



Philosophy

Department Newsletter

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Letter from the Chair

David Boonin

The following remarks were adapted from the welcoming address given at the Department's May 2009 Commencement ceremony.

I've now finished my third year as chair of the Department, and presiding over our commencement ceremony has been one of my favorite things about the job. But the position does come with one somewhat burdensome expectation: that the chair open the ceremony by trying to answer the eternal question: "Yes, but what is philosophy good for?" The idea has traditionally been that commencement marks the Department's last chance to assure our students' parents that by majoring in philosophy, their children have not made a tragic mistake.

At our previous two ceremonies, I did my best to answer this difficult question. But I'm not sure I ever came up with a response that the parents found fully satisfactory. As a result, the problem of trying to figure out what I was going to say this year was a source of some anxiety for me in the months leading up to Commencement. Then I had an unexpected epiphany: throughout the history of philosophy, important progress has often been made on difficult questions when someone found a slightly different way to frame the question. So I thought: maybe the key to answering the question "What is philosophy good for?" is to tweak the question a little bit. In particular, I thought maybe I could reframe the question as: "What is philosophy *not* good for?"

Suddenly, it felt as if a great weight had been lifted from my shoulders. The question that had previously seemed all but unanswerable suddenly seemed to have so many good answers, that now the problem was deciding which answer to present. After thinking through some of my options, I decided to



David Boonin, Department Chair

say a few things to the parents about one thing that philosophy is especially not good for: it's especially not good for instilling mental tranquility in those who pursue it.

One reason philosophy isn't a good source of tranquility has to do with the subject matter of philosophy. The questions that philosophers seek to answer are hard: What is knowledge? What is real? What am I? How should I live? It isn't just that it's hard to find the right answers to these questions. It's that it's hard to know how we could tell if we had found the right answers. Sometimes, it's even hard to believe that these questions have right answers at all. And yet it's even harder to believe that they don't. The very subject matter with which philosophers work can induce a kind of intellectual vertigo, and in training our students in this most demanding discipline, we have no doubt been guilty of causing them to suffer its symptoms along with us.

A second reason that philosophy is not good for instilling mental tranquility has to do with the culture of philosophy. It's a bit difficult to describe, but let's just say that it isn't exactly touchy-feely. I was invited to join an interdisciplinary reading group a number of years ago where faculty from

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Faculty Activities 2008-09

Dominic Bailey's "Excavating Dissoi Logoi 4" appeared in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* in Fall 2008; his "The Third Man Argument" appeared in *Philosophy Compass* in Summer 2009. In the Fall he was awarded a year's Fellowship at the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C. He presented his work on Platonic epistemology for the Graduate Philosophy Seminar at Oklahoma University in November, and his work on Plato's *Euthydemus* at the West Coast Plato Seminar in Berkeley in May. He also presented comments on Plato's *Sophist* at this year's Arizona Colloquium for Ancient Philosophy.

David Barnett published a paper in *Philosophical Studies* proving to the world that the word "if" is a lot like the word "suppose". A paper on a similar topic was accepted by *Nous*. He published a paper about the cutoffs for vague concepts in the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, and he had a second paper on vagueness accepted by *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. He published a paper in *Mind* on how the word "might" works. He published a paper arguing

various departments got together to read and discuss books. When someone made a comment during the discussion periods, people from the other departments would respond by saying things like "I really appreciate what you're saying" or "That's a really good point." I would respond by saying things like "That doesn't follow" or "Here's a counterexample." For some reason, I didn't get invited back the following year.

That's how philosophers interact with other people. I gave a talk at my own department a few years ago, and the first question after I was done began with "Here's why I don't like your argument." That turned out to be the *easy* question. One of the highest honors that the American Philosophical Association bestows on a truly excellent book is the devotion of an entire session to discussing it at one of its annual conventions. These sessions are not called "author meets admirers." They are called "author meets critics." And for good reason. In introducing our students to philosophy, then, we have also initiated them into this quarrelsome culture, and for the mental strain that this can cause we are again responsible.

A third reason that philosophy isn't good for instilling tranquility has to do with the method of philosophy. Philosophers commit themselves to following the argument wherever it leads, even if it leads to conclusions we do not wish to believe. When we think about whether free will exists, whether our minds could survive the death of our bodies, whether God could be both omnipotent and morally perfect, or whether the lives that most of us lead are immoral, we philosophers are sometimes led to conclusions that are disturbing and even depressing. Worse, we come up with *arguments* for these conclusions, and sometimes these arguments are not at all easy to overcome.

For those who take philosophical argumentation seriously, this, too, can be a source of intellectual anguish, and it is, once again, a distinctive form of discomfort that we are constantly inflicting on our students. I teach courses in applied ethics, for example, and I often have students come up to me after class and say something like this: "I can't find the mistake in the argument you were talking about today, but I know the

argument's wrong because I disagree with its conclusion." Some students are not bothered by this tension between what they believe and what an argument seems to show. They simply note the inconsistency and move on. But other students are deeply troubled by the experience. These are the ones who go on to become philosophy majors.

By educating our students in the ways of philosophy, in short, my colleagues and I have inculcated in them a state of perpetual mental dissatisfaction. One could argue that this dissatisfaction is a defining characteristic of philosophy itself. It was John Stuart Mill who famously declared that it is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. And who other than a philosopher could think that a dissatisfied life is preferable to a satisfied one?

So why, I imagine the parents were now asking themselves, have we inflicted all of this on their sons and daughters? And why have their sons and daughters put up with it? The answer, I think, can be found in the origins of the word "philosophy" in the Greek words *philo* and *sophia*, meaning "love of wisdom." As with any other form of love, philosophy has a kind of pure and immediate value that is intuitively grasped by those who are caught in its grip, but that must remain forever inaccessible to those who have never experienced it first-hand. Consider, by way of analogy, a different form of love: the love of parents for their children. If a childless person asked a parent, "What's so great about parental love?", the parent could try to give a set of reasons in response, but in the end, I suspect that the parent would have to give the same answer that I find myself giving in response to the question about the philosopher's love of wisdom. The answer is: I can't explain exactly why, but somehow it's worth all the aggravation.

I opened this year's Commencement ceremony by focusing on a few things that make philosophy a particularly difficult and, at times, aggravating pursuit. This may have been a somewhat peculiar way to begin a commencement ceremony. But I did it in the hope that everyone present would join me in feeling not only great pride and admiration for what our students have accomplished, but a little bit of sympathy as well. They certainly deserve it. □

that, unlike their brains, conscious beings are not composed of other things, in the book *The Waning of Materialism*. He argued with hundreds of stubborn philosophers at the University of Barcelona, the APA in Vancouver, the University of Wyoming, and the University of Texas. And he got tenure.

David Boonin continued working on a book on applied ethics and race, and had the manuscript accepted by Cambridge University Press. He was elected to a second term as Chair of the Department.

Eric Chwang had two papers appear in print: "Against the Inalienable Right to Withdraw from Research" in *Bioethics*, September 2008, and "A Defense of Subsequent Consent" in the *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Spring 2009. He also presented his continual work in progress, "Freedom from Autonomy," at the Bled Philosophical Conference in June 2008 and the paper-that-never-ends (hat tip to Claudia Mills for the name), "Three Ways of Speaking and the Futility of Coerced Promises," at *Promises and Agreements: A Philosophy Conference*, at Rice University, October 2008. He also tagged along with Carol Cleland to a fun workshop on societal issues in astrobiology in February 2009 and continues to rock-climb weekly (indoors only!) despite being terrible at it.

Carol Cleland was on sabbatical leave last academic year. She published two articles, one on historical science, which appears in the 2009 Blackwell *Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, and the other on epistemological issues in the scientific search for a "shadow biosphere" (a term she coined), which appeared in the journal *Astrobiology* last spring. She completed co-editing (with Mark Bedau) an anthology, *The Nature of Life*, for Cambridge University Press. She also completed an article, "Life without Definitions," for *Synthese*, and is finishing up a book, *The Quest for a Universal Theory of Life: Searching for Life as We Don't Know It*, for Cambridge University Press. Cleland gave a keynote talk last spring on historical science to a conference in Florence, Italy. She gave two invited talks at Montana State University, one to their History and Philosophy Department ("Life without

Interview with Robert Pasnau

Professor Pasnau is a prize-winning scholar of medieval and early modern philosophy and the previous chair of the Department. He recently spoke with David Boonin about his work.

David Boonin: You have a big new book coming out with Oxford University Press called *Metaphysical Themes 1274–1671*. What's so special about that period?

Robert Pasnau: Well, not too many people have thought that there's anything special about it—and maybe for me that's part of the interest. It overlaps two periods that have typically been studied in isolation: the later medieval period and the early modern period. I'm trying to tell a story that runs through those two periods, and to understand how medieval thought changed and turned into what we now think of as the early modern period of the 17th Century.

David: Why do you think the period's been neglected? It doesn't get taught much, for example, in the standard sequence of history of philosophy courses.

Bob: Partly, I think, people tend to specialize in one thing or another, and so it's unusual for anyone to try to write something that crosses over from one period to another. Someone will be a scholar either in early modern thought, or in medieval thought, but trying to write a book that genuinely grapples with both is quite difficult. But I think another part of it is that the period is just *obscure*—it's notoriously obscure. Later medieval philosophy is highly technical and dry and goes on for volume after volume. It's been very daunting for people to try to get a grip on what's going on in those books.

David: One thing you mention in the book is that during this period there was a very sustained focus on metaphysics, including a lot of problems that seem fairly abstract and esoteric, not the kinds of issues that seem closely connected to people's daily lives. Is there a reason why this period saw such a sustained attention to these kinds of problems?

Bob: Well, a lot of the folks I'm interested



Bob Pasnau, medieval philosophy enthusiast

in were theologians: Thomas Aquinas was a theologian; John Duns Scotus was a theologian; William Ockham was a theologian. Those are some of the biggest names from the later medieval period. Theology is metaphysical in a certain sense: it's the metaphysics of God. To have an adequate metaphysics of God, you really need to have a metaphysics all the way down that understands the created world as well as the nature of God. All of these authors thought that you couldn't be a theologian without also doing what we now think of as philosophy. So they tend to be very interested in metaphysics, and they have a lot of interesting things to say about metaphysics.

David: That strikes me as a bit surprising. On the face of it, it seems that a lot of the issues that these theologians discussed are not very directly connected to God or to theology—questions about the mereology of ordinary objects, the persistence conditions for ordinary objects over time, and so on. Do you think they were right to suppose that it was necessary for theologians grappling with the nature of God to spend so much time worrying about such things? Whatever one thinks about God, it seems that God is quite different from simple ordinary objects.

Bob: Yes, and that was a point of controversy in their time. Obviously, God is extremely different, but it was controversial as to whether God is *so* radically different that there's not even any point in trying to go from the familiar case of the world around us up to God. But if you think that you can't go from the familiar world around us up to God, then that's problematic because it's not clear how else you would get to any knowledge of God—

definitions”) and the other to their Center for Astrobiology (“Philosophical issues in Astrobiology”) and delivered a paper, “Common Cause Explanation and the Asymmetry of Overdetermination,” at the biennial meeting of the Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice, in Minneapolis.

John Fisher wrote “The Formalist Model of Nature Appreciation,” a chapter for a book on environmental aesthetics, and another paper on “The Aesthetic Value of Wild Animals.” His entry on “Music and Song” appeared in the *Blackwell Companion to Aesthetics* in 2009. There, he suggested that by focusing too exclusively on instrumental classical music, philosophy of music has overlooked the philosophical questions raised by the vast majority of the world's music. He developed this position in “The Concept of a Song,” which he read at an aesthetics conference, prompting heated debate about which was the definitive version of “Hound Dog.” In the spring he did extensive research for an entry on “Popular Music” for the *Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*. He also wrote a review of *Photography and Philosophy: Essays on the Pencil of Nature* for *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*.

Graeme Forbes chaired the closing afternoon sessions of the conference *Propositions: Ontology, Semantics, Pragmatics* at the University of Venice in November. In December, he responded at an Author-Meets-Critics session on his book *Attitude Problems*, at the APA Eastern Division meeting in Philadelphia. In February, he chaired an Author-Meets-Critics session on Penelope Mackie's book *How Things Might Have Been* at the APA Central Division meeting in Chicago. In May, he responded to a paper at the first Princeton Philosophical Logic Conference. In July, he gave a keynote talk at the Vagueness Workshop, part of the European Summer School in Logic, Language and Information, in Bordeaux, France. His critical notice of Kit Fine's *Modality and Tense* appeared in the *Philosophical Review*.

Ben Hale recently assumed a co-editorship of the journal *Ethics, Place, and Environment* and will be working with other faculty members to refashion the journal so that it is more responsive to current environ-

because, if you think about it, what basis do we have for grasping God's nature other than trying to run some sort of inference from the nature of the world around us up to God? If you just were to think in completely abstract *a priori* terms about what God is like, it would be difficult to get very far. At any rate, this was a debate that people had, and I think it's easy to be sympathetic with the camp that said you really do have to start with the created world and to understand *it*, and then make your way up to doing theology. And that was also, I should say, the way the disciplines of the time were organized, so that to become a theologian, you first had to spend many years studying philosophy. It was the conventional wisdom of the time that no one could be a good theologian who hadn't first studied philosophy quite intensively.

David: Some of the philosophers you cover in the book are central figures from the canon—people like Locke, Descartes, Spinoza—but you also discuss a number of people who are less well known. I was wondering if you could pick out one or two of the more obscure figures who you think deserve to be better known than they are, and say something about who they were and why they are important.

Bob: Well, it is literally the case that I talk about some figures that are *completely* unknown. I talk about some figures that I think have never been written about. I spent a week in the Bodleian library in Oxford just calling up old, old books from their rare book collection, and some of the books I was calling up I was quite confident nobody had looked at in hundreds of years. I felt a certain amount of pressure, actually, because I was thinking to myself, you know, “If I don't find something good in this book, when's the next time anyone's going to want to come look at it?”

David: And so you found some good stuff?

Bob: Well, I tried extra hard!

David: That sounds like an evasive answer to me.

Bob: [laughs] I *tried*! But it's not easy when

you get this book you really don't know anything about, nobody else has written about this figure, it's a big book, and you don't even know where to look in it for something that might be interesting. And it goes without saying, of course, that it's all in Latin. So it's a difficult challenge. But you asked about figures that stand out among all the people I talked about. One of the things I was most impressed by was the number of really first-rate philosophers from the 14th Century. They're not unknown, but they're dramatically underappreciated. One of them is John Buridan, who lived in the generation after Ockham, so the middle of the 14th Century. Ockham is not a household name, I suppose, but at least people know about “Ockham's Razor.” But Buridan is really not much studied at all, and he's just a spectacular



A page from Averroes' commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics. Bob reads stuff like this.

philosopher. Another person I would put in that category from around the same time is Nicole Oresme. Oresme has some reputation among historians of science because he was a forerunner to the kind of quantitative research program that Galileo would later make famous. But Oresme as a philosopher is really quite interesting and impressive, and very little work has been done on his thoughts; he deserves a lot more attention than he's received.

David: Is there a particular idea, either from one of them or from one of the other lesser-known philosophers, that contemporary philosophers working in metaphysics might be especially interested in learning about?

Bob: Well, one thing I find particularly interesting—both Buridan and Oresme talk about this—is a conception of identity over time that is perfectly familiar to us today, but that I think people hadn't realized dates back to this period of time. It's a picture on which genuine identity through time—

mental policy concerns. Among other publications, he published peer-reviewed papers in such venues as *Public Affairs Quarterly*, *Environmental Values*, *Social Theory and Health*, and *The Philosophy of Public Health*. Among other activities, he has started blogging about environmental policy and ethics at cruelmistress.wordpress.com, and he will be participating in the upcoming COP 15 global climate conference in Copenhagen.

Bob Hanna taught full-time in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge in 2008-09. His book, *Embodied Minds in Action*, co-authored with CU graduate Michelle Maiese, was published by Oxford University Press. He did invited talks at the University of Keele, Cambridge University, and the Institute for Cognitive Science at CU-Boulder. His book *Kant, Science, and Human Nature* was the subject of an Author-Meets-Critics session at the APA Pacific Division meeting. In May, a workshop on part 2 of his book in progress, *The Rational Human Condition*, was held at the University of Luxembourg, of all places. Otherwise he just had his idea of a good time and happily returned to Boulder and its lovely weather in July 09.

Chris Heathwood gave talks at MIT, the International Society for Utilitarian Studies conference at Berkeley, the Mountain-Plains Philosophy Conference in Kansas, and the Central APA, where he participated in an author-meets-critics session on Terence Cuneo's *The Normative Web*. He wrote the entry on welfare for the *Routledge Companion to Ethics* and a critical notice on Cuneo's book for the journal *Philosophical Books*. He team-taught a graduate seminar on the good with Michael Huemer, a burden that would crush any normal man. He was up for reappointment this year, and learned that he could keep his job, at least for a little bit longer.

Michael Huemer wrote a couple of papers, including “Values and Morals: Outline of a Skeptical Realism” for *Philosophical Issues*, and “Is There a Right to Immigrate?,” which has been rejected by three very impressive journals. He awaits two more rejections. He saved Heathwood from being crushed by a graduate seminar, and taught a great course on major

the very same thing existing at this moment of time and the next moment of time and then the next moment of time—is extremely rare. According to this view, most of the things that we regard as persisting through time in fact don't persist. Instead, what you get is one thing existing for a very brief time, and then another thing, and then another thing.

David: Are they talking about ordinary objects when they say this?

Bob: Yes, they're talking about ordinary objects. They're talking about animals, for instance.

David: [looking puzzled] Really?

Bob: John Buriden thinks that animals persist through time only for the briefest period—and then when their parts change, or when their properties change, they go out of existence and are replaced by some new object that's very, very similar to the old one, but not identical.

David: Does this include human animals? That would have some disturbing implications.

Bob: Well, they would get this result for human animals, except they believe that human animals have an immortal, immaterial soul that's not changeable in that way. So they had an account of why human beings are a special case, because of our immaterial soul, and that immaterial soul is genuinely enduring through time.

David: Did any of them worry about whether this view had moral implications for things like property ownership? If you think you own a particular piece of property, but if it turns out that really what you came to own went out of existence a few moments after you took possession of it, that might pose some serious problems.

Bob: Yes, they considered this as an objection to their view – the objection was that, if this were right, then it would make chaos of various kinds of institutions – social, political, and legal institutions.

David: Yeah, that's exactly what I was wondering about.

Bob: The reply was in effect a reply in the philosophy of language—the idea is that we need to reinterpret our language so that a term like “David Boonin” doesn't just refer to, say, a single entity, but can refer to a sequence of one thing after another. Now, as I said, “David Boonin” is not so bad a case because you've got a soul on this view, and the soul endures in a stable way. But they compare other animals to a river: the familiar example of a river flowing through a bed, and the river itself is always changing. And they want to say that animals are much more like rivers than we realize. So they would say that people can talk about the Mississippi, for example, and we know what they're talking about, and even though the thing that *is* the Mississippi, the body of water, is constantly changing, there's no obstacle to referring to that over time. And so we do the same thing with, say, Sophie the dog. Even though, strictly speaking, there is no one thing “Sophie” that endures, we can talk about Sophie as a sequence, and that's fine.

David: I wonder if people would still care as much about their pets if they came to think that Sophie's just a sequence. In any event, let's talk a little about your next big project: you're heading off to Morocco in the spring; this is not just some big boondoggle, is it?

Bob: It's a boondoggle for my wife. My wife's a lawyer and her law firm gives the lawyers sabbaticals. They had a lawyer commit suicide a few decades back; after that, the firm got together and decided they needed to do something about it, and so they have this sabbatical program, and for them it's a boondoggle. They're not supposed to go out and do anything other

social theories. He almost got a job offer from a rival university in a desert, but they ran out of money. In the spring, he recovered his stock market losses. He again edits the formidable newsletter before you, which is not late but has simply moved to an alternate publication schedule.

Alison Jaggar's book *Abortion: Three Perspectives*, co-authored with Michael Tooley, Philip Devine, and Celia Wolf-Devine, was published by Oxford University Press. Two of her articles also appeared: “Susan Moller Okin and the Challenge of Essentialism” in *Toward a Humanist Justice* and “L'Imagination au pouvoir: Comparing John Rawls's Method of Ideal Theory with Iris Marion Young's Method of Critical Theory” in *Feminist Ethics and Social and Political Theory*. The latter was reprinted in *Dancing with Iris: Between Embodiment and the Body Politic in Iris Marion Young's Political Philosophy*. Alison gave six talks, including one at the University of Oslo and plenary addresses at the Mid-West Women's Studies Association and the 25th anniversary conference of the journal *Hypatia*. In May-June, she spent a month at the University of Oslo working with CU alumnus Theresa Tobin on a book tentatively titled *Ethics across Borders*. Alison's ongoing research includes participating in a multi-disciplinary, international project to develop a new gender-sensitive global poverty measure. The project is funded by several sources, including a large grant from the Australian Research Council.

Dan Kaufman was granted tenure in the most painful way possible. [The process involved a medieval device known as “the pear of anguish.” Enough said. —ed.] He gave talks at the University of Toronto, the University of Massachusetts, and Barnard College. He has forthcoming papers on “Locke on Identity” for the *Blackwell Guide to Locke's Essay* and “The Real Distinction Argument and its Importance” for the *Cambridge Critical Guide to Descartes' Meditations*. He continues to edit the *Routledge Companion to 17th-Century Philosophy*. Reviews of his live musical performances refer to him as “a brilliant eccentric” and “the musical equivalent of Colonel Kurtz,” as well as



Morocco, site of Pasnau boondoggle

than have fun.

David: I see. But *you're* supposed to go do work.

Bob: Right. We philosophers, you know, are very serious.

David: So what are you going to be—allegedly—working on?

Bob: [laughs] I'm going to be studying Islamic philosophy. First of all, I'm going to be studying the Arabic language, quite intensively, because these texts were all written in Arabic. There's a great deal of interesting philosophy among medieval Islamic authors.

David: And is there anything in particular that you're looking for as a specific research project?

Bob: The figure I'm particularly interested in is Averroës. Averroës spent some of his life in Morocco, which makes that a natural place to go work on him. There are quite a few scholars there who work on Averroës. I'm also interested in Avicenna, who is probably the greatest of all Islamic philosophers. Both of these figures have received some attention from scholars, but there's really a need for a lot more work to be done. So I hope to be able to learn enough of the Arabic that I can look at the material in the originals and make a serious contribution to the scholarship in that area.

David: Now you presumably could have gone on publishing more and more about the various figures that you've already studied without moving on to look into the Islamic tradition. Was there a particular reason that you wanted to move on and look at this different group of figures?

Bob: I seem to be, by temperament, one of these people that likes to do something, write it up, and then move on and do something different. Philosophers seem to vary quite widely in that way. Some are like me, and then others like to sink their teeth into one very specific problem and work on it their whole career. These are two different mindsets in philosophy. It's not exactly that I lose interest in a particular area. I can imagine continuing to work on what I have been working on. It's that I feel this pull toward exploring new areas that I don't know anything about. I like a challenge.

David: I'd say that that's admirable, but that would be self-serving, because I tend to do the same thing. So instead, let's briefly turn to two other subjects. First, I wanted to ask about the annual Summer Seminar that you first organized shortly after you came to CU—that's been a big success for the department and for the students who participate. How did that come about?

Bob: I came from a small school in Philadelphia—St. Joseph's University—and had a brilliant student there. I had always felt quite bad for him because, at a small school like that, he had very few opportunities to take sophisticated classes of the sort that would really push him and give him a way of sensing just what kind of skills he had in philosophy. So when I came to Boulder, it occurred to me that this would be the perfect place to have a summer program that brings together students from around the country like this student I had in Philadelphia. I started it

referring to his music as “the darkest stuff coming out of Denver or anywhere else.”

Kathrin Koslicki had her book *The Structure of Objects* published by Oxford University Press, while her “Natural Kinds and Natural Kind Terms” appeared in *Philosophy Compass*. Her entry, “Structure,” is forthcoming in the *Handbook of Mereology*. She continued work on the nature of ontological dependence. She presented a paper at the Eidos Metaphysics Conference at the University of Geneva, gave a colloquium at the University of Alberta, and participated in the Arizona Ontology Conference and CU's Works-in-Progress series. She taught the undergraduate Introduction to Ancient Philosophy and the graduate Proseminar in Metaphysics. She organized the 2009 Colorado Conference on Dependence in March, bringing together approximately 20 renowned philosophers from the U.S., Canada, Europe and Australia.

Mitzi Lee took over as Director of Graduate Studies and spent much of the fall getting to know the students better and figuring out how the program works. Her book *Epistemology After Protagoras* (Oxford, 2005) was selected for an Author-Meets-Critics session at the APA Eastern Division meeting in Philadelphia. Mitzi spent the spring of 2009 as a visiting professor at Harvard, returning to her old grad student stomping grounds. She thought the Harvard students were great, but was very happy to return to Boulder in June! She spent much of the spring working on a new project on justice and the laws in Aristotle's moral and political philosophy, and presented her work at Yale in April. She was awarded a CU LEAP Associate Professor Growth Grant in the summer of 2009.

Claudia Mills won a campus-wide Boulder Faculty Assembly teaching award. She was also a keynote speaker and participating faculty member at the Undergraduate Ethics Symposium sponsored by the Prindle Institute for Ethics at DePauw University in Indiana in April, where she presented her paper “Artistic Integrity.”

Bradley Monton has a new book out: *Seeking God in Science: An Atheist*

The Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy has now run for ten years. Each year it attracts undergraduates from around the country, and beyond, to spend three weeks in Boulder studying philosophy in an intensive environment. The seminar particularly targets students from smaller schools who have not had the opportunity to take graduate-level classes. The topic changes every summer: recent years have covered the nature of identity, philosophy of science, the nature of God, and—this coming summer—applied philosophy. As the reputation of the program has increased, admission has become steadily more competitive, and the quality of the students has correspondingly grown. The seminar has proved to be an ideal springboard for many students. Alumni of the program can now be found in virtually every philosophy Ph.D. program in the country.

up my first year here, and it's gotten to be bigger and better every summer—bigger in the sense that it gets to be better known, with more applicants and stronger students coming. It's been a great experience for me, and I think it's meant a lot to a lot of the students who have gone through it and have gone off to really good Ph.D. programs in philosophy all over the country.

David: Are there things about it that you've enjoyed that are different from what you get out of teaching in a normal academic semester?

Bob: Two things come to mind. First of all, the students are really quite special because they are all very serious about going to graduate school, and all committed enough to give up three weeks of their summer to come to Boulder and do philosophy, pretty much 24-hours a day. They're smart, they're energetic, they're motivated, and so that part of it is a lot of fun. The other part is that it's a team-taught class. Of the fifteen class meetings, I only teach a couple of them per summer, and so the rest of the time it's my colleagues teaching. I try to go to as many of their sessions as I can and I really learn a lot about what my colleagues are doing. I've probably learned more about my colleagues' work from this Seminar than I have in any other way.

David: I wanted to ask you a few questions about your interest in the history of philosophy more generally. When you were an undergraduate, did you come to be interested in philosophy by first becoming interested in the history of philosophy, or did you become interested in the history of philosophy after you first became interested in philosophy?

Bob: It was a fairly long road for me to philosophy. I started off thinking I would be an English major, but I really couldn't stand these amorphous conversations about literature, and so then I drifted over toward history, but all I really cared about in history was intellectual history. And then I just kind of stumbled upon philosophy. And it didn't take me long to figure out that that was really what I cared about, but because I was coming at it from literature via history into philosophy, I was predisposed to think of

it in very historical terms. And as it happened, I was an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, which was a very historically oriented department. It never occurred to me, really, to do anything other than the history of philosophy.

David: And then I have a question about why you think philosophers in general should care about the history of philosophy. When I was in graduate school, we were all required to take a pretty large number of history of philosophy classes, and I was happy with that; I always enjoyed history of philosophy. But I remember one of my fellow students said he didn't think we should have to take any history classes at all, and what he said was, "I don't care about *old* ideas; I care about *true* ideas." What would you have said to him?

Bob: I quite agree. I only care about true ideas; I don't care about old ideas. There's nothing about the oldness of the things I study that makes them interesting to me. But I think that if you're only studying philosophy in the journals from the last couple of decades, you get locked into a fairly narrow framework about how philosophy should be done. If you care about thinking new thoughts, it's very difficult to do that if all you're looking at are the thoughts of the people around you. And so one way to break out of this narrow framework is to read the ideas of old dead people. There are a lot of smart old dead people, and they oftentimes thought about things rather differently from the way that we do. I don't think they usually thought about things in *radically* different ways. I don't think there's any great incommensurability between the way they thought about philosophy and the way we do, but I just think we approach issues by way of certain assumptions, and sometimes we don't even see certain kinds of issues because they're not on our roadmap of the field. And when you look at old texts, you get ideas. This, at any rate, is how it is for me. When I publish in contemporary philosophy, most of the work I do grows directly out of ideas I've gotten from the history of philosophy. So I'd encourage anybody who cares about true ideas to read more old stuff—it's good for you. □

Defends Intelligent Design. He participated in a four-way debate about intelligent design last Fall, in front of an audience of about 1000 in Fort Worth. He's also been appointed to be on the editorial board of the journal *Philosophy of Science*. Finally, he's been teaching Bob Pasnau how to kayak.

Wes Morriston gave the reply to Zachary Manis, "On Divine Essential Goodness and the Nature of Divine Freedom," at the APA Central Division meeting. The *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* published his article "The Moral Obligations of Reasonable Non-believers: A Special Problem for Divine Command Metaethics," and *Philo* published his "Must an Origins Agnostic be Skeptical About Everything?" Apart from that, he prepared for 2009-10.

Alastair Norcross spent most of the year drinking. In March, he sacrificed an innocent person and distributed their organs to five needy transplant recipients. When not promoting utility directly, he did so indirectly, by publishing "Two Dogmas of Deontology: Aggregation, Rights, and the Separateness of Persons" in *Social Philosophy & Policy* and "Was Mill an 'India House' Utilitarian?" in *Southwest Philosophy Review*. His "Act-Utilitarianism and Promissory Obligation," which he presented at the Baker Center Conference on Promises and Agreements, will be published in *Understanding Promises and Agreements: Philosophical Essays*. He gave six conference presentations and three invited talks. He organized CU's Think! lecture series. He also presented a motion to the APA, urging the APA to enforce its policy on discrimination, especially with respect to schools that discriminate against homosexuals. With Ben Hale, he organized the second Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, which was an even more outstanding success than the first. He and Diana ran the Bolder Boulder again, this time beating all the seventy-three-year-old women, all the six-year-old girls, and all but one of the seven-year-old girls. Next year, his goal is to beat all the women over sixty-nine and under nine.

Graham Oddie saw the paperback edition of his *Value, Reality and Desire* published by Oxford University

Graduate Student Accomplishments 2008-2009

CU has a nationally ranked graduate program in philosophy. Our students distinguish themselves in many ways—winning awards and fellowships, presenting their work at conferences, organizing their own conferences, publishing academic articles, and taking academic posts around the county.

Last year, three of our students won university-wide awards or fellowships:

- Pamela Lomelino (7th year PhD candidate) won an Arts and Sciences Graduate Student Fellowship for Fall 2009.
- Ron LeBel (MA student) received two research grant awards from the Institute of Cognitive Science, Fall 2008 and Summer 2009.
- Mike Zerella (6th year PhD candidate) won a 2008–2009 Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award.

In 2008-9, many of our students presented their work at academic conferences:

- Kendy Hess (PhD 2009): “The Modern Corporation as Moral Agent: Why Corporations Are Better than You Think They Are ... Or Ought to Be,” North American Society for Social Philosophy Conference, July 2008. Kendy won the award for Best Graduate Student Submission.
- Christian Lee (6th year PhD candidate): “A Suppositional Solution to a Problem for ‘Might’ Counterfactuals,” Northwest Student Philosophy Conference, 2009; “Grounding Evaluative Properties,” Rocky Mountain Ethics Conference, 2009.
- Tom Metcalf (6th year PhD candidate): “The Return of the Logical Problem of Evil,” University of Texas at Austin Graduate Philosophy Conference, April 2009; “An Empirical Defense of Moral Realism,” Texas Tech Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, April 2009.
- Amandine Catala (4th year PhD candidate): “Should Holocaust Denial Be Criminalized?,” Front Range Philosophy Conference, October 2008; Annual Meeting of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, March 2009; and

the Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities, January 2009. “Between Rectification and Protection: Is the Nozickian State Really Minimal?,” Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities.

- David Barnes (3rd year PhD candidate): “Jus in Bello and the Sophisticated Utilitarian,” Pacific Division American Philosophical Association, April 2009; International Symposium for Military Ethics (ISME), January 2009.
- Tyler Hildebrand (3rd year PhD student): “The Nomological Solution to the Truthmakers Objection to Presentism,” Pittsburgh/Carnegie Mellon Graduate Philosophy Conference, March 2009.
- Ron Le Bel (MA student): “Neurobiological Determinants of Human Communication: Prematurity and Early Childhood,” ASHA-NIH Research Symposium, November 2008.
- Andrew Winters (MA candidate): “A Response to Nozick’s Analysis of Knowledge: Shortcomings of a Reliabilist and Externalist Account,” Front Range Philosophy Conference, October 2008.
- Janella Baxter (MA ’09): “Kant’s Mereological Essentialism: Matter’s Impenetrability and the Potential Divisibility of Objects,” North American Kant Society Conference, Penn State, April 2008.

Our graduate students organize the annual Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference at CU, a refereed conference with talks by graduate students from across the nation and commentaries by CU graduate students. This past spring, Tyler Hildebrand (4th year PhD candidate) organized the RMPC. The keynote address was given by Peter van Inwagen (Notre Dame).

Our students publish their work in nationally recognized journals:

- Pamela Lomelino (PhD candidate) has two papers forthcoming: “Individuals and Relational Beings: Expanding the Universal Human Rights Model,” in *Social Philosophy Today*, and “Reconcept-

Press. During the 2008 summer, he was invited to an Author’s Symposium at Davidson College, where he defended the main ideas of his book in four sessions. He delivered two papers on related themes at a conference in Geneva, where he responded to extended critiques from several philosophers. In 2009, Graham was awarded a Boulder Faculty Assembly Award for Excellence in Research, for his work in value theory. He received a College Scholar Award and a Starr Fellowship, which will enable him to spend a year sabbatical working on the value of art at Oxford University. He also published “Values Education” in the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education*, “Truthlikeness” in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Science*, and “Truthlikeness and Value” in *Approaching Truth*.

Robert Pasnau published the two-volume *Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* and finished work on an 800-page history of metaphysics in the later medieval and early modern periods. He is still learning how to kayak.

Rob Rupert published essays on “Ceteris Paribus Laws, Component Forces, and the Nature of Special Science Properties,” in *Nous*, “The Causal Theory of Properties and the Causal Theory of Reference, or How to Name Properties and Why It Matters,” in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, and “Innateness and the Situated Mind,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition*. His book, *Cognitive Systems and the Extended Mind*, was published this past summer by Oxford University Press. And he was awarded tenure.

Michael Tooley completed the book chapters “Causation” for the *Routledge Companion to Metaphysics*, “Causes, Laws, and Ontology” for the *Oxford Handbook of Causation*, and “Personhood” for *A Companion to Bioethics*, 2nd edition. His “Farewell to McTaggart’s Argument?” was accepted by *Philosophia*. He presented “The Probability that God Exists” at a conference on Formal Methods in the Epistemology of Religion in Belgium. The three-way debate volume *Abortion – Three Perspectives*, co-authored with Alison Jaggar, Celia Wolf-Devine and Philip Devine, was published by Oxford University Press. He is currently completing a book on causation for

ualizing Autonomy to Address Cross Cultural Differences in Informed Consent,” in the *Journal of Social Philosophy*.

- Ron LeBel (MA student) co-authored “Motor–Auditory–Visual Integration: The Role of the Human Mirror Neuron System in Communication and Communication Disorders” for the *Journal of Communication Disorders*, Spring 2009, special issue on Neurobiological Determinants of Human Communication.

Four PhD students graduated recently and are at their first teaching posts after CU:

- Peter Higgins (PhD 2008) accepted a tenure-track position at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti.
- Jason Hanna (PhD Fall 2008) accepted a tenure-track position at Northern Illinois University.
- Dan Demetriou (PhD 2009) accepted a tenure-track Assistant Professorship at the University of Minnesota, Morris.
- Kendy Hess (PhD 2009) accepted a tenure-track position, the Brake-Smith Assistant Professorship in Social Philosophy and Ethics at the College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Five students graduated with MA’s in the spring of 2009:

- Janella Baxter wrote an MA thesis entitled

“Kant’s Mereological Essentialism,” directed by Professor Bob Hanna. She is now enrolled in the PhD program at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

- Jennifer Kling wrote an MA thesis called “Phenomenology, Intentionality, Empathy, and the End of Separatism,” directed by Prof. Bob Hanna. She is now enrolled in the PhD program at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- Brian Miller wrote a thesis entitled “Seems True: A Critique of Phenomenal Conservatism” with Michael Tooley. He is now enrolled in the PhD program at the University of Texas at Austin.
- John Martin wrote an MA thesis on Plato’s *Euthydemus*, directed by Prof. Dominic Bailey. He is now enrolled in the joint University of Denver–Iliff PhD Program in Religious and Theological Studies.
- Gustavo Oliveira wrote an MA thesis “Revolution or Genocide: A Peasant Polemic Against Political Liberalism,” advised by Claudia Mills. Two-time winner of the department’s Stahl Prize, he continues to pursue his interests in philosophy, especially social philosophy, agrarian and labor reform. He is working on translations between Portuguese and English on the issue of agrarian reform, and working with labor organizers and reform groups in Brazil. □

a series that John Perry and John Martin Fischer are editing for Oxford University Press.

Ajume Wingo presented “The Nature of Justification in Political Philosophy” at the American Political Science Association; “Freedom in the Making of Peace” for CU’s THINK! lecture series; “Relational Freedom in the Making of Transitional Justice” at Boston University; “Constitutions as Narratives to Losers” at the College of Wooster; “Aesthetics and Traditional African Art” at the College of Wooster Art Museum, and “An Aesthetics Framework for Understanding Human Rights in Africa and the Middle East” at CU. He also published an article on “The Aesthetics of Freedom,” in *New Waves in Political Philosophy*.

Michael Zimmerman spent much of his time on administrative duties as Director of the Center for Humanities and the Arts. He continues to do as much research as possible. In May 2008, he gave invited lectures at three universities in Taiwan. In August, he gave a prize-winning paper (to be published next year) at the first Integral Theory Conference in the Bay Area, and in October he gave a keynote address about “technological post-humanism,” at the Western Humanities meeting in Vancouver. He also published “The Singularity: A Crucial Phase in Divine Self-Actualization?” in *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*.

Welcome to Our Newest Faculty Member: Adam Hosein

The philosophy department is pleased to announce that Adam Hosein will join our department next year as an Assistant Professor. Adam holds a BA in philosophy, politics and economics from Merton College, Oxford, and a PhD in philosophy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His dissertation, *The Significance of Fairness*, explored the relation between moral constraints that fall on private individuals and those that apply to political institutions and their agents. He works mainly in ethics and political philosophy, with a special interest in issues of global justice. He also has interests in feminist philosophy and enjoys chatting about all areas of philosophy with better-informed friends and colleagues. Adam will join the Philosophy Department in the fall of 2010, after completing a post-doctoral fellowship in law and philosophy at the University of Chicago Law School. He enjoys playing guitar, reading short stories, and drinking tea, though he is only good at the last of these. □



Student Prizes

Jentzsch Prize

Congratulations to **Jennifer Kling** for winning the 2009 Jentzsch Prize, awarded annually to the graduate student who submits the best paper, as judged by an anonymous faculty committee. Kling's paper, "Mind-Body Interaction in Descartes," takes up the problem of how mind and body interact in Descartes' theory. In particular, Kling defends a distinctive account of where exactly the mind is, in relation to the body. The mind is not nowhere, and it is not spread throughout the whole body. Rather, it is located at just a single place in the brain, the pineal gland, which is the only place in the body that the mind directly acts on. Kling argues that this helps understand how Descartes can avoid various puzzles that arise over mind-body interaction.

Stahl Prize

The Stahl Prize is given annually in memory of Professor Gary Stahl, who taught at CU from 1962 to 1996, to recognize a graduate student who has made a significant contribution toward bringing the discipline of philosophy to bear on some demanding and crucial human problem. This year's winner, **Gustavo Oliveira**, is an active member of the Left Hand Book Collective and an organizer with Students for Peace and Justice. He was involved with last year's Democratic National Convention at the "Tent State," which served as a site for protests; a campaign to convince Congressman Mark Udall to "fund the troops home"; a free conference on "Progressive Responses to the Economic Crisis"; a counter-recruitment campaign against weapons manufacturers in Colorado; and the "Enough is Enough! – Stop Foreclosures!" response to the housing crisis, as well as many other initiatives too numerous to name. Congratulations, Gustavo!

Faculty Awards

Two Philosophy Department members received Boulder Faculty Assembly Awards for Excellence in 2009. The awards come with \$3000 and recognize excellence in teaching, service, or research.

Claudia Mills Recognized for Excellence in Teaching

Claudia Mills is one of the most highly regarded teachers in the department of philosophy. She is recognized for her ability to make her classes entertaining learning experiences while maintaining academic rigor, conceptual sophistication, and philosophical content. A gifted storyteller, Mills uses humor to explain and to illustrate philosophical theses, helping students understand difficult material.



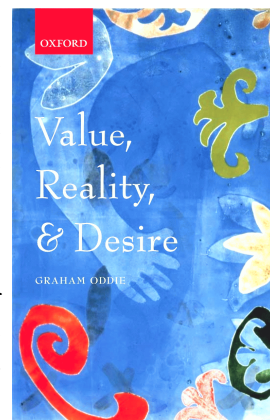
Beyond her exceptional work within the CU-Boulder academic community, Professor Mills has also been successful outside CU's boundaries, developing a flourishing writing career. In addition to her many scholarly articles, she is the author of more than forty children's books, for which she has received numerous writing awards. She enjoys using children's literature in the philosophy classroom. When she teaches Nietzsche in her introductory ethics class, she reads aloud the picture-book classic *The Rainbow Fish* and then leads a discussion with her students on why Nietzsche would not have liked the book. Her research interests focus on ethical questions

regarding the family, such as the rise in the use of behavior-altering medications for children, conflicts between parents and non-parents in the workplace, and intercultural adoption.

Graham Oddie Recognized for Excellence in Research, Scholarly, and Creative Work

The main focus of Graham Oddie's research for more than twenty years has been metaphysical realism, value realism, and scientific realism. He has authored, co-authored, or edited four books, has written numerous articles, and has many works in progress. While remaining an active scholar, he served as Chair of the Philosophy Department for several years and is currently serving as Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Professor Oddie's recent book, *Value, Reality, and Desire*, received extraordinary attention from philosophers worldwide and is considered an important contemporary contribution to the idea of value realism. Oddie defends value realism, which recognizes the existence of objective values that are independent of the mind and are not reducible to more basic properties. In other words, values actually exist and are not merely the expression of human fears and desires. His peers from around the world expressed glowing admiration for his work. One found it "one of the two or three most interesting contributions to philosophy I have read over the last dozen years." Another wrote, "I consider it to be the best defense of value realism ever to have been published," arguing that it "clearly belongs with the very best of contemporary work on the nature of value, and is in fact one of the most original and creative books I've read in any field of philosophy." □



Philosophy Graduation, 2009

The Spring graduation ceremony was held on May 8, 2009. The department honored the six students receiving Doctorates, seven receiving Master of Arts degrees, and fifty-six receiving Bachelor of Arts degrees. The department acknowledged nine BA students who graduated with honors and nine who graduated with distinction.

Department Chair David Boonin presided over the Philosophy Department ceremony.

The graduation address was given by Congressman Jared Polis. Polis was elected to Congress in 2008 and represents Colorado's Second District. He was the first openly gay man elected to Congress. While attending Princeton University, Polis co-founded his first company and has since launched several highly successful business ventures. He has been named an "Entrepreneur of the Year" by Ernst and Young and one of America's "Top Ten Young Entrepreneurs" by *Success* magazine. Polis has served on the Colorado State Board of Education and has worked for educational reform. He created the Jared Polis Foundation to improve access to

education and technology, and founded two innovative charter schools, and established the New America School, which today operates four campuses in Colorado and will soon open one in New Mexico. Polis co-founded the Academy of Urban Learning to address the challenges faced by teens who struggle with unstable living conditions. He was named "Outstanding Philanthropist" for Colorado's 2006 National Philanthropy Day.

Undergraduate Advisor Sheralee Brindell and Honors Advisor Robert Rupert presented the undergraduate degrees. Robert Pasnau, Director of Graduate Studies, presented the graduate degrees. Awards were presented to the winners of departmental prizes. Gustavo Oliveira was given the Stahl Prize for Community Service, and Jennifer Kling was awarded the Jentzsch Prize for the outstanding graduate student paper.

The opening and processional music was provided by Kevin Garry and Margarita Sallee. The formal ceremony was followed by a reception in the University Memorial Center.

Philosophy Department Graduates

Bachelor of Arts

James Bahan
Brandon Barrett
Jason Barry, *magna cum laude*
Sonja Blondeau-Heglin
Johanna Blumenthal*, *summa cum laude*
Jordan Bohall, *cum laude*
Tyler Broeren
Hannah Bulick*
Kendra Chapman
Joseph Chierotti
Brian Cocos
Benjamin Cooperman
Galen Dahl
Erik DeRoin
Eric Edwards
Nicole Fardi
Matthew Fine*, *summa cum laude*
Kirsten Garlinghouse
Joseph Goldberg
Jeffrey Green
Rebecca Heisler
Abram Herman
Colin Hickey*
David Humphreys
Daniel Hutchinson
Shawna Jensen
Leah Katz
Alexander Kelly
Charles Kern

Christopher Kluis
Daniel Layton
Darren Lee
Richard Lee, *magna cum laude*
Matthew McCormick
Robert Meis*, *magna cum laude*
Christopher Meyer*
Parker Mills
Maxwell Miner
James Murray
Luke Nikitow
Amie Christine Osberg
Bridgette Peterson*, *summa cum laude*
Anastasia Pinson
Sabrina Renteria
Ali Rodgveller
Dana Rosen
Nicholas Shaw
Theodore Simpson V
Zachary Sparks*, *magna cum laude*
Edwin Teran III
Joshua Townley
Jennie Trefren*, *magna cum laude*
Michaela Turner
Joshua Vaisman
Douglas Varacalli
James Zorrilla

Master of Arts

Chelsea Haramia
Tyler Hildebrand
Jennifer Kling
Randy Krogstad
John Martin
Gustavo Oliveira
Matthew Pike

Doctorate of Philosophy

Daniel Demetriou
Jason Hanna
Kendy Hess
Diana Hsieh
Ryan Mott
Jason Wyckoff

* *with Distinction*

Support the Philosophy Department

Philosophy is one of the most vibrant and engaged departments in the university. Help us continue with these efforts by making a tax-deductible donation. The items mentioned here are just a few of the many possibilities. For more information, contact the Department Chair, David Boonin, at 303-492-6964, or David.Boonin@Colorado.edu.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

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