

When is Something Innate?

~ Robert Northcott

As I look at my baby son, I can see my eyes in him. (And, fortunately for him, some of his mother's characteristics too.) The resemblance seems innate, but is such talk just an illusion? What could it mean to say that some features are innate, others not?

The division of biological traits into innate versus acquired has a long history. Indeed, some work suggests our tendency to make that distinction is itself innate. But in more recent times it has come under heavy fire. After all, isn't every trait the end-product of a long developmental process in which both genes and environment are equally essential? The contributions of the two factors seem hopelessly entangled and intermingled. When asked "which, nature or nurture, contributes more to personality?" the psychologist Donald Hebb replied: "which contributes more to the area of a rectangle, its length or its width?"

For this sort of reason, some biologists dismiss the innate-acquired dichotomy as a naïve pre-scientific relic, much like astrology or mysterious life-spirits. Worse, given its links to a dubious political history of 'master race' theories and so forth, it may even be dangerous. This skepticism has been reinforced by the difficulty of

defining exactly what innateness is. For instance, it can't mean something literally present at birth – else, say, brown eyes or male facial hair would have to be put in the acquired rather than innate category, which would be odd.

And yet, and yet. Notwithstanding its bad odor in some parts of science, in others innateness is still taken very seriously. For example, arguments rage over whether Chomsky is right that our understanding of language's underlying grammatical form is innate rather than acquired. Much research in psychiatric genetics concerns the extent to which certain conditions, such as schizophrenia and depression, are due to genes rather than environment. And Larry Summers was forced out as president of Harvard for wondering aloud whether men were innately better than women at math. Can it really be that all these debates are about nothing?

Traditionally, philosophers too have taken the concept to be meaningful. Locke argued that we are born with a blank slate free of all innate ideas. Kant replied, to the contrary, that certain innate knowledge is necessary in order for us to interpret sensory experience at all.

How, then, should we square the circle? On one hand, all agree that any trait is the final product of a hugely complex interaction of genes and environment. On the other, still it seems that some traits, such as eye color, are somehow more innate than others. This sort of question provides fertile ground for my own area of research, which is philosophy of science. Knowledge of the relevant science is essential – but not sufficient. The reason it's not sufficient is that conceptual issues, such as what we really mean by innateness, often turn on matters that have been studied more by philosophers than by scientists. In this case, in particular, the key notion is *causation*. That's something that's been discussed by philosophers since the ancient Greeks but it's not something that scientists usually study for its own sake.

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Well Done, David Griesedieck!



University of Missouri–St. Louis Chancellor Tom George (left) presents David J. Griesedieck, teaching professor of philosophy at UMSL, with the Chancellor's Award for Excellence for Non-Tenure Track Faculty Member. The award was presented Sept. 30 at the J.C. Penney Conference Center. [Photo by: August Jennewein, UMSL]

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In particular, much contemporary philosophical work suggests that causal claims are contextual. For example, what should I blame for the accident – failure of the car brakes, or the icy road? There'll be one answer if I'm arguing with my mechanic, a different one if moaning about the weather. Neither answer is wrong; rather, the only mistake is to think that either alone is right always and everywhere. Which cause is deemed *the* cause depends on context. Such ideas have been around a long time but have recently been developed in much greater detail.

Back to innateness. Indeed all traits have both genetic and environmental causes. On the view I support, whether we describe them as innate is implicitly a way of highlighting particular aspects of this causal history. Consider my son's blue eye color. Given his genes, his eyes would have turned out blue under almost any environment. But change the genes, and they might have been brown. So it's the genes that matter here. I signal this by describing his eye color as innate. Obviously, much environmental input is needed in order to build any eye at all. Nevertheless, in context, to claim that eye color was *not* innate would be a mistake, because the genes did make a difference whereas the particular environment did not.

The new approach helps with less clear-cut cases. Here's one: male girth tends to expand with age. Does that make the middle-aged pot belly innate? 'Yes' in that it occurs in a wide range of environments and seems to have a genetic basis. 'No' in that it could be avoided by eating less. But really both answers have their place, just as with the multiple causes of the car accident. In other words, the belly's expansion is both innate and non-innate. We say it's innate if wishing to emphasize its genetic causes or environmental *non*-causes; the other way round for non-innate. So calling it innate is sneaky shorthand for "don't blame the odd burger, it's my genes!"

In fact, *every* trait is both innate and non-innate in this way. It's just that for some traits almost every context gives the same ver-



Robert Northcott with son, Andrei

dict and so it *seems* that there's an absolute fact of the matter. It would have taken a pretty fantastic environmental intervention to make my son's eyes brown rather than blue, for instance. Thus, outside peculiar contexts such as science fiction message boards or philosophy classrooms, eye color is nearly always appropriately referred to as innate.

We are now also much better placed to analyze the technical details of actual science. For instance, are statistical regressions or analyses of variance good methods for discovering the relative importance of genes, environment and various subsets of these broad categories? Of what causal significance is a calculated heritability score of 0.5 for, say, homosexuality? Does it tell us whether or to what degree homosexuality is innate? The theories of cau-

sation I have mentioned have consequences for these – often heated – questions. That is one thing that makes philosophy of science an exciting area to work in.

So, finally, what traits are innate? The short answer is – all of them. But all of them are non-innate too. No trait gets a simple thumbs up or down. Rather, the innateness concept serves instead as useful shorthand for making contextual claims about a trait's causal history. I think the look of my son's eyes is indeed innate, by which, in context, I mean that their resemblance to mine is a result of his genes not his upbringing. In other words, sorry, son – there's nothing any of us could have done about it.

When not offering students his own version of an environmental input, Robert Northcott works on causation and its applications in science. As well as writing about innateness, he has written several technical articles on methods of causal inference, published in both philosophical and scientific journals.

Putting Philosophy to Use:

Famous People with Undergraduate Degrees in Philosophy

In each issue of the newsletter, we're adding 5 more names to the list!

- Jeopardy host Alex Trebek
- Writer and critic Susan Sontag
- Composer Steve Reich
- Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer
- NYC Mayor and Presidential Candidate Rudi Giuliani

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Perpetual Stranger

- Ronald Munson

Harold Burdz was skinny to the point of emaciation.

His skin had a washed-out dusky tinge and was almost translucent. Except for a fringe of wiry and graying black hair, he was bald. His hospital chart listed his age as fifty-two, but he could have been eighty-two and not looked much different.

I stood with Dr. John Randall and a group of third-year surgical residents gathered around Mr. Burdz's bed, but Mr. Burdz paid no attention to any of us. He was living in his own world, and in the jargon of clinical medicine, he was not oriented as to time or place. He spoke sometimes, but when he did, he didn't address anyone. He talked in a low, uninflected mutter, and what he said made little or no sense. "Need to get back to the house" was one of the few coherent sentences I heard him utter.

"Mr. Burdz was diagnosed with schizophrenia in his early forties," Dr. Randall said. Dr. Randall was the resident directly responsible for Mr. Burdz's care. "He's been confined to prison for the past ten years."

"What was he convicted of?" a resident named Molly asked.

Molly's every word and movement seemed filled with a tense, controlled energy. She was a member of the Surgical Ethics group. Residents in the group, as part of their education, presented and discussed cases in which ethical decisions had to be made.

I was the outsider in the group, the ethicist called on to raise issues and suggest justifiable ways of resolving them. Decisions that had to be made, were never mine to make. Rather, they belonged to patients, their families, and their physicians. This was it should be.

There are no ethical experts, but only people who have thought about issues more than some others have.

"He was convicted of assault, but no one knows exactly what he did any more." Dr. Randall shrugged. "He's kind of a forgotten man."

"Has his mental status changed due to his illness?" another resident asked.

"Not really." Dr. Randall shook his head. "During his years in prison, his mental condition has deteriorated. But even before he became ill, he was past the point of communicating with anyone."

"Do we know when that happened?" the same resident asked.

"No one now at the prison remembers when Mr. Burdz was sane enough to conduct a meaningful conversation."

"What about his next of kin?" Molly asked.

"Never married and isn't known to have children." Dr. Randall consulted the folder he was carrying. "Parents and other close relatives are all dead."

It was apparent to all that Mr. Burdz was now a perpetual stranger in a strange land. He was out of prison temporarily because he was sick. That he was a prisoner wasn't ignored, however. In accordance with regulations governing the control of inmates, Mr. Burdz was chained to his bed. Handcuffs secured his wrists, and his legs were shackled at the ankles. A heavy chrome chain was connected to both sets of restraints, then fastened to the iron frame of the bed.

"Mr. Burdz was transferred here to Midwestern Hospital at the recommendation of Dr. Joan Mercer, the prison physician," Dr. Randall said. "He was found doubled up on the floor of his cell and moaning in pain. Dr. Mercer examined Mr. Burdz and concluded that he

was probably suffering from an obstructed bowel. She was not equipped to perform the tests needed to establish a definitive diagnosis. Once here, Mr. Burdz received a thorough diagnostic work-up. A colonoscopy revealed a large cancerous mass in the lower bowel, as well as extensive lymph-node involvement."

Dr. Randall went on to describe Mr. Burdz's unfortunate situation. Because the cancer had metastasized, the most aggressive intervention could extend his life no more than a few months. Even for that chance, Mr. Burdz would need surgery to remove the mass, followed by chemotherapy.

"We do the surgery at this hospital all the time," Dr. Randall said. "It's the standard of care for Mr. Burdz's problem. But because he is a prisoner, Dr. Mercer would have to administer the chemotherapy and take responsibility for his follow-up care."

"What happens if he doesn't get the surgery?" an anesthesiology resident called Larry asked. "Is there an alternative?"

"Nothing effective," Dr. Randall said. He seemed to consider how to proceed. "If nothing is done, this patient will die in considerable pain. Surgery isn't going to cure him, but it can ease the time he has left."

"How can he consent to treatment?" Molly asked. "You said nobody remembers the last time he could carry on a rational conversation."

"He's incompetent and can't consent," Dr. Randall agreed. "And he has no relatives who can consent for him. Because he's a prisoner, Dr. Mercer says she's responsible for making decisions about his medical care."

"So is she going to agree to the sur-

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gery?" Molly asked.

"She is not." Dr. Randall stated the point flatly. "She wants him returned to the prison, and he will remain in the prison clinic until he dies."

"Bummer." The resident who had asked about Mr. Burdz's mental status looked astonished.

"Dr. Mercer says the decision is hers." Dr. Randall turned to me. "Do you agree with that, Dr. Munson?"

"Not at all." I shook my head. "Dr. Mercer has a conflict of interest. She shouldn't be responsible for both treating Mr. Burdz and deciding whether he gets treated. She's the one who's going to have to administer the chemotherapy and take charge of his follow-up care."

"Are you saying she shouldn't make any decisions about him?" Molly asked.

"No, she should make the purely medical decisions. But she shouldn't be the one deciding whether the treatment is in Mr. Burdz's best interest." I turned so I could see Molly. "His best interest may conflict with hers, without her realizing it. She may not know she doesn't want to add administering his chemotherapy to his list of chores."

"Since he's sure to die whatever we do, she could figure, why put myself to so much trouble?" Molly nodded.

"That's the inherent conflict," I said. "We don't have to imagine that this is actually her motive."

"But who should make the decision, then?" Dr. Randall asked.

"This is the kind of case in which the courts have to become involved," I said. "The hospital attorney needs to present the case to a court. The court

will appoint a *guardian ad litem* for Mr. Burdz, and it will be the guardian's responsibility to decide whether treatment is in Mr. Burdz's best interest."

The discussion that continued concerned various sort of conflicts of interest. Some of them were caused by a patient's doctor's wanting the patient to join a clinical trial, while others involved parents who might not necessarily have their child's best interest in mind in making a treatment decision.

Mr. Burdz's case, I later heard, was taken over by a court. A guardian decided that surgery without chemotherapy was the best option for Mr. Burdz. His disease eventually ended his life. He died in prison, but he died with a minimum amount of suffering.

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by Ronald Munson



Ronald Munson, a nationally recognized bioethicist, is Professor of the Philosophy of Science and Medicine at the UM-St. Louis. He is a medical ethicist for the National Eye Institute and a consultant for the National Cancer Institute. He is also a member of the Washington University School of Medicine's Human Research Protection Committee and an Associate Editor for ethics of the *American Journal of Surgery*.

Munson's most recent book is [*The Woman Who Decided to Die: Choices and Challenges at the Edges of Medicine*](#). His other books include: *Raising the Dead Organ Transplants, Ethics, and Society* (Oxford University Press 2002), named a "Best Book in Science and Medicine" by the American Library Association, and *Reasoning in Medicine* (with Daniel Albert and Michael Resnick). His [*Intervention and Reflection: Basic Issues in Medical Ethics*](#), in print

for thirty years and now in its eighth edition, is the most widely used bioethics text in the United States. Munson is also the author of the novels *Nothing Human*, *Fan Mail*, and *Night Vision*.

Philosophy in the Media: In Film and on NPR

On March 10, NPR's *On Point* featured filmmaker Astra Taylor and her Piece "Examined Life – Philosophy IS in the Streets." "One Web site reports that Taylor "whips around the Tri-State area and beyond with eight of the planet's most renown contemporary philosophers and probes their ever active brains for answers to questions large and small, elemental and abstract. Engaging a diverse and eclectic group of lauded philosophers and/or public intellectuals to step away from the Ivory Tower and into airports and lakesides, Tompkins Square Park and quaint row boats, Taylor's subjects include Martha Nussbaum, Avital Rennel, Peter Singer, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Judith Butler, Michael Hardt and Mr. [*Prophesy Delivered!*](#) himself, Cornel West, who at one point happily summarizes himself as a 'blues man in the life of the mind, I'm a jazz man in the world of ideas.'" Here's a link to *The NY Times* review:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/22/movies/22lim.html>

And this url will take you to the *On Point* Web site with a button to hear the program: <http://www.onpointradio.org/shows/2009/03/living-philosophy-the-examined-life/>

A second notable philosophy media site is Philosophy Talk, a long-running show on NPR featuring Ken Taylor and John Perry from the Philosophy Department at Stanford University. The show, which airs weekly, debuted in Aug. 2003 with the question "Is lying always bad?" Taylor and Perry have covered an amazing list of topics since then. Here's the show's main Web site: <http://www.philosophytalk.org/people.htm>.

And here's a link to their Archive: <http://www.philosophytalk.org/notesPastShows.htm>

The show is aired on a number of public radio stations, most of them on the west coast. We should lobby to bring it to KWMU!

Philosophy Blogs: A dialogue between [Gualtiero Piccinini](#), creator of the blog [Brains: A dialogue on Philosophy of Mind and Related Matters](#), and [Berit Brogaard](#), creator of the blog [Lemmings: A blog devoted to issues in language, epistemology, metaphysics, and mind](#)

G: What prompted you to launch a philosophy blog?

B: I was giving a talk in Aberdeen in Scotland in July 2006 and had a pub conversation with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, Carrie Jenkins, John Hawthorne and others about blogging. One side led by Walter argued that blogging was too time-consuming to be a worthwhile enterprise both for authors and readers. The other side led by Carrie argued that blogging was just an extended and more public version of emailing that could benefit both authors and readers in various ways. I was on Carrie's side, and to make my opinions a bit more believable I decided to start my blog, Lemmings, upon my return. I am very happy I did.

What prompted you? And why did you decide to turn it into a group blog?

G: It must have been fall of 2005. I knew some philosophers, such as Matt Weiner, who had started blogs. I was curious. One day I noticed a book on blogging on my wife's boss's bookshelf, so I borrowed it. The author turned out to be a right wing nut arguing that blogging was a way to defeat the democrats.

At the time, he was not obviously wrong - democrats were barely recovering from John Kerry's defeat in 2004. He was wildly wrong in the long run, though. Left wing

blogs like Daily Kos have many more readers than their right wing counterparts and are credited with helping build the progressive movement that turned the political tide in America.

Anyway, the book's author also argued that blogging is a helpful tool, and that everyone should blog. I decided to give it a try. I started my blog, Brains, in December 2005. Within a few months, a reader and fellow philosopher of mind pointed out that there was no group blog in philosophy of mind. He suggested that I turn Brains into a group blog. He said he'd like to contribute. He actually took more than two years to write his first post! But many others have contributed in the meantime. You said you are happy you started your blog. What are the benefits?

B: I use my blog to announce conferences, calls for papers, and other related events, to post pictures from conferences and to inform readers when I upload new papers to my website. It's also a great place to try out new ideas and get feedback on my work. Blogging makes people aware of your existence. I like to think that I write for an audience. Sometimes the audience consists of just a few referees. However, blogging increases the chance that your work gets read. Certainly, my citation indices went way up after I started my blog. I also suddenly got more invites to volumes and confer-

ences. And more people became interested in my work. But blogging also has other more important benefits. It's a great way to increase awareness of the inequalities which still exist in our profession, for instance, awareness of the sort of male favoritism that is characteristic of the field as a whole. Some larger blogs familiarly serve other purposes as well, for example, they announce philosophy jobs and moves and discuss problems internal to the profession (e.g. unprofessional refereeing procedures).

What are the benefits for you? Do you think some of these benefits will disappear as the popularity of alternative ways of sharing one's interests with others, for instance Facebook, increases?

G: I agree with your list of benefits. I also find blogging useful to find and connect with other people interested in my area, and to promote ideas that I find worthwhile and underappreciated. By the way, I enjoy your posts against male favoritism. I'd like to think I don't have that bias, but it's good to be reminded of it, so I can counteract it when I can.

I don't think Facebook and other tools change the usefulness of blogging. Facebook is a way to communicate with "friends", whereas blogging is a way to communicate with anyone interested in the topic. They serve different purposes.

Can you say more about your audience? What do you know about

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them? Do you track their number and location?

B: I used to look very closely at my stats but I have lost interest in them lately. I do occasionally look at them but now mostly at overall numbers. I have about 200 hits a day, more when I actually post and when others link to my posts and less when I take a break from blogging. About 70% of my readers are from the US and Canada, about 20% are from Australia and Great Britain, and about 10% are from other countries. I get really excited whenever I see a new country on the list. Today and yesterday I had readers from the US, Great Britain, Unknown, Canada, Australia, Germany, Hong Kong, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Spain, New Zealand, Czech Republic, China, Malaysia, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, Italy, Thailand, Romania, Sweden, France, Colombia, Austria, Israel, Serbia and Montenegro, Costa Rica, Portugal, Peru, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Turkey, India, Russian Federation, Pakistan, Iran, Islamic Republic, Belgium and Switzerland. It's exciting that there are people all over the globe who actually have an interest in reading my posts. It's almost like having friends all over the globe, except I usually don't know who they are. But they know me -- they know what I think, what I do, what I like, and what I look like, and they can communicate with me by commenting on my posts or by sending me emails -- and they often do. I like corresponding with people in all sorts of ways. Even though a lot of my correspondence is professional, corresponding with

people is also my hobby. It's what I like to do.

What are your readers like? And what are your co-bloggers like? Have you had any trouble cooperating with your co-bloggers?

G: My readers are like yours, I think. People with some interest in the topic, from all over the world -- mostly from industrialized countries. Some faculty, some students, some others. My co-bloggers are 22 faculty and students interested in philosophy of mind and related sciences. Some are old friends of mine, others are simply readers who asked to contribute. I made new friends that way!

If anyone who seems competent asks me to be a contributor, I am happy to give them an account. Their name appears on the side bar after they publish their first post. If I had more time, I would invite more people to contribute. Hopefully some day I will. I've never had any problem with contributors, and only rarely with commenters. Sometimes I get spam comments -- either people trying to advertise something, or people who spout nonsense about a post. I moderate the comments, so none of the spam appears on the blog.

One of the common objections I hear is that blogging takes too much time. This is not at all my experience. I spend very little time blogging -- maybe one or two hours a week -- and when I do, I often get good feedback that is very much worth the time. How do you feel about this? How much time does

blogging take away from you?

B: These days just an hour or two a week, but when I was more active on the blogging scene I would spend a few hours a day. I like to contribute to other blogs too. I glance at at least 20 blogs a day and scrutinize maybe three of them. I like to know what's going on. And it's interesting how the style and content can vary from blog to blog, or even from post to post on the same blog. Sometimes reading blogs is like reading celebrity gossip columns and other times it's like reading professional philosophy or science journals or newspapers. There are also those blogs that are more like diaries. I totally dig those. They are cool. Not many philosophy blogs are like that, though. And those that *are* like that tend to be anonymous, for good reasons. Here are a few of my favorites:

<http://bitchphd.blogspot.com/>
<http://pecunium.livejournal.com/>
<http://youngfemalescientist.blogspot.com/>

I also really like this blog for its uniqueness:

<http://nosnowhere.wordpress.com/>

Maybe some day I will start an anonymous live journal. Or maybe I already did :-). What are your blogger aspirations? Do you aspire to become bigger? To write on more general topics? To gain more influence on the practices of our profession?

G: I'm busy enough with the phi-

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philosophy of mind and related sciences. I'd like the field to become more rigorous and move towards a greater integration of psychology and neuroscience. The empirical side of the field is still largely framed by the ideas of the old greats: Fodor, Dennett, the Churchlands, etc.; Classical computationalism vs. connectionism. But this is a confused and simplistic dichotomy! They established the field, but they left many foundational issues unresolved and poorly understood. I think we have the conceptual tools and empirical evidence to make progress; we just need to deploy them carefully and see where we can go with them. There are a bunch of young people, including several Brains contributors, who are working on foundational issues. Some of them are still in graduate school. Blogging helps spreading the word, I hope. If I find some time, I might try to build Brains into a bigger blog, with more contributors. Or

maybe someone else will read this and volunteer to help? There is a lot to do!

What about you? Where do you go from here, blogging-wise?

B: I would like to blog more about male favoritism and other kinds of favoritism in philosophy. Before I had tenure I thought it was a bit risky to blog too much about these issues. But I guess I can do what I want now. Now I just need to find the time to do it. My hope is that blogging about these issues can change things around in our profession. I hope that when I retire in 40 years, there are 50% women in most top philosophy departments, 50% women among the highest paid philosophers, 50% women contributing to volumes and journals, etc. As it is now, there are about 21% women in top philosophy departments, 0 - 10% women among the highest paid philosophers, and about 15% female contributions to mainstream philosophy volumes (I just got done mak-

ing the calculations for Oxford volumes and hope to write a post about this soon). I hope blogging about these issues can help to change this picture.

I am off to Vancouver now. But I do have one last question before leaving. If someone out there wants to start a blog, what should they keep in mind? Which mistakes should they avoid? Any other useful advice to potential or actual bloggers?

G: Consider joining a group blog and practicing a bit. For some people, contributing to a group blog might be enough. If there is no group blog in your area, start one! If you want to start your own blog, aim at quality and look for an edge (a specialty, a different perspective, etc.). Finally, link to other blogs and online sources and ask others to link to your blog. The more connected you are, the more readers will find you.

Philosophers in Fiction

Last time we called your attention to Isabel Dalhousie, the heroine of Alexander McCall Smith's mystery series set in Edinburgh. She is the editor of the (fictional) *Review of Applied Ethics*. (Aestheticians might also take interest in McCall's real-life role as an inept bassoonist in Edinburgh's Really Terrible Orchestra. Here is an account he wrote for the NY Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/09/opinion/09mccallsmith.html>).

Here are two more fictional philosophers to add to your list.

Rebecca Goldstein's best-seller *The Mind-Body Problem*, published in 1983, recounts graduate student Renee Feuer's trials and tribulations pursuing a Ph.D. in Philosophy at Princeton University. Since Gold-

stein herself earned a Ph.D. from this prestigious department, many rightly view her novel as a roman a clef.

Memoirist Emily Fox Gordon recently published the novel *It Will Come to Me*. Her heroine, Ruth, is a blocked writer married to Ben Blau, chair of the Philosophy Department at the fictional Lola Dees Institute in Spangler, Texas. Since author Gordon is in real life married to George Sher, a moral philosopher in the philosophy department at Rice University, this too may be a novel that is informative about real people and places!



A Philosopher Praises the Manual Arts

Matthew B. Crawford, who holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Chicago and who owns and operates a motorcycle repair shop, has written the bestseller *Shop Class as Soul Craft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work* (Penguin, 2009). Initially after earning his degree, Crawford worked for a think-tank in the Washington, D.C. area. His job was to summarize scientific papers. While this might sound like an intellectually stimulating job, Crawford reports that his required quota soon rose to 23 summaries per day – way too much to permit absorbing and understanding the material he read. Reflecting on the nature of rewarding work, Crawford realized the special value of jobs that cannot be outsourced, as well as the appeal of work done with the hands. Not only manufacturing but also a good deal of intellectual work is now outsourced. Think of all the call-

ing centers that connect you with a very smart techie in India! Crawford's book is a sustained argument against this trend. His webpage reports that "*Shop Class as Soulcraft* seeks to restore the honor of the manual trades as a life worth choosing." A little farther down on that page we are told that "I [Crawford] am currently a fellow at the [Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture](http://www.instituteforadvancedstudiesinculture.com/) at the University of Virginia." But he is also co-owner of Shockoe Moto (<http://shockoemoto.com/>), so he continues at least in part to live his vision.

Here is a link to the original article in *The New Atlantis* on which Crawford based his book:

<http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/shop-class-as-soulcraft> The site will also take you to various radio interviews and newspaper reviews, as well as to Crawford's home page.

UMSL Delegation to SIUC Philosophical Collaborations Conference Trumpets Wittgenstein

For sixteen consecutive years the SIU-Carbondale Philosophy Department has hosted a one-of-a-kind event: "Philosophical Collaborations", an annual conference for faculty and graduate student interaction. This year the conference was attended by UMSL's Waldemar Rohloff and Tom Knoten who presented papers on the topic: 'Interpretations of the Motto to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*'. Taken together, the papers represent contrasting views on the meaning of the motto and the *Tractatus* as a whole with Tom advocating a

"straightforward reading" and Waldemar advocating a "dialectical reading".

Robert Hahn, SIU-Carbondale philosophy faculty member and conference organizer, showcases the conference as an event which fosters an alternative model of research in philosophy and enhances graduate level education through mentoring and scholarly interaction between faculty and graduate students. It is hoped that UMSL can continue to send faculty/graduate students pairs to future installments of the conference.

Alumni & Student News

Kathy (Collum) Wright graduated from UMSL in 1980. She majored in philosophy and served as the department's Undergraduate Assistant. She graduated from Washington University's Law School in 1983 and has held a variety of interesting positions ("former prosecuto and public defender, formerly taught at Webster, formerly at Bryan Cave") before landing as Staff Attorney for the Chapter 13 Bankruptcy Trustee for the Eastern District of Missouri (from 1996 to the present). Kathy is married and happily childless; she and her husband Jim live in Richmond Heights with their parrot Midas.

Robert Earle, a recent UMSL graduate, is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in philosophy at SUNY – Buffalo. Robert is flourishing on all fronts! He recently became engaged to his girlfriend Jen Hopkins. And he sent the following update on his dissertation research:

"I am writing a dissertation now on the aesthetics of nature, mostly on debates regarding cognitivism/non-cognitivism, the question of 'positive aesthetics,' and the interplay between ethics and aesthetics. I am just beginning work on it this semester though, so I don't have any precise position to share at this time. I am currently in the second year of a two-year interdisciplinary fellowship through the National Science Foundation devoted to ecological restoration, which has been very educational and intriguing. If you have any students you think might be interested in that program they can check it out at: <http://www.erie.buffalo.edu/educationIGERT.php> .

I am very happy to have Carolyn [Korsmeyer] on my dissertation committee and my advisor is Ken Shockley, who focuses on Environmental Ethics and is involved with the NSF program my fellowship is through. Also, as part of a Canadian-exchange requirement of the fellowship, I will be following through on an opportunity to travel to Edmonton, Alberta this January and study for a semester with Allen Carlson."

Are you an alum or current student with news to share? Please keep in touch and let us know what you're up to! Send an email to philosophy@umsl.edu.

Faculty Briefs

Note: Additional works and full bibliographic information can be found on faculty curriculum vitae posted on their bio pages at <http://www.umsl.edu/~philo/Faculty/faculty.html>

Anna Alexandrova presented a paper "The Contribution of Models to Empirical Successes" at a conference Models and Simulations 3: Emergence Computation and Reality, held at the University of Virginia in March 2009. She will be speaking on values and the science of wellbeing at the University of Colorado-Boulder in October 2009 and the Central Division of the American Philosophical Association in February 2010 in Chicago.

Brit Brogaard spent the past academic year on leave at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia. While there, she continued her research program addressing issues in the philosophy of perception, color, centered worlds, and perspectival theories of truth. Many publications have resulted, among them are these:

"Strong Representationalism and Centered Content", *Philosophical Studies* (2009).

"Context and Content: Pragmatics in Two-Dimensional Semantics", Keith Allan and Kasia Jaszczolt, eds. *Cambridge Handbook of Pragmatics* (2009).

"Colour", in D. Pritchard, ed. *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Philosophy* (2009).

"Disjunctivism", in D. Pritchard, ed. *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Philosophy* (2009).

"Descriptions", in D. Pritchard, ed. *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Philosophy* (2009).

"Centered Worlds and the Content of Perception", Blackwell Companion, Steven Hales, ed., (2009).

"Perspectival Truth and Color Primitivism", C. Wright and N. Pedersen, eds. *New Waves in Truth and Pluralism* (2009).

"Knowledge-How: A Unified Account", *Knowing How: Essays on Knowledge, Mind, and Action*, J. Bengson and M. Moffett eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press (2009).

"Color in the Theory of Colors? Or: Are Philosophers' Colors All White?", *The Center Must Not Hold: White Women on The Whiteness of Philosophy*, George Yancy, ed. (2009).

"Primitive Knowledge Disjunctivism", *Philosophical Issues*. Presented at, among other places, the Pacific division meeting of the APA 2009.

Brogaard has also accrued another honor (and responsibility!) She will become American editor for *Erkenntnis*, a prestigious philosophy journal founded in 1930 by Hans Reichenbach and Rudolph Carnap, famed philosophers of science and members of the Vienna Circle.

John Brunero will be presented a paper "Means-Ends Coherence and Unmodifiable Intentions" at the 2009 Central States Philosophical Association Meeting in DeKalb, IL. Oct. 9-10.

Robert Northcott has had the following papers accepted since the last issue of our newsletter:

-- "Natural-born determinists: a new defense of causation as probability-raising," forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*

-- "Is actual difference making actually different?", forthcoming in *Journal of Philosophy*

-- "On Lewis, Schaffer and the non-reductive evaluation of counterfactuals," forthcoming in *Theoria*

He has also given talks on genetic drift, on selection and fitness, and on experimental philosophy, at a range of venues: two in St Louis, one at the University of Kansas, and one over the summer at the British Society for the Philosophy of Science in the UK. In October he will be giving a talk on explanation in social science in Boulder, Colorado, and then in December a talk on genetic drift at the Eastern APA in New York.

Gualtiero Piccinini has had the following papers accepted: "First-Person Data, Publicity, and Self-Measurement." Forthcoming in *Philosophers' Imprint*. (35 pp. typescript.) "Information without Truth" (with Andrea Scarantino). Forthcoming in a special issue of *Metaphilosophy* on the Philosophy of Information. (23 pp. typescript.) "Scientific Methods Ought to Be Public, and Descriptive Experience Sampling Is One of Them." Forthcoming in a symposium in the journal *Psyche* on *Describing Inner Experience? Proponent Meets Skeptic*, by R. T. Hurlburt and E. Schwitzgebel. (18 pp. typescript.) He has also been awarded an extremely prestigious NSF grant to support his project "Computation in the Brain: Towards a Mechanistic Theory of Cognition". The grant goes from August 1, 2009 to July 31, 2009. The total award, \$120,312, will cover not only Piccinini's course buyouts and summer salary, but also a graduate research assistant for a year (including her tuition), two consultants, materials and supplies, plus indirect costs.

Stephanie Ross has written a symposium piece, "When Philosophers Want to Have it All:

Comments on Ron Moore's Syncretic Theory of Natural Beauty" that will appear in the Oct. 2009 issue of *Ethics, Place and Environment* (Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 357-364). She has also reviewed Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson's book *Functional Beauty* (Oxford University Press, 2008) for *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2009.07.06).

Fourth Annual Gateway Graduate Conference

The fourth annual Gateway Graduate Conference took place March 6-8. It was a smashing success. The conference, like its predecessors, was organized by members of the Philosophers' Forum, the Philosophy Department's organization for graduate students and undergraduate majors.

The theme of this year's conference was The Metaphysics of Mind. Forum members sifted through submissions and selected 9 graduate students from other campuses (University of Arizona, Brown University, Boston University, Arizona State University, Syracuse University, SUNY Buffalo, Notre Dame University, UM – Columbia, and Washington University) to participate in the program. Each visitor presented a paper, with students from UMSL's M.A. program serving as commentators.

Fri. night, an eminent philosopher of mind, Terry Horgan from the University of Arizona, gave a keynote talk titled "Updating the Agenda for the Metaphysics of Mind." Prof. Horgan was a gracious and active participant throughout the conference, attending papers and interacting with the assembled students.

While this year's Gateway Graduate Conference will be a hard act to follow, the department is already looking forward to next year's incarnation.

Call For Papers

Fifth Annual Gateway Graduate Conference

March 5-7, 2010

Keynote Speaker: Kieran Setiya, University of Pittsburgh

The graduate students of the University of Missouri-St. Louis invite high quality paper submissions in all areas of philosophy, but are particularly interested in papers on metaethics, ethics, and other areas of moral philosophy.

Submissions must be authored by graduate or postgraduate students. Papers must be suitable for a 25- to 30-minute presentation (roughly 10-12 pages). Papers will be blind-reviewed, so please remove all personally identifying information, including name and institution, before submission.

Email submissions to UMSLGatewayConference@gmail.com in .pdf, .doc, or .rtf format by **January 4, 2010**. Include name, paper title, university affiliation, and contact information (phone and email) in your email, as well as an abstract of 150 words or less. (Notifications will be sent out by the beginning of February.)

Please contact Lisa Cagle with any question at llfhc@umsl.edu

Let us hear from you...

Please send us your thoughts about the newsletter, ideas for future issues, and material for the news columns to philosophy@umsl.edu.

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