Departmental Seminars

Seminars meet on **Thursdays at 4.30pm in Seminar Room 2**, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Free School Lane, Cambridge. There is tea beforehand in Seminar Room 1 at 4.15pm.

Organised by Stephen John.

19 January Timo Airaksinen (University of Helsinki; Clare Hall, Cambridge)

Berkeley's Siris: light, fire and spirit

26 January Nigel Pleasants (University of Exeter)

Wittgenstein, ethics and moral certainty

2 February Vladimir Jankovic (University of Manchester)

The indoors and the forging of climatological citizenship during the medical

Enlightenment

9 February Ann Whittle (Faculty of Philosophy, Cambridge)

Causal nominalism

16 February Matthew Ratcliffe (Durham University)

Commonsense psychology and interpersonal interaction

23 February Bruce Moran (University of Nevada)

What's in a name? Paracelsians, Paracelsianism and the imagination

2 March Rachel Cooper (Lancaster University)

On the pathological

9 March Jacqueline Stedall (The Queen's College, Oxford)

Invisible mathematicians: Thomas Harriot and John Pell

Seminar Programmes are sent out at the start of every term to the names on our mailing list. Please contact the Department if you would like to be added to or removed from the mailing list, or if you change your address.

Seminar information is also available on our website at www.hps.cam.ac.uk/seminars

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Abstracts

19 January Timo Airaksinen (University of Helsinki; Clare Hall, Cambridge)

Berkeley's Siris: light, fire and spirit

Berkeley's *Siris* (1744) may be an unduly neglected treatise. It reveals and confirms its author's philosophical achievements. The greatest of them is his double aspect account of causality. *Siris* is based on the distinction between natural causes, which are mere regularities between phenomena, and agent causality, which is an efficient force. Berkeley tries to show that agents can influence the world by using aethereal corpuscles as their instruments. These particles are both material and in some sense immaterial or occult because they follow and do not follow the laws of nature. *Siris* is a rhetorical text which uses analogy, metaphor, paradox, and ambiguity to illuminate the reader. The point is that the universe is ambiguous with respect to its material and immaterial essence. The world is at the same time scientific and material and metaphysical and immaterial. Berkeley does not always keep those two aspects apart from each other as he tries to convince the reader that such an ambiguity is both unavoidable and basically incomprehensible. He fights a losing battle against scientific realism and materialism. This I take to be the key to the mystery of *Siris*.

26 January Nigel Pleasants (University of Exeter)

Wittgenstein, ethics and moral certainty

Wittgenstein's (later) philosophical reflections on language, meaning, sense and nonsense have been taken as a source from which to construct various pictures of our ethical and political situation. Notoriously, Wittgenstein's philosophy has long been thought by some of his critics and advocates to entail a moral and political conservatism that follows upon his supposed conceptual conservatism. But others have perceived in Wittgenstein's philosophy the conceptual resources for a critical social theory (Habermas, Giddens) and liberal political philosophy (Mouffe, Flathman). And yet others (Rossi-Landi, Rubinstein) have seen in Wittgenstein's philosophy a proto-Marxism. All of these readings share a view of Wittgenstein as a quasi social and political theorist. More recently, a view of the ethical implications of Wittgenstein's philosophy that is predicated on reading Wittgenstein in an anti-theoretical, 'therapeutic', manner, has begun to crystallise. This view – the intrinsically-ethical reading – derives from the prominent New Wittgenstein school of exegesis. Proponents of the intrinsically-ethical reading reject the traditional view of ethical and political action being confined to certain spheres of public and personal life, and depict human beings as inherently morally and politically responsible beings in virtue of their use of language.

I disagree with both 'traditional' and 'new' readings of the ethical import of Wittgenstein's philosophy, and will outline some of my objections to these kinds of reading. I aver that Wittgenstein's later philosophy is not in itself about, nor does it contain any particular implications for, ethics; however, I do think that it can be of great value in helping us think about ethical matters. I shall demonstrate one way in which this might be pursued. Drawing on the epistemic anthropology of *On Certainty*, I shall introduce and outline the significance of the phenomenon of 'moral certainty' in relation to philosophical puzzlement over the badness of death and wrongness of killing.

2 February Vladimir Jankovic (University of Manchester)

The indoors and the forging of climatological citizenship during the medical Enlightenment

The paper explains the late Enlightenment medical environmentalism as shaped by the concern over social and bodily exposures to external hazards. I show that this concern derives from a medical moralization of luxury and a consequent, literal and cultural, 'emplacements' of individuals within a putative polity defined by the medical and other impact of climate. I particularly stress the construction of pathogenic indoors and its relationship with the theory of physiological responses to the 'outside' that helped create a vocational niche for the practitioners versed in administering the airs, climates, and travel as means of cure.

The interest in indoor climates coincided with the associational culture of the new publics. While we know much about how boudoirs, coffeehouses, libraries, and lecturing theatres shaped the intellectual content of modernity, little attention has been given to the ways in which these spaces affected the *bodies* of the new publics. Habermasian public spaces and Foucaldian heterotopias could have been very smelly places. That this has been unnoticed by historians, who were bent on discovering environmental threat where they imagined it was most likely to emerge, is all the more puzzling given the contemporaries' interest in the truly breath-taking achievements of the Enlightenment. The eighteenth century commentators had plenty to say about claustrophobic dizziness, fainting, overheating, and sudden exposures to cold during the nights out. After the medical opinion claimed such conditions to be treatable, the questioning of the indoors began to claim urgency in the European social commentary, first with regard to overcrowding, and then as an epitome of the unhealthy living *per se*.

9 February Ann Whittle (Faculty of Philosophy, Cambridge)

Causal nominalism

The causal theory of properties is standardly combined with a realist's ontology of universals or tropes. In this paper, I consider an uncharted alternative – a nominalist causal theory of properties. I discuss advantages and disadvantages of the resulting theory of properties, and explore the Rylean understanding of causal powers that emerges.

16 February Matthew Ratcliffe (Durham University)

Commonsense psychology and interpersonal interaction

Recent philosophical work on interpersonal understanding emphasises an ability to attribute propositional attitudes, principally beliefs and desires, to other people. This ability is often referred to as a 'folk' or 'commonsense' psychology. I will begin this talk by addressing the question of what the terms 'folk' and 'commonsense' actually mean and will suggest that there are several different senses lurking in the recent literature. In one sense, 'belief-desire' psychology is a description of what everyday interpersonal understanding most centrally involves, a description which is not arrived at via empirical scientific studies but is, rather, presupposed by them. I go on to argue that this description is impoverished in several respects and that that it can be revised, elaborated and supplemented by drawing on insights from the phenomenological tradition. My primary focus will be on how accounts of belief-desire psychology fail to accommodate the extent to which interpersonal understanding is characterised by structures of interaction, rather than by detached scrutiny of one person by another.

23 February Bruce Moran (University of Nevada)

What's in a name? Paracelsians, Paracelsianism and the imagination

Today, outside the German-speaking world, we have studies focused upon English, French and Italian Paracelsians. Spanish Paracelsians have also been discovered. The sincerity of these studies cannot be questioned. But future scholarship needs now to be much more concerned with questions of authenticity. And in this regard we need to ask whether, or to what extent, thinking in terms of 'Paracelsian' and 'Paracelsianism' has actually committed us to a descriptive language that seems indispensable while leading us to believe in the solidity of an illusion. I want to suggest the need for a new kind of 'cultural clearing' in the forest of 'Paracelsian' studies so that we might at least entertain the possibility of different relationships in thinking about how to describe this part of early modern medicine and science.

2 March Rachel Cooper (Lancaster University)

On the pathological

I aim to provide an account of what makes a condition pathological, as opposed to, say, a moral failing or normal variation. This is a question of key importance because we treat those who suffer from disorders with special consideration – we may think they deserve treatment or disability payments, we may excuse wrong-doing on their part, and so on. I propose an account according to which by 'pathological condition' we mean a condition that it is a bad thing to have, that is such that we consider the afflicted person to be unlucky, and that can potentially be appropriately medically treated. All three criteria must be fulfilled for a condition to be pathological. The criterion that for a condition to be pathological it must be a bad thing is required to distinguish the biologically different from the disordered. The claim that the sufferer must be unlucky is needed to distinguish pathology from conditions that are unpleasant but normal, for example teething. Finally, the claim that for a condition to be pathological it must be potentially medically treatable is needed to distinguish disorders from other types of misfortune, for example economic problems and legal problems.

9 March Jacqueline Stedall (The Queen's College, Oxford)

Invisible mathematicians: Thomas Harriot and John Pell

Thomas Harriot (c.1560-1621) and John Pell (1611-1685) were both regarded by their friends and contemporaries as brilliant mathematicians, yet neither makes much of an appearance in most later histories of the subject. This is largely because Harriot never published, while Pell published only in curious and rather secretive ways. Both, however, left large quantities of manuscripts, which are only now receiving full attention. In this seminar I will offer a reassessment of their (interconnected) lives and work, leading in turn to some observations about new ways of approaching the history of mathematics.

From Generation to Reproduction

This seminar, which is funded by our Wellcome Trust enhancement award in the history of medicine, will be a forum for discussion of how, since 1500, our world of reproductive practices and controversy was created.

We meet on **Tuesdays from 5pm to 6.30pm in Seminar Room 2.** Tea is available from 4.40 in Seminar Room 1. All welcome! Organised by Lauren Kassell.

24 January Gayle Davis (University of Glasgow)

Stillbirth registration and conceptions of the deadborn, c.1900-1950

31 January Wendy Churchill (Wellcome Centre, UCL)

Sex, age and the female reproductive body in early modern British medicine

7 February Charlotte Augst (Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority)

Is law important? Making sense of reproductive technologies in Germany and

Britain – a discourse analysis

14 February Bernardino Fantini (University of Geneva)

The germ is the life and the life is the germ: Louis Pasteur's explanation of

infectious diseases and his biological philosophy

History of Medicine

History of Medicine seminars are held on **Tuesdays at 5pm in Seminar Room 1**. Tea is available from 4.40pm. All welcome.

Early Medicine and Natural Philosophy

Organised by Lauren Kassell

28 February Sandra Cavallo (Royal Holloway, University of London)

What were surgical tracts about? The writings of an ordinary Italian surgeon in the

early eighteenth century

History of Modern Medicine and Biology

Organised by Tatjana Buklijas and Soraya de Chadarevian

21 February Bernd Gausemeier (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin)

Genealogy and human heredity around 1900

7 March Emese Lafferton (HPS, Cambridge)

Inventing the 'Magyar': ethnography, physical anthropology and eugenics in

Hungary around 1900

Psy Studies

History of Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Allied Sciences

Seminars are held fortnightly on **Wednesdays at 5pm in Seminar Room 1.** Tea is available from 4.40pm. All welcome.

Organised this year by Emese Lafferton, Andreas Mayer and Deborah Thom.

1 February Alexander Etkind (Department of Slavonic Studies, Cambridge)

Psychoanalysis in dark times: Leon Trotsky and his daughter

15 February Aude Fauvel (EHESS, Paris)

'In the world of the mad': patients' testimonies and the rise of anti-psychiatry in

19th-century France

1 March Daniel Beer (Royal Holloway, University of London)

'Microbes of the mind': moral contagion in late Imperial Russia

15 March Patricia Soley Beltran (University Ramon Llull, Barcelona)

Sex, subjectivity and agency: lessons from the sociology of transsexualism

Criticism and Culture

Seminars are held fortnightly on **Wednesdays at 5pm in the Faculty of English, 9 West Road.** All welcome. Organised by Mary Jacobus and David Hillman.

25 January Margot Waddell (Tavistock Clinic; British Psycho-Analytic Society)

Narcissism: an adolescent disorder?

8 February Irit Rogoff (Goldsmiths College, London)

What is a theorist?

22 February Cora Kaplan (Queen Mary, London)

Bibliophilia

8 March Sarah Wilson (Courtauld Institute, London)

The visual world of French theory

Latin Therapy

The Latin Therapy Group meets on **Fridays at 4pm in the HPS Lodge** to practise the art of translation, improve our Latin grammar, and determine who deserves more sympathy on account of the difficulty of their sources – all in a mutually supportive environment! Well-known (usually classical) texts of relevance to the history of science are studied, as well as texts on which members of the group are working. Select meetings will be held in historic college libraries, with a session to be scheduled at Gonville and Caius during Lent Term. The language tutor is Debby Banham. All are welcome to attend.

For more information, and to be added to the mailing list, please contact Patrick Boner. Information is also available on the Latin Therapy website, **www.hps.cam.ac.uk/latintherapy**.

Cabinet of Natural History

Seminars are held on **Mondays at 1pm in Seminar Room 1.** You are welcome to bring your lunch with you. Organised by Francis Reid.

23 January Ernst Hamm (York University, Canada)

Erudition and geology: the Temple of Serapis revisited

30 January Sophie Forgan (University of Teesside; Captain Cook Memorial Museum)

Splashing about in popularisation: Penguins, Pelicans and the common reader in

mid-20th century Britain

6 February Natalie Kaoukji (HPS, Cambridge)

A natural history of machines: John Wilkins' mathematical magic

13 February Margaret Olszewski (HPS, Cambridge)

Romantic science and a passion for botanical design: the life and garden of Izabela

Czartoryska

20 February Carla Nappi (Princeton University; Needham Research Institute, Cambridge)

Eating the two-legged sheep: man, nature and analogy in early modern Chinese

natural history

27 February Anne Secord (HPS, Cambridge)

Hotbeds and cool fruits: the unnatural cultivation of the 18th-century cucumber

6 March David Kohn (Drew University, Madison)

Fabricating the *Origin*

13 March David Allan Feller (HPS, Cambridge)

Darwin and dogs

Epistemology Reading Group

We will be reading from Tamar Szabó Gendler & John Hawthorne (eds) *Conceivability and Possibility* (paperback, OUP, 2002). Two copies are on reserve in the Whipple Library. Each meeting of the group will focus on an article, with a member of the group offering a preliminary evaluation, followed by a general discussion.

Meetings will take place on **Thursdays at 2pm in Seminar Room 1** and are open to all. Organised by Peter Lipton.

19 January John Campbell, 'Berkeley's Puzzle'

26 January David Chalmers, 'Does Conceivability Entail Possibility?', secs 1-6

2 February David Chalmers, 'Does Conceivability Entail Possibility?', secs 7-12

9 February Michael Della Rocca, 'Essentialism versus Essentialism'

16 February Gideon Rosen, 'A Study in Modal Deviance'

23 February Alan Sidelle, 'On the Metaphysical Contingency of Laws of Nature'

2 March Stephen Yablo, 'Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda', secs 1-13

9 March Stephen Yablo, 'Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda', secs 14-24

STS Workshop

Meetings are held on Thursdays, 12noon to 1.30pm in Seminar Room 1. All welcome.

Organised by Jon Agar, Ipek Demir, Rob Doubleday and Martin Kusch.

The meetings in Lent Term 2006 have the common theme of 'Kuhn and the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge'. (A conference with this title will take place in HPS at the end of Lent Term.) Copies of all the texts will be on reserve in the Whipple Library.

- Peter Lipton will introduce and lead a discussion of T.S. Kuhn, 'Dubbing and Redubbing: The Vulnerability of Rigid Designation', in C. Wade Savage (ed.), *Scientific Theories* (Minn. Studies in the Philosophy of Science XIV), University of Minn., 1990, 298-318; and S.B. Barnes, 'On the Extensions of Concepts and the Growth of Knowledge', *Sociological Review* 30, 1, 1982, 23-44
- 2 February **Jim Secord** will introduce and lead a discussion of T.S. Kuhn, 'The Relations between History and the History of Science' and 'Mathematical vs. Experimental Traditions in the History of Physical Science', in Kuhn, *The Essential Tension*, Chicago, 1977, 31-65 & 127-161
- Martin Kusch will introduce and lead a discussion of S.B. Barnes, 'Thomas Kuhn and the Problem of Social Order in Science', in T. Nickles (ed.), *Thomas Kuhn*, CUP, 2003, 122-141; and S. Fuller, 'Being There with Thomas Kuhn', *History and Theory* 31, 1992, 241-75
 - 2 March Simon Schaffer will introduce and lead a discussion of T.S. Kuhn, 'Historical Structure of Scientific Discovery', in Kuhn, *The Essential Tension*, Chicago, 1977, 165-177. The paper is available online at http://www.augustana.edu/users/Psmccallum/Readings%202005/kuhn.pdf
 - 9 March **John Forrester** will introduce and lead a discussion of his paper 'Kuhn and Psychoanalysis'

Reading Kant

We meet on **Tuesdays**, **1.00-2.30pm in the HPS Lodge**, starting on 17 January. We will continue to read the *Critique of Pure Reason*. For the first meeting Angela Chew will introduce the Transcendental Deduction, version B, section 2, §§15-20, B129-B143 (pp. 245-252 in the Guyer-Wood edition, and pp. 151-160 in the N.K. Smith edition).

Organised by Yoon Choi, Alix Cohen and Marina Frasca-Spada.

Judith Butler Reading Group

The Judith Butler Reading Group meets on **Fridays from 11.30am-1pm in the HPS Lodge**, starting from 27 January.

This term we will be reading Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* 10th Anniversary Edition. London: Routledge, 1999. (Whipple Library Z.1450 A,B). For more information, please contact Leon Rocha.

Science and Literature Reading Group

This term we are reading texts on the theme of psychology. We meet fortnightly on **Mondays at 7.30pm** in the upstairs seminar room at Darwin College – please note the change of day and time. For further information please contact Katy Price or Melanie Keene. Everybody is welcome.

- 23 January John Haslam, Illustrations of madness (1810)
 - Text available online:
 - http://www.collphyphil.org/HMDLSubweb/Pages/H/HaslamJ/illmadPgAccess.htm
- 6 February Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919) and E.T.A. Hoffman, 'The Sand Man' (1817)

Texts available online: http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~amtower/uncanny.html

- http://gaslight.mtroyal.ca/sandman.htm
- 20 February A.R. Luria, The mind of a mnemonist: a little book about a vast memory (English

translation first published 1968). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.

- (£11.95 from amazon.co.uk, ISBN 0674576225)
- 6 March Nicholas Wright, Mrs Klein (1988). London: Nick Hern Books, 1995.

(£8.99 from amazon.co.uk, ISBN 1854592327)

Wittgenstein Reading Group

Meetings take place fortnightly on **Tuesdays**, **3.00-4.30pm in the HPS Lodge**. Copies of the readings will be made available in a reserve folder in the Whipple Library. For further information please contact Lorenzo Bernasconi or Bill Grundy.

24 January Wittgenstein and Politics: Crary, Alice, 'Wittgenstein's philosophy in relation to

political thought' in Crary and Read (eds)(2000) The New Wittgenstein. London:

- Routledge. pp.118-145.
- 7 February Wittgenstein and Literature: Huemer, Wolfgang, 'Wittgenstein, language and

philosophy of literature' in Gibson and Huemer (eds) (2004) The Literary

- Wittgenstein. London: Routledge. pp.1-13.
- 21 February Wittgenstein and the Sociology of Science: Lynch, Michael, 'Extending

Wittgenstein: The Pivotal Move from Epistemology to the Sociology of Science' (pp.215-265); Bloor, David, 'Left and Right Wittgensteinians' (pp.266-282); and Lynch, Michael, 'From the "Will to Theory" to the Discursive Collage: A Reply to Bloor's "Left and Right Wittgensteinians" (pp.283-300) in Pickering, Andrew (ed) (1992) *Science as Practice and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago

Press.

7 March Wittgenstein and Ethics: Tilghman, Ben, 'Morality, Human Understanding, and

the Limits of Language' in McCarthy and Stidd (eds) (2001) Wittgenstein in

America. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp.237-249.

Modal Logic Reading Group

The Modal Logic Reading Group meets on **Mondays at 3.30pm in the HPS Lodge.** This term we will be reading the section on logic in Boolos, Burges and Jeffreys *Computability and Logic* (Cambridge: CUP). For more information, please contact Paul Dicken.

History of Science Workshop

The History of Science Workshop is a seminar group devoted to peer discussion of work in progress on the history and historiography of science, for example PhD chapters, dissertations, articles intended for publication, or conference papers. The seminar aims to provide an informal arena for the exchange of ideas among students of the history of science in HPS and elsewhere.

We meet on **alternate Wednesdays at 1pm in Seminar Room 1**. Papers are circulated by e-mail before each meeting, and a copy is left in our box file in the Whipple Library. Please contact Nicky Reeves if you are interested in giving a paper or adding your name to the e-mail list.

25 January Leon Rocha (HPS, Cambridge)

Zhang Jingsheng's Sex Histories (1926), or, on how not to write a book on sex

8 February Stefan Pohl (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona)

The natural energy: a new, total and national science. Thermodynamics, evolution and the construction of a native Spanish scientific culture in the late nineteenth

century

22 February Sophia Davis (HPS, Cambridge)

Making the atomic bomb sublime

8 March Fang Xiaoping (Needham Research Institute, Cambridge)

The advent of barefoot doctors under medical system reorganization: doctor-villager relations in Chinese villages during the Cultural Revolution

Philosophy Workshop

The PW is a fortnightly peer group seminar devoted to the discussion of on-going work by researchers in philosophy. Short papers will normally be circulated by e-mail one week in advance of each meeting, where the author will give a brief synopsis. The aim of the seminar is to provide a forum for informal, constructive interaction amongst those currently engaged in philosophical research.

Meetings take place **every other Wednesday at 1pm in Seminar Room 1**, and are open to all researchers. For more information, or to add your name to the list of e-mail recipients, contact Mark Sprevak.

1 February Mary Leng (St John's College, Cambridge)

Realism about theories and realism about entities

15 February Steve John (HPS, Cambridge)

Trust, placebo effects and knowledge

1 March Nick Tosh (HPS, Cambridge)

Bernard Williams and vindicatory history

15 March David Liggins (Faculty of Philosophy, Cambridge)

From a metaontological point of view

Scepticism Reading Group

Meetings take place fortnightly on **Tuesdays 3.00-4.30pm in the HPS Lodge**. The topic in Lent Term is Robert Nozick's 'modal epistemology'. The first three meetings will focus on one chapter each of Nozick's *Knowledge and Skepticism* (in his *Philosophical Explanations*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1981, 167-288). The last meeting will focus on critical responses to Nozick's epistemology. Nozick's book will be on reserve in the Whipple Library. *This reading group is open only to current PhD and MPhil students in HPS*. For further information contact Martin Kusch.

31 January 'Knowledge' (Nozick 1981: 167-196)

14 February 'Scepticism' (Nozick 1981: 197-247)

28 February 'Evidence' (Nozick 1981: 248-288)

14 March BonJour, L. (1987), 'Nozick, Externalism, and Skepticism', in S. Luper-Foy (ed.), *The Possibility of Knowledge: Nozick and His Critics*, Rowman & Littlefield,

Totawa, 297-313.

Brueckner, A. (1991), 'Unfair to Nozick', Analysis 51: 61-4.

Craig, E. (1989), 'Nozick and the Sceptic: The Thumbnail Version', *Analysis* 49:

161-2.

Williams, M. (2002), 'Nozick on Knowledge and Skepticism', in D. Schnidtz (ed.),

Robert Nozick, Cambridge UP, 131-153.

German Therapy

The German Therapy Group meets on **Fridays from 1pm to 2.30pm in Seminar Room 1** starting on 20 January. Modelled on the successful departmental Latin Therapy group, we aim to acquire and practise skills in reading German for research purposes, and translate texts people have come across in their studies. We welcome beginners as well as those with some knowledge in German language; the level and pace of the class will be tailored to the participants.

For more information, and to be added to the mailing list, please contact the tutor, Angela Breitenbach. The set work this term will be taken from the Rogallas' *German for Academic Purposes*, copies of which may be viewed in the relevant box file in the Whipple Library.

Greek Therapy

The Greek Therapy Group meets on **Fridays from 2.30 to 4pm, in the HPS Lodge**. Laurence Totelin is our language tutor. We are working through *Greek for Beginners* by L.A. Wilding, and *A Primer of Greek Grammar* by Abbott & Mansfield (both published by Duckworth).

For more information contact Nick Tosh.

Heidegger Reading Group

The Heidegger Reading Group meets on **Tuesdays at 1pm in St Catharine's College**, seminar room W1, where we shall be continuing to wrestle with *Being and Time*.

For more information, please contact Paul Dicken.