

Graduate Workshop on Fiction & Philosophy II  
Lund University, Department of Philosophy & Cognitive Science

Thursday October 4<sup>th</sup> 2018 Room LUX: B339

- 9.00-9.15 Welcome and introduction
- 9.15-10.15 Keynote address: Nora Hämäläinen (Centre for Ethics as Study in Human Value, University of Pardubice)
- 10.15-10.30 Coffee break
- 10.30-11.15 Frits Gävertsson (Lund University) – ‘The Cost of Conviction in John Williams’s *Stoner*’
- I argue that given a plausible reading of John Williams’s *Stoner* (1965) the novel throws light on the demands and cost of pursuing a strategy for self-realisation along Platonic lines which seeks unification through the adoption of a single exclusive end in a manner that emulates the Socratic maieutic teacher. The novel does not explicitly argue either for or against such a strategy but rather vividly depicts its difficulties, appeal, and limitations thus leaving the ultimate evaluation up to the reader.
- 11.20-12.05 Tadej Todorović (University of Maribor) – ‘Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed*: A Case Study of Thought Experiments in Fiction’
- I will try to show how we can look at literary fiction through the lens of thought experiments (TEs). There have been some attempts in philosophy to drag fiction under the umbrella of thought experiments; the primary motivation for that is to provide an explanation for how fiction, something completely imaginary, can provide epistemic access to genuine knowledge. I will present my view on the relationship between TEs and fiction, which is the idea that some works of fiction either contain or are built upon TEs, and use Le Guin’s novel *The Dispossessed* to substantiate my theory.
- 12.05-14.00 Lunch
- 14.00-14.45 Diana Neiva (University of Warwick, University of Porto) – ‘*Scream* as philosophy: between fictional horror and true crime’
- The “film as philosophy” (FAP) hypothesis has been vividly debated in recent Anglo-American philosophy. Carroll (2006) and Wartenberg (2007) support that hypothesis by arguing that some films may philosophize through self-reflection. Wes Craven’s *Scream* franchise (1996, 1997, 2000, 2011) established itself as meta-horror cinema by reflecting on the slasher genre. It could be said, then, that the *Scream* films philosophize in a self-reflective way, in Carroll and Wartenberg’s lines of argument. In this presentation I will argue that these films philosophize on the nature of horror, focusing primarily on their reflections about the relationship between fictional horror and true crime.
- 14.50-15.35 Matías Graffigna (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen) – ‘Living in a Marxist Sci-fi world: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Power of Science-Fiction’
- In her masterpiece *The Dispossessed* Science-Fiction author Ursula Le Guin invites us into the experience of an anarcho-communist society. I believe the world depicted in this novel to be a possible realization of Marx’s rather formal-empty idea of communism, understood as no more than the end-stage of human history, “a society without classes and without government”. *The Dispossessed* is a *presentification* through *phantasy* of certain *formal* concepts, by which *intuitive content* is given. Because these concepts belong to *socio-economic theory* (Marxism), content is *necessary* to fully comprehend them. Or so shall I argue with the application of this *phenomenological methodology*.
- 15.35-16.00 Coffee break
- 16.00-16.45 Thérèse Söderström (Lund University) – ‘Reading as a Moral Act’
- In the philosophical debate on the relation between fiction and morality, it is sometimes argued that reading fiction can significantly aid subjects in developing their moral compass. An influential account of this view is found in Martha Nussbaum’s *Love’s Knowledge* (1990), where she also claims that the reading itself takes place in a non-moral sphere. Seeing moral demands as located in social relations, Nussbaum draws up an analogy meant to illustrate and prove that since reading is an act performed in solitude, a relevant counterpart to the reader is missing; leaving the reader located outside of morality and the act of reading a non-moral act. Accepting the main strands of Nussbaum’s account, I argue that her analogy suffers from several serious flaws. I reject her claim, and show that the act of reading and acts in real life are not significantly different to warrant that we regard them as belonging to different moral spheres.
- 16.50-17.35 Erin Kavanagh (University of Wales, Trinity St. David) – ‘A Moral Myth’
- This presentation seeks to examine whether exposure to fiction about the past is a beneficial method for influencing behaviour in today’s world. It uses as a case study, a new mythic poem (‘Brenin Y Coed Mór’) which has been written to disseminate information about environmental change.
- 19.00 Workshop dinner

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Friday October 5<sup>th</sup> 2018 Room LUX: B339

- 9.00-9.15 Coffee
- 9.15-10.15 Keynote address: Maria Green (Raoul Wallenberg Institute)
- 10.15-10.30 Coffee break
- 10.30-11.15 Axel Rudolphi (Uppsala University) – ‘Art and Reality in Performance Art’
- In this paper I present the relatively recent art form of performance art as providing a number of interesting examples and perspectives to the philosophical discussions of the relation between engagement with art and fiction and our outlooks on practical reality. The ultimate aims of this discussion are (i) to show actual examples in which it, in my view, can be strongly argued that art intricately works with, and on, our practical and moral outlooks on reality; and (ii) to shed some light on what the social and cognitive consequences of something taking place within the context of ‘art’ may be.
- 11.20-12.05 Nils Franzén (Uppsala University) – ‘Evaluative Sensibilism and Imaginative Resistance’
- Fiction invites us to imagine scenarios where evaluative facts are different from what they are like in the actual world, we refuse to go along. For instance, we do not accept a fiction where Nazism is presented as being the correct moral outlook, even though we know that what we are dealing with is just make-belief. The question of why this is the case is the puzzle of imaginative resistance. In this paper, I take imaginative resistance to offer an important clue to the nature of evaluative terms and concepts. I outline a sensiblist semantics for normative terms and concepts, and argue that it explains imaginative resistance.
- 12.05-14.00 Lunch
- 14.00-14.45 Gloria Mähringer (Lund University) – ‘Self-Constitution in the Tension between Individual Creativity and Collective Fiction’
- This talk examines the possibilities and limitations of reframing one’s existence through the activity of writing fiction. Descriptions by authors reflecting about what the process of writing does to themselves range from „I only exist when I am writing“ (Ingeborg Bachmann) to „You lose yourself and sink into a state of pure being, like an animal — belonging to the world, not to yourself.“ (Karl Ove Knausgard). I connect philosophy, social psychology and neuroscience in order to argue that individual self-constitution requires a realm of collective fictions and spell out some conditions under which individual creativity may be part of transforming collective fiction.
- 14.45-15.30 Michael Devlin (Linköping University) – ‘Morality and Fiction’
- 15.30-16.00 Coffee break
- 16.00-16.45 Francesca Rodesino (University of Zürich) – ‘A Fitting Attitude Theory for fiction’
- An object *x* is fictional if it is the object of an appropriate mental attitude, that of imagining (Walton 1990; Currie 1990). This definition is strikingly analogous to the definition of a value given by fitting attitude theories of value, according to which, for example, *x* is good just in case *x* is the object of an appropriate form of desiring. FA theories are subject to a famous counterexample. The wrong kind of reasons problem (WKR). The purpose of this talk is to illustrate a similar counterexample to the definition of being fictional and to provide a solution.
- 16.50-17.35 Louis Rouillé (Institut Jean Nicod) – ‘Is it possible to disagree about nothing?’
- The first sentence of *the Metamorphosis* by Kafka says that Gregor has turned into a monstrous "*Ungeziefer*" (English translation: "vermin"). Smith, a literary critic, imagines Gregor as a big cockroach-like creature. Nabokov argues that Gregor must be a beetle. Smith and Nabokov disagree; but Gregor’s metamorphosis is a fiction: it has not actually occurred; hence, they disagree about nothing. How is this even possible? I interpret this "great beetle debate" (cf. Friend 2011) using the notion of faultless disagreement. Faultless disagreements are promising in that they are disagreements on "non-objective matters of opinion" (cf. Kölbel 2004).