drawing on the philosophy of psychiatry, I aim to develop a more nuanced view of the relation between mental illness and people's desires, choices, and actions.

I am very passionate about philosophy of psychiatry, which is still a somewhat niche subject in Oxford. I was therefore grateful to receive the Gilbert Ryle Prize 2023 for my work in this area on the BPhil in Philosophy. My current DPhil project is supervised by Dr Jonathan Pugh and Professor Edward Harcourt, conducted at the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, and generously funded by the Open-Oxford-Cambridge AHRC DTP and Merton College Oxford. To learn more about self-illness ambiguity, see the Philosophical Explorations special issue on the topic, including my contribution with Dr Doug McConnell (McConnell and Golova 'Narrative, addiction, and three aspects of self-ambiguity' (2022)).

**Anna Golova is studying for a DPhil in the Philosophy Faculty and is a member of Merton College**

# Martha Klein

## *1941-2024*

Photography: Deborah Elliot, by kind permission of the Master, Fellows and Scholars of Pembroke College, Oxford

Martha Klein was born in California and brought up in New York City. Although she was an undergraduate at Queens College in New York at the tender age of 16, she left before graduating. This was followed by a series of jobs including a stint of nearly three years during which she was, in her own words, 'the girl who served in the mess' on a Norwegian ship on which her husband Larry was second mate.

On moving to the UK, she worked at the British Film Institute and then in the Photographic Department at the University of Reading; and it was whilst working in the second of these jobs, by then thirty-three, that she decided to pursue a degree in philosophy at Reading as a mature student. After graduating from Reading, Martha took the BPhil at Somerville College, and then completed a D Phil in 1987. She was appointed to a lectureship in Philosophy at Christ Church after completing her D Phil, and in 1993 was elected Fellow of Philosophy at Pembroke College where she worked until her retirement in 2006, serving as Tutor for Admissions from 2000-2003.

Martha's D Phil thesis was on free will and moral responsibility and this provided the basis for her book, Determinism, Blameworthiness, and Deprivation (OUP, 1990). She continued to be preoccupied with these issues throughout her career as well as other issues in the philosophy of mind, including what she referred to as 'the moving power of thought', namely the problem of how our thoughts can move us to action in virtue of their contents despite the fact that thought contents are plausibly regarded as abstract, and therefore not in space or time.

In addition to her work as a scholar, Martha is remembered with great fondness by generations of students at Pembroke. On her retirement, one former student recalled 'her ability to make the most complex theory suddenly dawn on you after leaving one of her tutorials,' and added that 'she was always a tutor you could talk to about anything at any time.' And at her farewell dinner her colleague Ken Mayhew (Fellow in Economics from 1975 to 2014) seconded this sentiment, observing that whilst Martha was 'demanding of her students and concerned to stimulate their intellectual ambition' she was 'always willing to help them with personal problems but was never intrusive.'

# TIMFEST
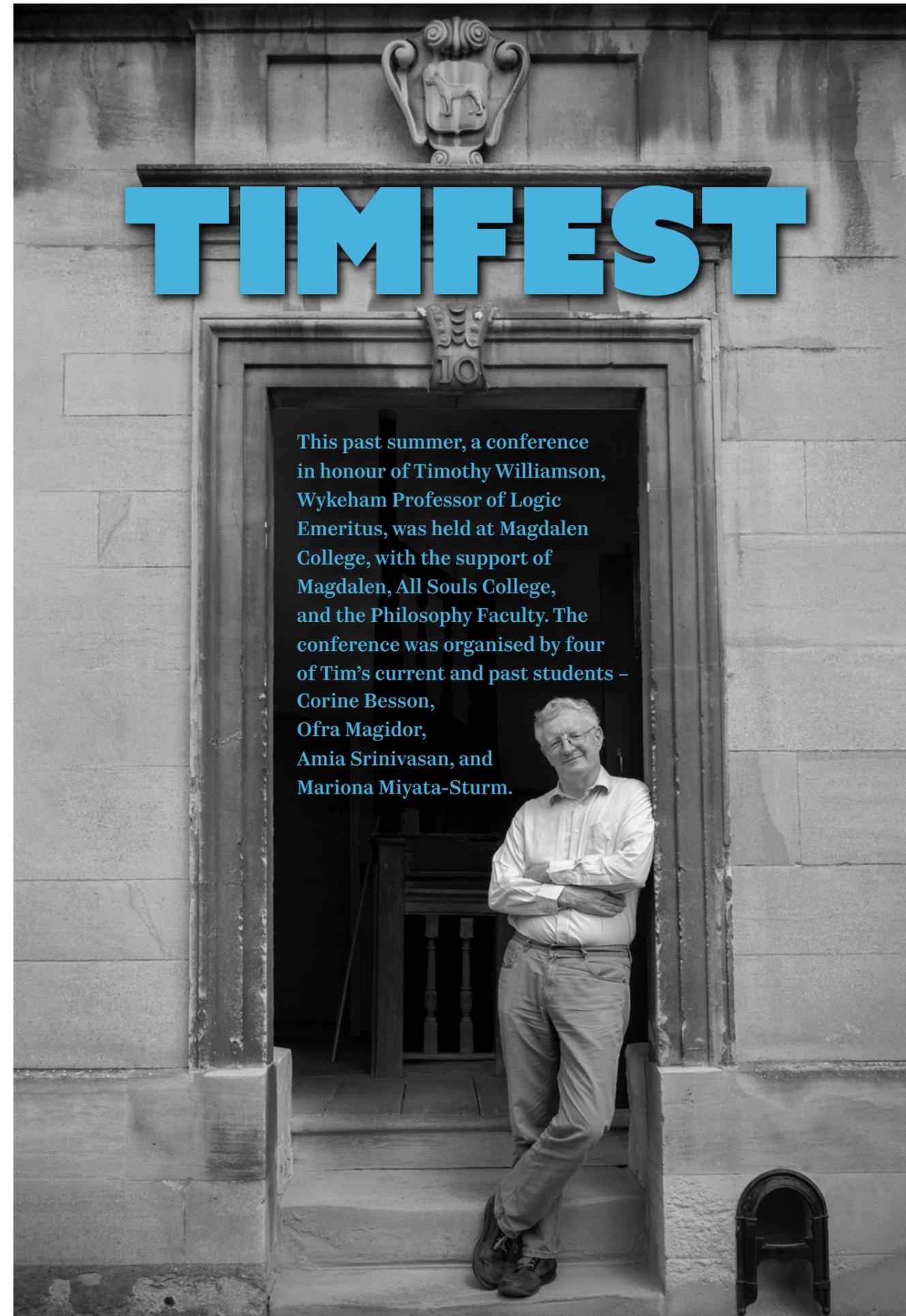
This past summer, a conference in honour of Timothy Williamson, Wykeham Professor of Logic Emeritus, was held at Magdalen College, with the support of Magdalen, All Souls College, and the Philosophy Faculty. The conference was organised by four of Tim's current and past students – Corine Besson, Ofra Magidor, Amia Srinivasan, and Mariona Miyata-Sturm.

Photography: Keiko Ikeuchi

Timfest brought together over 140 of Tim's former and current students, colleagues and friends, from the UK, US, Europe, Australia, Pakistan and elsewhere. As was fitting, the conference consisted mostly in high-octane philosophical discussion, ranging across the many areas of Tim's work – epistemology, metaphysics, logic, philosophy of language, metaphilosophy – as well as the application of Williamsonian insights to ethics, philosophy of science, and aesthetics. Across two days, a total of 24 speakers presented, a feat made possible by rigorous chairing and timekeeping, aided by stopwatches and horns; everyone agreed that the panels, which consisted in sets of rapid-fire, fifteen-minute talks, were a particular success, encouraging speakers to cut to the philosophical chase.

But there was also time for personal reflections. Speaker after speaker commented not only on the philosophical originality, significance and influence of Tim's work, but also on Tim's extraordinary generosity as a teacher. A particular theme was Tim's ability to instil confidence in those who, sometimes because of their gender or class backgrounds, lacked it. Indeed, one of the things that was in such striking evidence at TimFest is how dedicated Tim has been, over his forty years as a teacher, to mentoring and supporting generations of women philosophers. As many of the women present noted, Tim has done this work of teaching and mentoring women deliberately – but









MAGDALEN COLLEGE
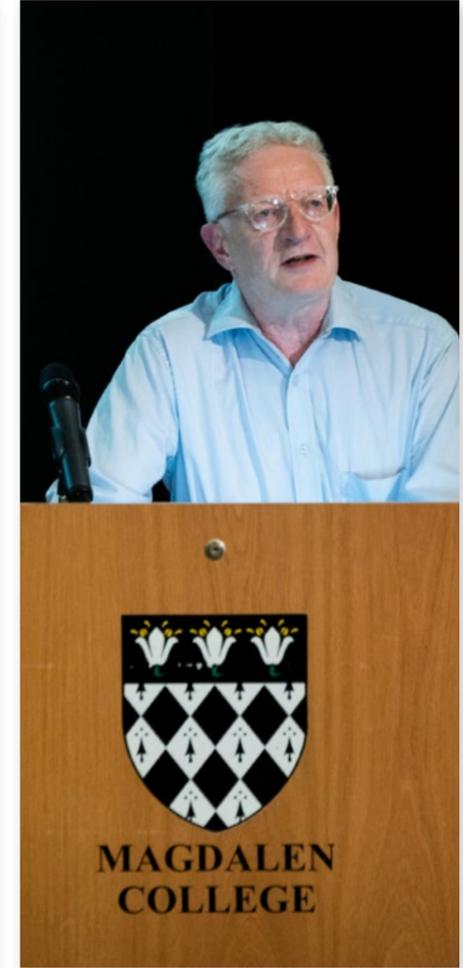



also quietly, modestly, and without fanfare. He hasn't needed implicit bias training, or to be lectured on the value of diversifying the discipline. Tim has simply done what comes naturally to him, which is to take women seriously.

The conference concluded with a set of wonderful remarks by Tim. The remarks, in addition to being enormously moving, are – as won't be a surprise to those who know Tim personally, but might be to those who have only encountered him on the page – a comedic tour de force. They are commended to you. Tim retired from the Wykeham chair in September 2023. He is now Senior Research and Teaching Fellow in Philosophy and a Professorial Fellow at New College – doing, as he says, 'the same work, for the same money, under a less imposing mode of presentation'.
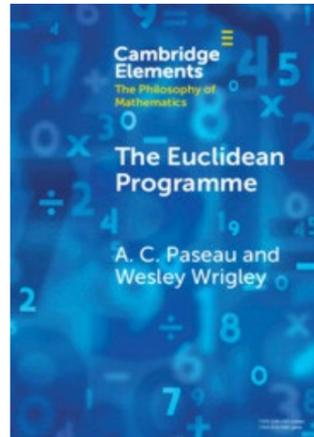
**Amia Srinivasan, Chicele Professor of Social and Political Theory and Professorial Fellow in Philosophy, All Souls College**

**WATCH**
Tim's remarks on YouTube

https://rb.gy/i5mtqb

Special Thanks to Jeremy Goodman

## The Euclidean Programme
**CUP 2024**
**Alex Paseau and Wesley Wrigley**

*The Euclidean Programme* is co-authored by Alex Paseau and Wesley Wrigley. Paseau is a current Faculty member, and Wrigley (LSE) taught at Oxford and Wadham in 2020–2021. *The Euclidean Programme* examines Euclidean geometry's philosophical legacy. Euclid's *Elements*, written in about 300 BC, is a famous textbook of ancient Greek geometry and one of the great works of Western thought. It embodies a certain vision of the highest form of human knowledge – especially mathematical knowledge – as obtained by deduction from self-evident first principles. Paseau and Wrigley explain how this vision evolved over the millennia, from antiquity to the early modern period and into the twentieth century. They then assess its philosophical merits. Overall, the book offers a combined historical and philosophical analysis of the epistemological ideal Euclid's *Elements* inspired.
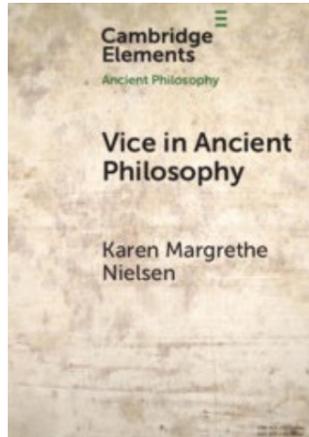
## Vice in Ancient Philosophy
**CUP 2023**
**Karen Margrethe Nielsen**

Ancient philosophers offer intriguing accounts of vice – virtue's bad twin. This Element considers injustice and lawlessness in Plato and Aristotle. Starting with Socrates' paradoxical claim that 'tyrants and orators do just about nothing they want to do' (*Gorgias* 466d-e), it examines discussions of moral ignorance and corruption of character in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle's account of vice is indebted to Plato's. But his claims have confounded critics. Why is the vicious agent full of regrets when he acts in accordance with his wish? To what extent is vice a form of moral ignorance? Why will the unjust man never get what he wants? These and other questions yield new insights into ancient Greek ethics and moral psychology, as well as surprising perspectives on contemporary debates.
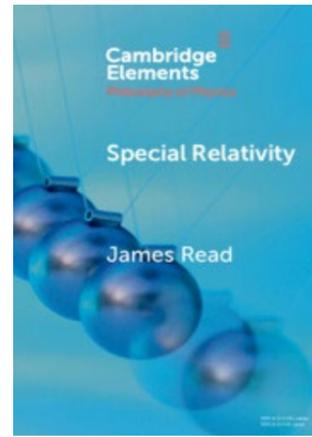
## Special Relativity
**CUP 2023**
**James Read**

This book presents the philosophy of special relativity, from the foundations of the theory in Newtonian mechanics, through its birth out of the ashes of nineteenth-century ether theory, through the various conceptual paradoxes which the theory presents, and finally arriving at some of its connections with Einstein's later theory of general relativity. It illustrates concepts such as inertial frames, force-free motion, dynamical versus geometrical understandings of physics, the standard hierarchy of classical spacetimes, and symmetries of a physical theory; it also discusses specific topics in the foundations of special relativity such as Einstein's 1905 derivation of the Lorentz transformations, the conventionality of simultaneity, the status of frame-dependent effects, and the twin paradox.
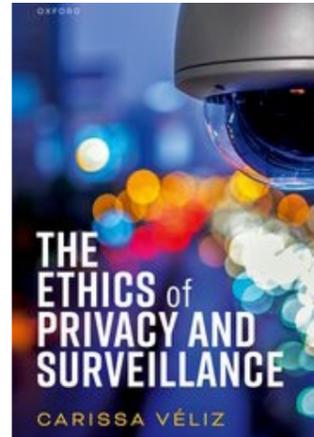
## The Ethics of Privacy and Surveillance
**OUP 2024**
**Carisa Véliz**

Privacy matters because it shields us from possible abuses of power. Human beings need privacy just as much as they need community. Our need for socialization brings with it risks and burdens which in turn give rise to the need for spaces and time away from others. To impose surveillance upon someone is an act of domination. The foundations of democracy quiver under surveillance. Given how important privacy is for individual and collective wellbeing, it is striking that it has not enjoyed a more central place in philosophy. This book is intended to contribute to a better understanding of privacy from a philosophical point of view - what it is, what is at stake in its loss, and how it relates to other rights and values. The five parts that compose this book respond to five basic questions about privacy: Where does privacy come from? What is privacy? Why does privacy matter? What should we do about privacy? Where are we now?
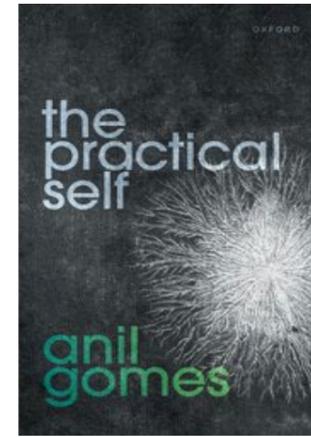
## The Practical Self
**OUP 2024**
**Anil Gomes**

We are self-conscious creatures thrown into a world which is not of our making. What is the connection between being self-conscious and being related to an objective world? 'One should say it is thinking, just as one says, it is lightning', the eighteenth-century philosopher, physicist, and aphorist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg writes. 'To say cogito is already too much...' Sometimes thoughts strike us like lightning. When this happens, we are their patient. It is central to our self-conscious lives that this is the exception: we are first and foremost the agents of our thinking. *The Practical Self* argues that self-consciousness requires faith in ourselves as the agents of our thinking. And this faith is sustained by practices which relate us to other thinkers. This provides us with a connection to the world: self-conscious subjects must have faith in themselves as thinking agents and it is a world of others which sustains this faith.

**The book is available as a free PDF download here: https://academic.oup.com/book/55798**
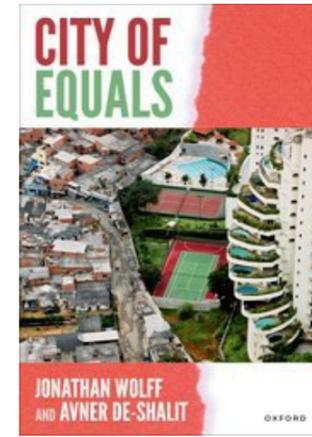
## City of Equals
**OUP 2023**
**Jonathan Wolf and Avner de Shalit**

Combining their own reflections, a multi-disciplinary literature review, and, distinctively, more than 180 interviews in 10 cities in 6 countries, Wolff and de Shalit have derived an account of a city of equals based on the idea that it should give each of its city-zens a secure sense of place or belonging. Four underlying values structure this account. First, access to the goods and services of the city should not be based purely on the market. Second, each person should be able to live a life they find meaningful. Third, there should be diversity and wide social mixing. Fourth, there should be 'non-deferential inclusion': each person should be able to get access to what they are entitled to without being treated as less worthy than others. In sum, in a city of equals each person is proud of their city and has the (justified) feeling that their city is proud of (people like) them.

## The Human A Priori
**OUP 2023**
**A. W. Moore**

*The Human A Priori* is a collection of essays concerned with something ineliminably anthropocentric in our systematic pursuit of a priori sense-making. Part I deals with the nature, scope, and limits of a priori sense-making in general. Parts II, III, and IV deal with three great exemplars of the systematic pursuit of such sense-making: philosophy in the case of Part II, ethics in the case of Part III, and mathematics in the case of Part IV. Much of Moore's attention is devoted to the work of others: Kant and Wittgenstein feature prominently, and other essays are reviews or critical notices of recent work in philosophy. But the interest is never purely exegetical. One of the lessons that emerges is that we humans achieve nothing of real significance in philosophy, ethics, or mathematics except from a human point of view, and hence that all three of these pursuits can be said to betoken what may reasonably be called the 'human a priori'.
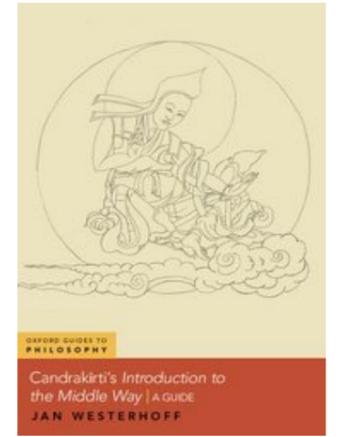
## Candrakīrti's Introduction to the Middle Way: A Guide
**OPU 2024**
**Jan Westerhoff**

Candrakīrti's *Introduction to the Middle Way (Madhyamakāvatāra)* is a central work of Buddhist philosophy for two reasons. It provides an introduction to Madhyamaka, one of the three major philosophical schools of Buddhist thought; and, within Madhyamaka, it plays very prominent role due to its enormous influence in Tibet, where it became the main entry-point into the study of Madhyamaka thought. The historical importance of the *Introduction to the Middle Way* for understanding a major section of Buddhist thought is thus evident. However, what makes it particularly interesting for students is the role it plays as an 'introduction', presenting a comprehensive guide to the key philosophical ideas and problems of Madhyamaka thought. This *Oxford Guide* is for the philosophically interested student or scholar. Westerhoff's commentary focuses on the philosophical content of the text, using Candrakīrti's auto-commentary as the main explicatory resource

TIMFEST 2023





Madpeople's Coping Mechanisms



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