Ancient Philosophy Resurgent at Berkeley

Over the last few years, there has been a renewed emphasis in ancient philosophy at Berkeley. While the Classics department has maintained a strong philosophy contingent with Profs. John Ferrari and Tony Long, the hiring of Profs. Klaus Corcilius in 2011 and Timothy Clarke in 2012 has significantly increased the involvement of the philosophy department.

With the departure of Alan Code in 2007, the philosophy department was left without a permanent faculty member specializing in ancient philosophy. “These were tough times for our ancient philosophy graduate students,” says department chair John MacFarlane, “but the community was remarkably resilient.” Although the Townsend Working Group and Dorothea Frede’s visiting position held things together, “it was only with the hiring of two permanent faculty members, Klaus Corcilius and Timothy Clarke, that things really got going again.”

These hires have resuscitated the Joint Graduate Program in Ancient Philosophy, offered by Classics and Philosophy. The program is now headed by a committee of five faculty members, including Corcilius, Clarke, Ferrari, Long, and Kinch Hoekstra, a scholar of ancient and early modern politics in the Political Science department.

Most of the activity in ancient philosophy runs through the Townsend Working Group in Ancient Philosophy. Founded in 2001, the group has in recent years expanded, bringing more speakers to campus than ever before. In 2013 the group hosted 11 talks, with topics ranging from psychology in the Pythagoreans (Richard McKirahan, Pomona College) to Stoic logic (Dominic Bailey, Colorado). Also in 2013-4, Berkeley hosted the annual West Coast Plato Workshop on the Hippias Major and Minor.

Berkeley’s community of ancient scholars has initiated ties with other institutions in the US and Europe. Berkeley collaborated with Davis and USF for the first Bay Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy. The first event in this series was held in Spring 2014 with Aryeh Kosman (Haverford). Graduate students and faculty members from the US and

Canada discussed his interpretation of Aristotle’s theory of activity and capacity, with its applications in his physics, psychology, and metaphysics. Berkeley has also begun partnership with the Munich School of Ancient Philosophy (the largest in Europe), which includes institutional exchange of graduate students and faculty and research collaboration. As part of this project, Nicola Carraro, a graduate student at Munich, visited Berkeley to work with Prof. Clarke on Aristotle’s theory of generation and corruption.

In Fall 2014, the Classics Department brings in Prof. Sara Magrin, a specialist on Hellenistic and Neo-Platonic philosophy, from the Université du Québec à Montréal. Magrin’s current work focuses on Plotinus’s psychology and in particular his understanding of the difference between animal and human cognition. She is teaching a seminar on the subject this coming Spring, examining “how Plotinus approaches some aspects of Plato’s and Aristotle’s psychologies.” The ancient philosophy community is excited to welcome her as she joins their ranks.
This month marks the beginning of my second year as Chair. It has been a pleasure to get to know the many facets of the department in a way I did not before.

Our undergraduate major continues to be popular, defying a meme in the popular press about the decline of the humanities. This year we were one of ten departments on campus to roll out Berkeley Connect, an undergraduate mentoring program that helps connect undergraduates with their academic departments through small group meetings, one-on-one advising, and special events with professors and alumni. Professors Lara Buchak and Wes Holliday, who are coordinating the program in the department, organized an exciting schedule of events, and by all accounts the program was a great success. We look forward to continuing it this year.

The department was featured in an article in the online edition of California Magazine (“Philosophy’s Popularity Soars: Devotees Find It’s More Than ‘An Interesting Path to Poverty’”), which profiled several former philosophy majors, exploring the paths their careers took after Cal and the role philosophy played in their lives.

Our graduate program remains strong and vibrant. We are particularly excited to be offering a new graduate fellowship, the New Directions Fellowship, with the help of two generous donors. It aims to foster significant dialogue between philosophers and scientists working in allied areas. Alex Kerr, who won the first fellowship, will take courses in psychophysics and vision science, under the mentorship of cognitive scientist Stephen Palmer. He is hoping that his studies will help him explain why we intuitively treat shape inversion differently from color inversion, and whether we should.

We have enjoyed a larger faculty in the last two years than at any time since I came to Berkeley, and we have not done any new tenure-track hiring. But you can’t run in place for long. Our faculty continues to be highly sought after by other departments. We were extremely happy to have retained Jay Wallace, who was offered the storied White’s Chair of Moral Philosophy at Oxford. But Sherri Roush has decided to leave Berkeley to take up a new endowed chair in Philosophy and Medicine at King’s College, London. And John Searle has retired after 55 years of service (though he will continue to be very active in the department, teaching half time as Professor of the Graduate School). This year we will be doing a faculty search to help replenish our ranks.

Kwong-loi Shun, who taught at Berkeley from 1986-2003 before taking up administrative positions at the University of Toronto and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, has returned to the department to teach two courses per year. It is terrific that we can once again offer courses in Chinese philosophy at Berkeley. In addition, the distinguished philosopher John Perry will be a Visiting Professor at Berkeley in Spring 2015, teaching Philosophy 4 and a graduate seminar.

I am delighted to report that Katharina Kaiser has won the 2014 Distinguished Teaching Award for non-senate faculty in the Arts and Humanities, in recognition of her outstanding performance and dedication in the classroom. (Reading the teaching evaluations of my colleagues has been one of my more humbling experiences as Chair.)

After three long years at the restorer’s, the Chinese painting of “Nine Wise Old Men” is back in the Dennes Room, and it looks terrific. Thanks are due to former Chair Mancosu for all of his work making this happen.

The intellectual life of the department is as vibrant as ever. The list of visiting speakers, workshops, and small conferences that the department has hosted in the last two years is too long to give here. For all of this we owe thanks to our hard-working staff, and to the generosity of friends and alumni who have supported us over the years and helped to make Berkeley an outstanding center for philosophical research and teaching. We very much hope you will consider making a contribution online: a secure link can be reached from our departmental website (http://philosophy.berkeley.edu/page/Giving). We thank you for your continued support, and we hope you will keep in touch with news about your own activities, which we will report on from time to time in future editions of our Newsletter. Just send us an email at philosophynews@berkeley.edu.

### New Faculty Profile

**Kwong-loi Shun** taught in the department from 1986 to 2003 before moving to the University of Toronto and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has returned to Berkeley and will be teaching two courses each year starting Spring 2014. His main research interests are in moral psychology and Confucian ethics, and his main research project is a multi-volume work on Confucian ethics. For the past year, he has been working on a number of papers related to the third volume of the project, on such topics as: acceptance, anger and resentment, forgiveness, purity of the mind, tranquility, and methodological issues in the transition from textual studies to philosophical explorations.
Katharina Kaiser Wins Distinguished Teaching Award

The Philosophy Department offers a hearty congratulations to Katharina Kaiser for winning the 2014 Distinguished Teaching Award for non-senate faculty in the Arts and Humanities. Awarded in recognition of her outstanding teaching and extraordinary commitment to her students, the Divisional Teaching Award is a well-deserved honor. Professor Kaiser has been teaching at Berkeley in the German and Philosophy Departments, respectively, since 2006 and 2008.

Lara Buchak featured on Philosophy Talk

Berkeley philosopher Lara Buchak was featured on an episode of the radio program Philosophy Talk. Taped live at Berkeley’s Marsh Theater in February 2014, the episode “Risky Business: the Business of Risk” explored how we ought to take risk into account in making decisions.

Hosts John Perry and Ken Taylor, of Stanford philosophy, started the episode by debating the dominant approach to this question, called expected utility theory. This theory holds that it is rational to do what will maximize the “expected utility” of one’s actions over time. The expected utility of an action depends only on the likelihood and value of the possible outcomes of that action.

Taylor raised a challenge to this the view, questioning the implication that two people cannot both be rational if they disagree about whether or not to take a risky action, yet agree about the value and likelihood of each possible outcome. “Maybe I’m just risk-averse!” Taylor suggested, without being irrational.

After a report from contributor Caitlin Esch on prominent risk-takers, the hosts introduced Professor Buchak to talk about just this question. Buchak emphasized that we can ask not only how likely and how valuable an action’s outcomes are, but also whether to take big risks or play it safe.

“You might be the kind of person who says, I really care about avoiding the worst case scenario, or the kind of person who says, something really good could happen and that’s what I’m going to focus on.”

Buchak contends that rationality does not require us to always opt for what would maximize average utility in the long run. Instead, there might be many rational ways to balance prudence and risk-taking.

One audience member asked how to go beyond assessing personal risk, to assess the risks that our decisions create for others. Professor Buchak described two possible approaches. According to one, we should avoid taking risks for individuals that they wouldn’t impose on themselves. On another, we should aggregate and determine whether the rewards of an action are worth the risks at the level of the group.

Buchak pointed out that the question of whether to be more or less risk-averse may arise at the level of the group. How a society answers this question may play a role in the degree of inequality it is willing to accept.

“I think that the level of inequality we’re willing to tolerate in a society, how much we care about the worst-off people versus the best-off people mirrors the level of risk we’re willing to tolerate in our own individual decisions.”

Professor Buchak reported enjoying her experience on Philosophy Talk. “The hosts asked me great questions, and helped draw out the implications of some of my work,” she said, “Questions from the audience were stimulating. It was great to hear from those outside of philosophy: to hear what they think about making risky decisions and what issues they find most pressing and interesting.”

Philosophy Talk airs at 10 am on Sunday and 12 pm on Tuesday, PT, on 91.7 FM, KALW. Recent episodes are available on http://www.philosophytalk.org/.


Michael Arsenault – B.A. University of Toronto
Omar Fakhri – B.A. Biola University, M.A. Texas Tech University
Nick French – B.A. New York University
Dan Khokhar – B.A. B.S. J.D. Indiana University, M.A.
New York University
Dustin Neuman – B.A. Sarah Laurence College, M.A. Brandeis University
Adam Paris – B.A. New York University
Sophia Dandelet – B.A. University of California, Berkeley
Ravit Dotan – B.Sc. M.A. University of Jerusalem
Tyler Haddow – B.A. Stanford University
Joseph Kassmann-Tod – B.A. M.A. University College London, M.A. University of London
Joy Li – B.A. Rutgers University
Christy Wong – B.A. Stanford University

Philosophy at Berkeley | 3
Since its founding by a generous friend of Berkeley philosophy in 2011, the New Crop Prize has aimed to “reward and encourage the next generation of young philosophers” through highlighting their original work and bringing them into conversation with well-known philosophers through the New Crop Symposium.

In addition to submitting their work for the prize, each year undergraduate majors and minors submit nominations and vote for the Distinguished New Crop Visitor, who is invited to select the winning essays from among five finalists and to attend a two-day symposium at Berkeley. This year’s visitor was Professor Ned Block, a philosopher of mind at New York University.

In keeping with the tradition of the prize, on the first day of the symposium Professor Block held a seminar on his philosophical work exclusively for undergraduates. On the second day, the five finalists were honored at an open forum, where he announced the winner of the first prize and the two runners up.

The five finalists this year were Chris Allen (“Color on a Naïve Realist Transparency View of Visual Experience”), Shannon Doberneck (“Gendler’s Rationality/Equity Thesis (And the Evidence that Speaks Against It)”), Andrew King (“Choice-Set Formation and Moral Deliberation”), Griffin Madden (“Threat and Punishment”), and Daniel Spina (“Material Falsity and the Objects of Sensation”).

First prize went to Chris Allen. There was a tie for first runner-up, with Shannon Doberneck and Andrew King receiving the award. Griffin Madden and Daniel Spina received honorable mentions. Each of the winners presented an abstract of his or her paper, before taking questions from Professor Block and an audience of their fellow Berkeley undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty.

“It was so surreal to have a philosopher that I had read in class read my paper and ask me questions! I almost had to pinch myself afterwards to make sure I wasn’t dreaming!” Shannon Doberneck commented afterward, “I was also very humbled by the professors and graduate students in the department that asked me questions during the awards ceremony. The fact that people from the department whom I respected were taking something that I had written so seriously really meant a lot to me. I felt like a real philosopher!”

Each of the three winners received a cash prize, funded by the sponsors of the New Crop. The department is proud of the accomplishments of its undergraduates and looks forward to the next instantiation of the New Crop Event.

Departmental Awards

Departmental Citation (distinguished undergraduate work in philosophy)
Sophia Dandelet (2013)
Shannon Doberneck (2014)

Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award
Lindsay Crawford; Kelly Glover; Janum Sethi (2013)
Zack Bruce; Peter Epstein; Richard Lawrence (2014)

Fink Prize
Ethan Jerzak, “Non-Classical Knowledge” (2013)
Alex Kerr, “Perspective & Spatial Experience” (2014)

New Directions Fellowship
Alex Kerr
The Undergraduate Philosophy Forum continued strong into its tenth year on campus, providing a space where Berkeley undergraduate philosophers can meet and deepen their philosophical interests outside the classroom.

“The aim of Phil Forum is to provide a place where students who can’t get enough philosophy can do more philosophy,” says Forum president Shannon Dobernack. “We try to cover topics that aren’t covered in our courses, but are of interest to students who frequently attend our meetings.”

Undergraduates organize all aspects of the group, from picking topics and leading discussion, to inviting speakers. Topics addressed this past year included self-deception, the normativity of meaning, Kant’s views of self-consciousness, and situational semantics, among many others.

The Forum also frequently provides opportunities for graduate students to present their research. A dozen graduate students presented to the Forum in 2013-2014. “It’s a lot of fun for undergraduates to learn what their graduate student instructors are up to and engage with them and their work,” Dobernack notes, “it’s always a great time!”

Eugene Chislenko, who gave a talk on part of his dissertation, reported having an excellent experience at the Forum. The talk, entitled “Lack of Motivation,” took place during the review period for final exams. Chislenko notes that it “was a great chance to combine philosophy with issues that are personally important to people, and the students jumped on it.”

“Nine Wise Old Men” Returns to the Dennes Room

After three restorative years away, some old friends have finally returned to the Dennes Room. Lo-chung Chiu Lao Hui, or The Gathering of the Nine Old Men at Lo-chung, is a large painting in colored ink depicting a gathering of Confucian scholars at Hsiang-shan, in modern-day Honan province, as related by the 9th century poet Po Chü-i.

Gifted to the University in 1953 or ’54 by Californian lawyer and conservationist William Edward Colby, the painting is on permanent loan to the Philosophy Department, where it had hung for many years in the Dennes Room before its restoration became necessary.

Crowded around one another laughing, joking, pointing and arguing, the nine wise old men pulse with vitality and good cheer. Their presence is a welcome reminder of the collaborative and playful nature of philosophy.

Ten Years of the Undergraduate Philosophy Forum

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“Ten wise men, including Prof. Paolo Mancosu

“It was a really intelligent group of people, genuinely interested, and a joy to talk to. They both understood what I was presenting and had a lot of questions about it,” he said, “It left me clearer about my own work and more excited about it.”

Caitlin Dolan, a fifth-year graduate student, found the students “insightful” in discussion of a more unusual topic she presented to the Forum this year. “I talked about pictorial representation, which isn’t something that would be covered in typical philosophy courses, and I was impressed by the group’s enthusiasm and willingness to dive into a new topic.”

While connecting undergraduates to other members of the department, the Forum enables them to explore continuing their philosophical studies beyond Berkeley. For the past several years, the Forum has invited Professor Niko Kolodny to run a workshop on applying to graduate school in philosophy.

“Many students have attended, ready with just the right sort of questions,” Kolodny stated, “It’s heartening to see that so many students are seriously considering pursuing philosophy, and doing so with such a mature balance of enterprise and hardheadedness.”

Philosophy undergraduates who continue their studies frequently give credit to the Forum as the place where they developed their philosophical talents along with their peers. Arden Koehler, a former member who will be starting graduate school at NYU this fall, attests that the “sense of community” in the Forum is crucial for its members’ growth.

“Independent learning’ is a misnomer for our activities, because any progress we make in understanding is a result of the thoroughly interdependent discussions, presentations, and debates that comprise our meetings.”

Philosophical Faculty Blog for NPR

Beginning in 2011 and 2012 respectively, Alva Noë (Philosophy) and Tania Lombrozo (Psychology, affiliated faculty in Philosophy) have been penning regularly featured columns for National Public Radio’s 13.7: Culture and Cosmos blog. Named for the age of the universe, the 13.7 blog is dedicated to new research at the intersection of science and the humanities. Covering topics as diverse as natural teleology, the (in)explicability of human tragedy, the neuroscience and ethics of drug addiction, and the origins of life and consciousness, Lombrozo and Noë continue a long tradition of academic engagement with the wider public. Find these discussions and more at http://www.npr.org/blogs/13.7/.
Philosophy Commencement 2013-2014

Each year, the department invites one graduating senior and one alumnus/a of the department to address the graduating seniors at the department commencement. The following are excerpts from the addresses delivered in 2013 and 2014.

From Betty M. Park, documentary film maker, Alumni Speaker 2013:

After graduating from Berkeley, I took a minor detour by working at a non-profit. I think I was motivated by the idea of making the world a better place, but I was so miserable I’m pretty sure I single-handedly dragged down the world’s happiness quotient. About a year on the job I reached a breaking point, and I remember thinking—if I’m going to lead a life of poverty and misery, shouldn’t I at least be pursuing my dreams? And my dream at the time was to make documentaries.

A week and half later I moved back to New York and landed a job as an assistant at a TV production company through a friend...I got my first big break when the editor I was assisting had his fourth nervous breakdown. When the producers realized that he was now off the radar, camped out in an RV somewhere in New Mexico, they turned to me and said, “You. You’re gonna edit.” I kind of just widened my eyes and said, “Yes, yes I am.” While there was some feigning confidence in the beginning, hoping that this button would do what I wanted, and that red button could indeed eject me from my seat if necessary, I learned quickly. I built a steady career as an editor, eventually going on to executive produce shows.

But the thing is, I had this creative compulsion to do more. You could say I was compelled by the same thing that led me to pursue philosophy in the first place...Philosophy majors are inherently curious about humans and our existence and the world in which we live, and this curiosity was at the heart of my interest in documentaries.

Mamachas del Ring, my first documentary, tells the story of Carmen Rosa The Champion—an indigenous Bolivian woman who struggles to make it on her own in the world of professional wrestling...In retrospect, I think I was drawn to this subject partly because the struggles of the main character would come to resemble my own. We were both trying to succeed independently, without having to answer to anyone else. Our tales were feminist, as we navigated worlds dominated by men, and tried to change them by virtue of succeeding in them. We have had to carve out paths for ourselves, as there wasn’t an obvious or pre-determined course to follow...

As philosophy graduates, out there in the real world—with shifting priorities, practical concerns, and still the task of figuring out what you really want to do, while balancing other people’s expectations of you—I urge you to have confidence in yourself and your decisions...Stay focused on finding your perfect story to tell, the thing that fits you so well it’s as if it chooses you. But don’t wait for that thing to come to you—go out and find it for yourself.

From Arden Koehler, Undergraduate Speaker 2013:

At that very grown-up feeling age of 18, when I started at Berkeley, I had never experienced the merciless discipline of thought philosophy subjects you to. That didn’t stop me, of course, from being convinced I had all kinds of metaphysical insights. For instance, under all this pretense of meaning and value, I was certain there was a depressingly simple reality. Just atoms, in the void. And all this fluff, this embarrassing fanfare of life—an illusion we try in vain to wish into existence.

Of course, everyone comes to philosophy differently, with different dogmas ingrained. Some undoubtedly came here with a sunnier world view than mine. But we are all changed by our study in ways I believe transcend these differences, and which are born of the nature of a philosophical education....There’s that moment we all experience when our eyes widen, when a radically different possibility suddenly seems, well, possible. It shakes you. Or when something you were sure was true begins to seem like a self-justifying farce, or worse, incomprehensible. I am often driven in this moment to squeeze my eyes shut, to get up, to walk away for at least a little while. Because although revelation is exhilarating, it is frightening too-- an entire world of possibilities can open up, demand to be thought of, or be closed off, leaving you absolutely stranded. This is the point when I usually go get a snack...

All that nihilistic certainty I had at 18 has since been undermined by philosophical questioning. I was cocky then, but I was not happy with my “knowledge” that the world was a meaningless place. Philosophy promised to unmask my pretensions, and it has; it has given me reasons (if there are such things as reasons) to doubt my sureness.

In this way we learn from philosophy by being made a fool in front of it. The hope is that it can also re-educate us. That’s the real challenge, of course, the dreaded positive project. As we’ve discovered, it is much easier to poke holes in theories than to articulate and defend a picture of how things really are. And so far I am left with that unsettling feeling of not yet having found such a picture, and some doubt as to if I ever will.
But this unsettled feeling is, I suspect, a feature of our discipline, and not a bug. Of course, if we go on to do more philosophy, and even more so if we don’t, we may become more sure about what we think is so. Perhaps because we think we can defend our beliefs with greater rigor. Perhaps because we no longer choose to try. But I fear that crystallization. I believe we should never quite leave the unsettled feeling behind which, at least for me, has been so central. Being unsettled, being unsure and disturbed by this un sureness, is a way of starting philosophy—maybe the only way. For me it is both what it feels like to do philosophy and what makes the radical and critical thought it demands, possible. It drives inquiry, and I believe it makes us better. And so, if we can find a way to live with our eyes wide open in the face of this disquiet, we may be enabled, even compelled, to exchange those banal comforts of certainty for the exhilarating, the unnerving, and perhaps, even, the meaningful, search for an unknown truth.

“We learn from philosophy by being made a fool in front of it. The hope is that it can also re-educate us.”

And this is where the philosophy degree from Berkeley really kicked in. Now if I could dissect Descartes, then I could certainly phrase a question that would get the president thinking and talking...

I have a degree in philosophy from this incredible university. So do you, now. And as I see it, the opportunities are limitless.

From Tamara Keith, White House Correspondent for National Public Radio, Alumni Speaker 2014:

You need to come up with an answer to this question: “Philosophy major at Berkeley, huh?”

Because people are going to ask. People are still asking me, fifteen years later: philosophy major? So, you just need to come up with an answer.

My most vivid memory of getting asked this question was in 2005. I had just applied for a job covering state politics for KPCC, which is Southern California Public Radio. And I was in L.A., so I sent some emails and was like, “Hey, you want to get coffee?” I did not think this was a job interview, I thought this was networking or something. And so I show up at this coffee place, we order our drinks, and then the news director opens up a manila folder and looks down and says, “Philosophy major at Berkeley, huh?” And I realized I was sitting in a job interview, and he had my resume.

So, it’s pretty important to have an answer. And my answer was, “Yeah, philosophy major at Berkeley! It taught me how to think, it taught me to tear apart an argument, it taught me how to break down ideas, it taught me how to ask questions.” And as a journalist, asking questions is supremely important. Actually, in everything in life, asking the right questions is supremely important.

So, when you are asked this question, I would suggest starting with a little bit of humor, something funny, and then a very forceful description of what this degree did for you, and why it makes you the right person for the job, or the right person for whatever it is.

And then there will be a follow up question, which is: “So who’s your favorite philosopher?” And you should just have an answer. Because they’re going to ask. And, generally, then it stops.

In case you were wondering, I did in fact get that job, which means that I got to cover Arnold Schwarzenegger when he was governor of California...

From Shannon Doberneck, Undergraduate Speaker 2014:

I think that philosophy requires a certain willingness to be vulnerable, without which we surely wouldn’t have lasted in the discipline. Philosophy requires that we be ready to engage with one another, that we be ready to both give and receive criticism. We must come prepared: to ask questions, to display our confusion, to admit ignorance. It requires that we lay aside our pride.

Eventually philosophy equips us with the ability and hopefully the willingness to turn the critical eye inward, in some cases becoming our own strongest critic. Somewhere along the way, we learn to scrutinize our own beliefs, perhaps rejecting things we once held so dear. While this can be distressing, at times fostering a deep sense of insecurity, I think that we are better for it; it allows us to know ourselves better. Or maybe, it allows us to, in the words of Nietzsche, “become who we are.”

Philosophy also requires a sense of charity, a certain care in judging the work or thought of others. Of course, this sense of charity might not be fine-tuned when we begin philosophy, as I’m sure many of us, myself included, have written that classic 3-page paper wherein we swear we disproved some famous philosopher completely. Surely, these weren’t our most charitable moments. But charity is required of us in philosophy, for instance, in the moments when our peers can’t quite find the words to successfully make their point. In those moments, we must try to take what they are saying in its best light. We do this, I hope, so that we may judge what others say and think as fairly as possible.
This sense of charity also seems to be refined along the way. At some point, we don’t only try to see the work of others in its best light; we also try to aid our fellow philosophers. When we discover a mistake in someone’s argument, we try to help her along. Is there a way to salvage her view? What might we say to bridge the gap? … Ultimately, the sense of charity that we acquire seems to breed a sense of care. We become invested in one another. We become a community, committed to understanding one another and helping each other understand things better. I feel utterly grateful to have been a part of such a community. In the end, I think that these two things hang together. When we become more charitable with one another, it makes it easier for us to be vulnerable. For the shyer folks like myself, being vulnerable and open can feel nearly impossible. When I started philosophy, I thought that I must hold my tongue unless I had something illuminating to say, which I assure you, wasn’t very often. I was afraid of being thought less of, and so I refrained from displaying my confusion. But the more that I was met with the charity of others, the more that I began to own my confusion, and the more I began really doing philosophy.
I think that it is in those conversations when confusion is rampant, but we’re all equally invested, that we, as philosophers, are our most vulnerable, but also our most charitable. I also think that it is in those conversations when philosophy truly prospers.

California’s Philosophy Graduate Students Present at BSD Conference

The latest edition of the annual Berkeley-Stanford-Davis Graduate Conference (BSD) was held on Saturday, April 26th, 2014 at UC Davis. The conference featured presentations from graduate students attending UC Berkeley, Stanford University, UC Davis, San Francisco State University, UC Irvine, CSU Long Beach, and Biola University.

UC Berkeley was represented by three presenters: Melissa Fusco, and her paper “Causal Decision Theory’s Revenge”, Eugene Chislenko, and his paper “A Solution for Buridan’s Ass”, and Alex Kocurek and his paper “Made-Truth and Settled-Truth”. Other topics covered at the conference included applied ethics (“The Contingent Justification of the Bloomberg Ban”), epistemology (“Some Problems with Knowing How: A Response to Stanley & Williamson”), and metaphysics (“An Enduring Problem for Animalism.”)

Much of the value of the BSD conference consists in bringing together graduate students from the three organizing schools and throughout the state of the California. “Stanford and Davis are just far enough way from Berkeley that it’s hard for anyone to commute on a regular basis,” says Chislenko, “BSD plays a central role in keeping our graduate communities integrated.”

In addition to 12 peer-reviewed student presentations, the conference included a keynote address by UC Davis Professor Emeritus Paul Teller, on the topic of “Language and the Complexity of the World.” Professor Teller wrote a cordial email to the conference participants after the conference, calling the conference a “great success.” After the keynote address, conversation about the conference continued over drinks.

The next edition of the BSD conference is to be held in the coming academic year at Stanford University.

Recent Ph.D. Placements

Joseph Barnes
*A Platonic Account of Epistemic Value*
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2013 (6-year term position)

Erin Beeghly
*Seeing Difference: The Epistemology and Ethics of Stereotyping*
University of Utah, 2014 (tenure track)

Brian Berkey
*Against Moderate Morality: The Demands of Justice in an Unjust World*
Stanford University, McCoy Center for Ethics in Society, 2013 (2-year Postdoctoral Fellowship)

Justin Bledin
*Logic Informed*
Johns Hopkins University, 2013 (tenure track)

Erich Matthes
*Engaging with the Past: Essays on History, Value, and Practical Reason*
Wellesley College, 2013 (tenure track)

Michael Rieppel
*Being Something: Prospects for a Property-Based Approach to Predicative Quantification.* UC Berkeley (lecturer), 2013

Recent Junior Faculty Moves

Michael Caie (Ph.D. 2011)
Moved to University of Pittsburgh, 2014 (tenure track) from Syracuse

Jessica Gelber (Ph.D. 2011)
Moved to University of Pittsburgh, 2014 (tenure track) from Syracuse

James Genone (Ph.D. 2009)
Moved to Rutgers University-Camden, 2013 (tenure track) from Franklin & Marshall College

John Schwenkler (Ph.D. 2009)
Moved to Florida State University, 2013 (tenure track) from Mount St. Mary’s University
Faculty Updates

Lara Buchak
Lara Buchak completed her book Risk and Rationality, which was published by Oxford University Press in November 2013. She has also recently published articles on the relationship among believing a proposition, having faith in a proposition, and assigning probability to a proposition. Buchak gave a number of academic talks this year, in addition to appearing on the radio show Philosophy Talk to discuss her book. In Spring 2014, she received tenure and was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.

John Campbell
John Campbell and co-author Quassim Cassam (University of Warwick) finished writing Berkeley’s Puzzle, which is scheduled for publication by Oxford University Press in August 2014. Campbell is currently working on another book, tentatively titled Does the Mind Have a Causal Structure?, which looks at the relation between our imaginative understanding of one another’s minds and the conception of mental states as causing one another. Since 2011, he has also been working with physicist Saul Perlmutter and social psychologist Rob MacCoun on an interdisciplinary “Big Ideas” class at Berkeley, called “Sense and Sensibility and Science.” After close to two years in preparation, they had their first semester in Spring 2013, and taught it again in Spring 2014. The course covers a wide range of topics, from biases in human reasoning to data analysis and deliberative polling, all woven into a single narrative thread around the role of science in a democracy.

Klaus Corcilius
Klaus Corcilius recently co-edited an essay collection with Dominik Perler (Humboldt), entitled Partitioning of the Soul: Debates From Plato to Leibniz (De Gruyter, 2014). He also authored numerous articles for journals and collections, including “Activity, Passivity, and Perceptual Discrimination in Aristotle”, “Faculties: Ancient Debates”, “La Psychologie”, “De Motu Animalium 6”, “Phantasia und Phantasie bei Aristoteles”, and “Aristotle’s Model of Animal Motion” with Pavel Gregoric (University of Zagreb). Corcilius was also a visiting speaker at various events at the Universities of Munich (LMU), Prague, Basel, Muenster, Zagreb, Toronto, Vancouver, USC, UC Riverside, UC Santa Barbara, Stanford, and Denver, and gave presentations at the 2013 and 2014 meetings of the West Coast APA. His main project currently is a book on Aristotle’s conception of animal and human agency.

Tim Clarke
Since joining the department in 2012, Tim Clarke has been working on his book, Aristotle and Elatic Monism, which is forthcoming with Oxford University Press. He has recently given papers at the Humboldt University of Berlin, LMU Munich, Sapienza University of Rome, UCLA, San Francisco State, Stanford, and the University of Chicago. He participated in the 2014 Symposium Aristotelicium at Delphi.

Hubert Dreyfus
Hubert Dreyfus gave the 2013 APA-Pacific Division Dewey Lecture “Standing Up to Analytic Philosophy and AI at MIT in the Sixties”. The lecture received many positive responses in lectures, talks, and print, especially at the Citris-sponsored “Robots and New Media” symposium last April. The first volume of his collected works Skillful Coping (edited by Mark Wrathall) is forthcoming from Oxford University Press this fall. He is currently working on developing his course on Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Dostoevsky into a new volume with Sean Kelly, much like their previous collaboration on All Things Shining did for Homer and Moby Dick.

Hannah Ginsborg
Hannah Ginsborg has continued to work on the normativity of meaning and on issues in Kant. Recent articles include “Meaning, Understanding and Normativity”, “The Appearance of Spontaneity: Kant on judgment and empirical self-knowledge”, and “Oughts Without Intentions: A Kantian Perspective on Biological Teleology”. Her collection of essays The Normativity of Nature: Essays on Kant’s Critique of Judgment will be published by Oxford University Press in November 2014. Her recent teaching has included a new upper-division course, co-taught with Mary Ann Smart in the Music Department, on “Music and Meaning”. In the last two years, she has given talks in many different places, including Berlin, Leipzig, Porto Alegre (Brazil), Copenhagen, and Beirut.

Wes Holliday
Since May 2013, Wes Holliday has authored numerous articles for journals and anthologies, including: “Information Dynamics and Uniform Substitution”, “Epistemic Closure and Epistemic Logic I: Relevant Alternatives and Subjunctivism”, and “Measure Semantics and Qualitative Semantics for Epistemic Modals”. This summer he taught a week-long course entitled “Beyond Worlds and Accessibility”, at the Third East-Asian School in Logic, Language and Computation at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China. In August, along with Thomas Icard (Stanford), he will co-teach a week-long course on logic and probability and co-organize a week-long workshop on epistemic logic at the 26th European Summer School for Logic, Language and Information (ESSLLI) at the University of Tübingen, Germany. He has recently given talks at the University of Amsterdam, the Berkeley-London Graduate Conference in London, the Pacific APA, Carnegie Mellon, and Tsinghua University, Beijing.

Niko Kolodny
Since the last edition of this newsletter, Niko Kolodny spoke at Tulane, Arizona State, Stuttgart, Harvard Law, Brown, UCLA, NYU, Colorado, Columbia, and several times at the Australian National University, where he was the Harsanyi Fellow for the summer of 2013. Rereading the last edition of the newsletter, he is sobered to find that he is still working on the same papers on democracy and means and ends that he at least claimed to be working on then. He is heartened to see, though, that he finished editing the volume devoted to Samuel Scheffer’s 2012 Tanner Lectures, entitled Death and the Afterlife (OUP, 2013). He is also heartened to be passing on the roles of undergraduate advisor and the organizer for the New Crop Event to Seth Yalcin and Wes Holliday. He will be on leave for 2014-15 academic year, during which he hopes to lay the groundwork for having something new to report in the next version of this newsletter.

Geoffrey Lee
John MacFarlane
John MacFarlane’s book *Assessment Sensitivity: Relative Truth and Its Applications* was published by Oxford University Press in 2014, after ten years in the making. MacFarlane was the keynote speaker for the Berkeley-Stanford-Davis Graduate Philosophy Conference at Berkeley in 2013, and gave talks on the rationality of relativism, indicative conditionals, objective and subjective oughts, and the difference between relativism and expressivism at Reed College, The Northern Institute of Philosophy in Aberdeen, Illinois Wesleyan, the University of Illinois, Ohio State, Notre Dame, MIT, and the Pacific APA. MacFarlane became Chair of the Philosophy Department in 2013.

Paolo Mancosu
After finishing his three-year stint as Chair of the Philosophy Department, Paolo was on leave for 2013-2014. He spent the Fall 2013 in the Bay Area and the Spring 2014 as a visiting Professor at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich. During this year he worked on a book manuscript titled *Infinity and Abstraction*. The book connects the topic of abstraction principles to the problem of assigning numbers to infinite sets and develops a line of objection to neo-logicism called the good company objection. He has recently lectured on this material in Brazil, Italy, Germany, Holland, Poland, Austria, Belgium, France, the UK, and the USA. He has also prepared two collections of his essays for publication that will appear in Portuguese and French. In addition to several articles in the philosophy of mathematics, he recently published an account of the publication of Doctor Zhivago (see New Faculty Publications).

Alva Noë
Alva Noë continues to write and teach on topics in the philosophy of mind. He has just finished a paper on concepts and he is almost finished with a new book on art and human nature. He has developed a lecture performance with the choreographer Deborah Hay; they will be performing it in Fall and Winter 2014. In addition, he writes a weekly essay for National Public Radio’s 13.7 *Cosmos and Culture* series (www.npr.org/13.7).

Hans Sluga
Hans Sluga spent a month in China in October 2013. While there, he served as an external examiner at Hong Kong University and attended the International Conference on Wittgenstein and Contemporary Philosophy in Beijing, which saw the inaugural meeting of the Chinese Wittgenstein Society. In addition, he gave lectures in Xi’an, Macau, and Hong Kong. In May 2014, Hans gave a series of seminars on political philosophy in Toulouse, France and another series of seminars on Wittgenstein’s conception of the world and history in Bonn, Germany. In November 2014, Cambridge University will publish his book *Politics and the Search for the Common Good*. He has also just been appointed to be chair of the Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction, which will be dealing with the impact of technological change on higher education.

Barry Stroud
Since publishing two books in 2011, *Engagement and Metaphysical Dissatisfaction* (OUP) and a selection of his earlier essays, *Philosophers Past and Present* (OUP) Stroud has contributed more than a dozen articles, essays, and reviews to journals, collections, and *The Times Literary Supplement*. His “Doing Something Intentionally and Knowing That You are Doing It” appeared in the Canadian Journal of Philosophy in 2013, and essays dealing with Hume, color concepts in Wittgenstein, moral epistemology, and logical necessity are forthcoming. Stroud has also given numerous talks and invited lectures at universities and conferences in the past three years, speaking at the Society for Analytic Philosophy in Germany in Konstanz in 2012, at a meeting of The International Hume Society in Belo Horizonte, Brazil in 2013, and delivering the newly-endowed Josep Blasco Lectures in Valencia, Spain in 2014.

R. Jay Wallace
Jay Wallace’s new book *The View from Here: On Affirmation, Attachment, and the Limits of Regret* was published by Oxford University Press in 2013. In Fall 2013, the book was featured at a roundtable discussion at Berkeley, sponsored by the Kadish Center for Morality, Law, and Public Affairs, as well as at two sessions sponsored by the Program in Ethical Inquiry at Brown University. Wallace participated in a two-day NOMOS symposium on the book at the University of Valencia in Spain, in June 2014. In addition, Wallace delivered the 2013 Frankfurt Lectures at the University of Frankfurt, on the topic of “Bilateralität in der Moral”; a shorter version of the same material was presented as the Voltaire Lecture at the University of Potsdam in 2013. At Berkeley, Wallace has been serving on the Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations (the “Budget Committee”) since the Summer of 2013. He was also Equity Advisor in the Philosophy Department in 2013-14. He was appointed to the Judy Chandler Webb Distinguished Chair for Innovative Teaching and Research in 2013.

Daniel Warren
Daniel Warren has been continuing his research on Kant’s theoretical philosophy, focusing especially on his conception of matter in relation to early modern philosophy. In 2013 and in 2014, he taught graduate seminars devoted to these themes, including “Primary and Secondary Qualities in Early Modern Philosophy” and “Kant’s *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*”. In May-June 2013, Warren participated in the Second Biennial North American Kant Conference at Cornell University. He gave a talk in December 2013 on the Kantian conception of mathematical force laws at a Kant conference in Jerusalem, which was later presented at a workshop at Stanford. In June 2014, Warren presented a paper about Kant’s views on chemistry and mechanics at the University of Cambridge Workshop on Kant and the Laws of Physics. He has also given a talk on Kant’s views on the metaphysics of the self at the North American Kant Society meeting at Stanford and at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver; and at Acadia University in Nova Scotia he presented work on Kant’s pre-critical conception of causality.

Seth Yalcin
Seth Yalcin’s last few talks were at Oxford, Rutgers, Pittsburgh, St Andrews, Stanford, Konstanz, UCSD, UCSC, and MIT. He recently returned from teaching a three-week intensive minicourse on new problems about modality at the Logic, Language, and Cognition Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His first paper in experimental semantics, joint with Joshua Knobe at Yale, will shortly appear in *Semantics and Pragmatics*. Another paper, on Fregean approaches to quantifying in, is forthcoming in *The Philosophical Review*. With John MacFarlane and colleagues in linguistics, he continues to organize the Meaning Sciences Club, an interdisciplinary forum on topics in the philosophy of language, linguistic semantics, and related areas.
New Faculty Publications

Lara Buchak
Risk and Rationality, Oxford University Press, 2013
Lara Buchak sets out an original account of the principles that govern rational decision-making in the face of risk. Combining research from economics and philosophy, she argues for a more permissive theory of decision-making, which better captures the preferences of actual decision-makers. [Adapted from Oxford University Press]

Edited by Klaus Corcilius and Dominik Perler
Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz, De Gruyter, 2014
We tend to describe the human soul by referring to different types of cognitive activities. Each activity seems to be produced by a special part of the soul. But how can a simple, undivided soul have parts? Classical thinkers gave radically different answers to this question. The eleven chapters reconstrcut and critically examine these answers. [Adapted from De Gruyter]

Edited by Niko Kolodny
Death and the Afterlife, Oxford University Press, 2013
We normally take it for granted that other people will live on after we ourselves have died. Samuel Scheffler maintains that this assumption plays a surprising — indeed astonishing — role in our lives. He argues that, in certain important respects, the future existence of people who are as yet unborn matters more to us than our own continued existence and the continued existence of those we love. [Adapted from Oxford University Press]

John MacFarlane
John MacFarlane discusses how we might make sense of the idea that truth is relative, and how we might use this idea to give satisfying accounts of parts of our thought and talk that have resisted traditional methods of analysis. [Adapted from Oxford University Press]

Paolo Mancosu
Inside the Zhivago Storm: The Editorial Adventures of Pasternak’s Masterpiece, Fetrinelli, 2013
Paolo Mancosu provides a riveting account of the first publication of Doctor Zhivago and of the subsequent Russian editions in the West, reconstructing the story of the Italian publication and the pressure exercised on Fetrinelli by the Soviets and the Italian Communist Party to stop publication of the novel in Italy and in other countries. [Adapted from Fetrinelli]

Edited and translated by Véronique Munoz-Dardé and Luc Foisneau
Justice et critique (in French), EHESS, 2014
Given in March 1991 to three of his Harvard students, this interview constitutes a rare example of intellectual autobiography by John Rawls, an author little inclined to talk about himself. Twenty years after the appearance of A Theory of Justice, it reveals the evolution of his thought, starting from a vision of philosophy as a “conversational discipline”. Luc Foisneau and Véronique Munoz-Dardé provide an original translation accompanied by an extensive preface and commentary. [Adapted from EHESS]

R. Jay Wallace
The View from Here: On Affirmation, Attachment, and the Limits of Regret, Oxford University Press, 2013
Must we always later regret actions that were wrong for us to perform at the time? Can there ever be good reason to affirm things in the past that we know were unfortunate? In this original work of moral philosophy, R. Jay Wallace shows that the standpoint from which we look back on our lives is shaped by our present attachments—to persons, to the projects that imbue our lives with meaning, and to life itself. [Description taken from Oxford University Press]