THE MAKING OF AN ACADEMIC JOURNAL

A Conversation with Gerald Gaus

Under the co-sponsorship of the Murphy Institute and Sage Publications (London), the journal Politics, Philosophy & Economics (PPE) published its inaugural issue in February 2002, and has since become an important component of our new Center for Ethics and Public Affairs. Co-edited by Gerald Gaus and Jonathan Riley, PPE is currently the only peer-reviewed journal in the humanities or social sciences housed at Tulane University. After three years at the editorial helm, we asked Professor Gaus to reflect on the challenges of launching a new academic journal.

Q. What prompted you to get involved in the hard work of editing an academic journal?

GG: In the mid-1990s, I was President of the International Economics and Philosophy Society, which I helped found in order to bring together philosophers, economists, and political scientists working on similar issues. At the time, the main journal in the field was Economics and Philosophy. It was (and still is) an excellent journal, but also focused on a fairly narrow range of issues in the philosophy of economics.

Our new society’s aim was to reach a wider audience. Sage Publications heard about us, and suggested we launch a new journal devoted to interdisciplinary discussion among philosophers, economists, and political scientists. It was a great idea, but also needed people to push it forward. So Jonathan Riley and I, with the help of Julian Lamont from the University of Queensland, decided we were up to the challenge.

Q. One of the announced aims of PPE is to provide “A distinctive forum for discussion and debates among philosophers, economists, and political scientists.” How have you gone about achieving that goal?

GG: It hasn’t been easy. Economists are not highly rewarded for interdisciplinary work. What makes one’s name in economics is highly formal analysis. So it has been a real job to get high-quality economists. Interestingly enough, we have found that senior, more established figures are interested in getting the wider audience that PPE gives.

By contrast, political scientists and philosophers, especially, have been far more enthusiastic about...
2003–2004 was a very busy and exciting year for the Murphy Institute’s Center for Ethics and Public Affairs. In the Fall, we welcomed our first class of Faculty Fellows, an impressive and intellectually compatible group of visiting scholars, whose projects ranged from the philosophy of rights to the limits of deliberative democracy (See Profiles, p. 3). Throughout the year, we hosted numerous other visiting scholars for lectures, seminars, and conferences (See p. 8). In late Spring, we also received welcome news that the Board of the Tulane Murphy Foundation has put the Center on even firmer footing by approving a request to fund construction of a new building to house the Murphy Institute. Ground breaking is planned for 2006. There also was excitement on several other fronts:

- Much of it was generated by the Center’s first year-long Faculty Seminar. Over the course of two semesters, the seminar provided the setting in which Faculty Fellows and members of the Center’s Faculty Executive Committee presented new scholarship in progress. It also hosted presentations by a number of distinguished visitors including Thomas Pogge (Columbia), Joseph Raz (Oxford), David Schmidtz (Arizona), Margaret Little (Georgetown), and Geoffrey Sayre-McCord (North Carolina).

- Our journal Politics, Philosophy, and Economics, just completing the third year of its existence, is well on its way to becoming a leading forum for interdisciplinary scholarship focused on issues in ethics and public affairs (See p. 1). The fourth annual PPE conference—on “Economics and Justice” —was hosted by the Center on February 27–28, 2004.

- Another highlight of the year was the continued success of the Center’s Graduate Fellows in a very competitive job market. Kristin Smith-Crowe has accepted a position as Assistant Professor at the David Eccles School of Business, University of Utah. Benjamin Crowe has been hired by the University of Utah as Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy. Mathew Oberrieder, a Graduate Fellow during 2002–2003, also recently accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor in the Philosophy Department at Mercer University.

- Finally, another impressive group of visiting scholars have accepted awards of Faculty Fellowships for 2004–2005: Erica Benner (Central European University); Eric Cavallero (Arizona); Julian Lamont (University of Queensland); and Robert Talisse (Vanderbilt). Their projects during a year’s residence at the Center will range from an improved theory of income justice to a study of ethical reasoning about national claims.

At the end of only two full years of activity, it of course is too early to say that the Center for Ethics has come of age. But there can be no question the work we have done to date has laid a solid institutional foundation and established high intellectual standards.
Current events have focused the world’s attention on human rights. As that attention has increased, so too has the challenge of defining what we mean by rights.

During his year as Faculty Fellow, Leif Wenar worked on two projects that will help to meet this challenge. The first was a book entitled *The Nature of Rights*. “Rights—any kind of rights, from human rights to constitutional rights to personal rights—have specific and complex structures if you examine them closely,” explains Wenar. “I’m trying to develop a precise vocabulary for appreciating what rights are about.” By providing the tools for such discussions, Wenar believes his book will help to create a framework for better understanding both what rights we have and why rights are so important to us.

Wenar’s second project deals with another big topic: “global justice.” He argues that certain basic needs—such as the right to an adequate standard of living—should be viewed as birthrights of every human being. He also views the problem of justice in the global economy by considering what principles of justice might apply to concrete policy questions. “Take a sweatshop in a third-world country,” he suggests. “Here some say simply that workers are exploited. Others say it cannot be unjust to offer jobs that workers freely choose because these jobs in fact are better than jobs they could find elsewhere.”

Wenar is trying to develop principles of justice which would hold true from all perspectives—from that of the sweat shop owner as well as that of the worker. “For a theorist, this is exciting,” he says, “because these are real problems where one can hope to make a difference.”

Wenar, who earned his A.B. from Stanford and Ph.D. from Harvard, has lived for several years in England, where he teaches at the University of Sheffield. He had high praise for the Center for Ethics Friday afternoon faculty seminars, during which Faculty Fellows and other visitors presented scholarly work-in-progress. “The seminar sessions were invaluable to me,” says Wenar. “When you’ve worked on something for such a long time, it really helps to get some different perspectives—and here I’m among world-class scholars.”

In looking back on his year at the Center for Ethics, Wenar comments that only three institutions in the country—Harvard, Princeton and Tulane—have similar programs. “Harvard and Princeton are well established as places where people have done important work in the area of ethics and public affairs, and now Tulane is establishing itself in that way. The Murphy Institute’s new Center for Ethics is positioned to be part of a very influential triangle in the world of moral and political philosophy.”
While the Center’s other Faculty Fellows pondered complex political issues, Ulrike Heuer, an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania, focused on a question that resonates on a more individual, personal level—the nature of values and emotions.

Most people intuitively seem to recognize the inherent importance of “values,” Heuer observes. But what lends them their central importance in our moral scheme? Consider friendship. “Friendship is presumed to be of value to us. But how does it guide our actions? Should we try to have as many friends as possible? I want to know how values like friendship actually guide our actions and decisions,” Heuer, says, “as well as how values are related to reasons.”

Even more personal and individualistic are emotions. Here too Heuer is trying to determine how emotions help us to understand the world, how they may have a cognitive function. “Emotions are in fact important means by which we find our way in the world,” Heuer argues. “An initial emotional response like attraction or repulsion may prove to be unfounded. A pastry on a dessert cart, for example, at first may look particularly appealing, but then turn out to be mere decoration. Sometimes, however, such a reaction is useful, because it is a way of getting to know about the value of something.”

Another example of the same phenomenon would be the emotion of fear, which can be useful when it alerts us to impending danger. “Studying how emotions guide us,” says Heuer, “is part of the project of finding out what is good and bad.” In various ways, emotions help us learn things about ourselves and the world around us.

Heuer’s fellowship year at the Center for Ethics allowed her to complete several papers on these topics, and these papers will form the core of a forthcoming book entitled Reasons and Values. Heuer’s previous academic appointments have included visiting professorships at Columbia University and visiting fellowships at Balliol College, Oxford, and Harvard University. She received her master’s and doctoral degrees in philosophy from the Free University, Berlin. In Fall of 2004, she is moving to England where she will take up her new position as Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Leeds.

Deliberative Democracy

With another national election approaching, it seems everyone has an opinion. Across the country, voters are deliberating on the merits of a sea of candidates in various settings, ranging from organized campus debates to chatter on talk radio. But does this kaleidoscope of public discourse produce any useful results?

Ask Guido Pincione, a 2003–2004 Faculty Fellow at the Murphy Institute’s Center for Ethics and Public Affairs. With colleague Fernando Tesón of the Florida State University College of Law, he’s just completed a book on Discourse Failure: A Philosophical Essay on Democracy, Consent and Political Deliberation. The book challenges the notion that widespread public discourse—a process some scholars speak of as “deliberative democracy”—somehow enhances the legitimacy of election results.
In Pincione’s view, the term “deliberative democracy” describes an unattainable ideal. The fly in the ointment here, he says, is the “rational ignorance” of the citizenry. Proponents of deliberative democracy believe voters generally “get it right” as a result of widespread public debate. But Pincione isn’t so sure. He points out that, in the late 1950s, political scientist Anthony Downs showed that it was not rational for ordinary voters to make an effort to acquire accurate political information, since an individual vote in fact is highly unlikely to alter the outcome of any election.

In Pincione’s view, those who praise deliberative politics have not taken seriously what Downs first identified as the problem of “rational ignorance.” Theories of “deliberative democracy,” he claims, are utopian. They simply don’t describe what goes on in real-world politics.

At first glance, this view of things doesn’t seem to bode well for our political process. If current deliberative processes aren’t leading us to good results, does that mean voters lapse into frustration and apathy? Not necessarily, argues Pincione. While most voters can’t or won’t invest the time and effort to fully inform themselves, it is usually rational for them to hold views on the basis of evidence that they acquired at low cost to themselves. Error, in addition to ignorance, is then the predictable result. And, for better or for worse, it is a combination of rationality, ignorance, and error that explains the otherwise mysterious fate of democracies.

Pincione is quick to point out that he doesn’t oppose the deliberative process. He’s just doubtful the current accounts of that process describe what goes on in the political arena. Widespread political deliberation surely takes place, Pincione concedes, but its value lies not in bringing about ideal political outcomes, but in helping to avert collective tragedies.

By training both a lawyer and a philosopher, Pincione is currently Professor of Law at Torcuato Di Tella University in Buenos Aires. He also has held visiting professorships at the University of Toronto (Faculty of Law), the Arizona State University College of Law, and the Florida State University College of Law.
FELLOWS 2004–2005

FACULTY FELLOWS

ERICA BENNER
Central European University

ERIC CAVALLERO
Department of Philosophy
University of Arizona

JULIAN LAMONT
Department of Philosophy
University of Queensland

ROBERT TALISSE
Department of Philosophy
University of Vanderbilt

GRADUATE FELLOWS

HANS GRUENIG
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
(Philosophy)

WILLIAM GLOD
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
(Philosophy)

REBECCA LIVINGSTON
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
(History)
The 2003–2004 Graduate Fellows came from all over. Their research interests covered everything from Heidegger to organizational psychology. But each shared a common goal: to finish the challenging and painstaking work of writing a doctoral dissertation. They all also had high praise for their year at the Center for Ethics and Public Affairs.

“I’m deeply indebted to this program,” says Julinna Oxley, a Ph.D. candidate in philosophy. “The fellowship allowed me to focus completely on my dissertation. I can’t imagine how people finish without this kind of support.” Her dissertation aims to develop a theory of benevolence that focuses on the reciprocal nature of that virtue.

Oxley argues that benevolence is valuable precisely when both sides agree on the good to come from the interaction. “In this way,” she points out, “we move away from moral paternalism and in the process every agent is respected.” Oxley, who is pursuing her dissertation under the direction of Professor Gerald Gaus, expects to complete her work in Fall 2004.

Benjamin Crowe finished his dissertation this Spring, and was awarded his Ph.D. in philosophy at the 2004 Tulane University Commencement. Written under the direction of Professor Michael Zimmerman, Crowe’s dissertation explores the evolution of Heidegger’s view that an “authentic” way of life can only be maintained via “destruction”—that is, by means of a critical confrontation with the intellectual heritage of a culture, as opposed to the “mindless conformity” Heidegger saw evidence of in the majority of public discourse. Crowe was particularly concerned to trace the influence of Martin Luther on Heidegger’s work in this vein.

“The Center’s fellowship gave me a wonderful opportunity to dig in and work out my ideas with a detail and precision I might not otherwise be able to do,” says Crowe. “It was a great opportunity to complete my research, and move on with my professional career.” Next fall, he will begin a three-year appointment in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Utah.

Christi Sumich, a Ph.D. candidate in history, spent the year finishing a dissertation on concepts of disease and the medical profession in seventeenth-century England. Working under the direction of Professor Linda Pollock (History), she is exploring the nascent role of doctors in early-modern English society. Why did people then consult physicians? How were physicians perceived? What sort of moral authority did they have? Sumich’s effort to answer such questions has led her to study everything from plague orders and regulations to transcriptions of religious sermons.

Sumich stresses that in addition to the opportunity to complete her work, she’s been particularly appreciative of the Center’s encouragement to interact with other scholars working in her field. “It’s been great,” she observes. “Each Graduate Fellow was given the opportunity to invite a renowned expert in his or her field to come to Tulane as a guest speaker, and we had the chance to discuss our work and receive feedback on a one-on-one basis.” She also notes that fellows received funding to attend professional academic conferences. “It’s all been a very welcome networking opportunity,” Sumich says.

Kristin Smith-Crowe’s training and research are focused more directly on the present. She will receive her Ph.D. in industrial/organizational psychology in August, 2004. Her doctoral dissertation, completed under the direction of Professor Michael Burke (Psychology), explored how organizational practices and individual personalities interact, to impact ethical decision-making. Smith-Crowe is particularly interested in understanding the sorts of cognitive processes employers and workers use in making decisions in the workplace.

With the corporate world rife with well-publicized scandals, Smith-Crowe recognizes that her topic is a timely one. “We’re now more aware of the difficult decisions employees confront. Ethical decision-making is becoming part of teaching and research in business schools.”
Faculty Fellowships 2005-06

The Murphy Institute’s Center for Ethics and Public Affairs at Tulane University is pleased to announce residential Faculty Fellowships for the 2005-2006 academic year. These fellowships, made possible by grants from the Tulane Murphy Foundation, are available to support outstanding faculty whose teaching and research focus on questions of ethics and moral choice in such areas as architecture, business, government, law, medicine, urban design and planning, and environmental policy. While fellows will participate in conferences and seminars organized by the Center, they will be expected to devote most of their time to conducting their own research. Stipends will vary in accordance with individual circumstance, but will not exceed US$35,000. Center Faculty Fellowships are open to all, regardless of citizenship.

Further information about the Fellowships and applications may be obtained from the Center page on the Murphy Institute web site at www.tulane.edu/~murphy or may be requested by contacting:

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Applications must be received by December 8, 2004.
LECTURES AND CONFERENCES

FEBRUARY 27–28, 2004
POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY & ECONOMICS
CONFERENCE: “Economics and Justice”

SAM SCHEFFLER (University of California, Berkeley):
Choice, Circumstance, and the Value of Equality

MARC FLEURBAEY (Université de Pau):
Freedom with Forgiveness

JOHN ROEMER (Yale University):
Eclectic Distributional Ethics

ALLEN BUCHANAN (Duke University):
Equality, Human Rights, and Human Nature

PHILIP PETTIT (Princeton University):
Liberty and Leviathan

ERIC RAKOWSKI (University of California, Berkeley):
The Future Reach of the Disembodied Will

JANUARY 29, 2004
Heidegger, Ethics and Politics
THOMAS SHEEHAN, Professor of Religious Studies,
Stanford University

MARCH 23, 2004
MARY C. PARKER YATES LECTURE
The Many Faces of Liberalism
MICHAEL FREEDEN, Professor of Politics and
Professorial Fellow, Mansfield College,
Oxford University

APRIL 15, 2004
Necessary Evils: The Problem of Dirty
Hands Made Real
JOSHUA D. MARGOLIS, Assistant Professor of
Business Administration, Organizational Behavior Unit
and Ethics Group, Harvard Business School

THOMAS SHEEHAN

M I C H A E L  F R E E D E N

PHOTOGRAPH BY KIMBERLY MORRIS / SOUTHERN LIGHTS

LECTURES AND CONFERENCES

>>>2004

FOCUS Fall 2004
MAY 21–23, 2004

“THE NATURE OF RIGHTS”

CHARLES BEITZ (Princeton University):
The Moral Rights of Creators of Artistic and Literary Works

GERALD GAUS (Tulane University):
Public Justification and Our Morality of Rights

ERIC MACK (Tulane University):
Prerogatives, Restrictions, and Rights

HENRY RICHARDSON (Georgetown University):

HORACIO SPECTOR (Universidad Torcuato Di Tella):
Moral Rights

GOPAL SREENIVASAN (University of Toronto):
Duties and Their Direction

HILLEL STEINER (University of Manchester):
Conscription

LEIF WENAR (University of Sheffield):
The Nature of Rights

International experts in philosophy, politics, and the law met at the Murphy Institute’s Center for Ethics and Public Affairs from May 21–23 for a workshop on “The Nature of Rights. A group of high-powered experts on rights”—including the Murphy Institute’s Gerald Gaus and Eric Mack, as well as Center Fellow Leif Wenar, Charles Beitz from Princeton, Henry Richardson from Georgetown, Gopal Sreenivasan from Toronto, Hillel Steiner from Manchester, and Horacio Spector from Universidad Torcuato Di Tella—presented papers in a roundtable format. Also joining in the discussions were the Murphy Institute’s Jonathan Riley, Center Fellow Ulrike Heuer, and Thomas Scanlon from Harvard, one of the English-speaking world’s most distinguished philosophers.

Among the topics that were debated during the ten intensive sessions were the rights of creators of literary and artistic works, the morality of mandatory conscription, the justification for private property, the relation among rights, autonomy, and well-being, and the character of the ultimate justification of rights. The participants reported that the seminars were exceptionally stimulating; and that discussions of the papers continued informally well into the night on each day of the conference. As the sessions finally concluded, the participants were unanimous in their praise of the Murphy Institute for facilitating such a productive and memorable event, and for providing such an excellent venue for the event.
CATHY LAZARUS, Associate Professor of Medicine, was the first Tulane University faculty member to complete the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine program of Drexel University College of Medicine.

ERIC MACK, Professor of Philosophy, received an Earhart Foundation Research Grant in the Fall of 2003 and was a Visiting Bradley Foundation Scholar at the Social Philosophy and Policy Center, Bowling Green State University, in the Spring of 2004.

GUIDO PINCIONE, Center Faculty Fellow and Professor of Law, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, will be a Visiting Scholar at the Social Philosophy and Policy Center, at Bowling Green State University, in the Spring of 2005.

CHRISTI SUMICH, Center Graduate Fellow, Department of History, received a Tulane University Graduate School Dissertation Year Fellowship for 2004–2005.

LEIF WENAR, Center Faculty Fellow and Reader in Philosophy, University of Sheffield, received a Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs Fellowship for 2004–05.

MARTYN THOMPSON, Professor of Political Science, was elected Vice-President and President Elect, the Michael Oakeshott Association.
GERALD GAUS

ROBERT MARTENSEN

GRAHAM OWEN
a journal that devotes itself to the economic analysis of morals and politics, as well as philosophical analysis of economic concepts.

Our annual PPE Conferences at Tulane also have been a very productive forum for interdisciplinary exchange. Although we do not artificially insist on a certain distribution of disciplines, we always have some economists, philosophers, and political scientists discussing the same topic. This year, for example, our conference topic was economic equality. Prominent economists, political philosophers and a lawyer participated. These really are tremendously fruitful gatherings, and currently one of the few places where people from these different disciplines can exchange ideas about important issues in ethics and public affairs.

Q. What have been the main challenges of editing PPE?

GG: As a new journal, we of course have been concerned that our circulation is on the rise, and I'm happy to report that it has been. In order to reflect a wide range of views, PPE has a diverse group of editors and associate editors, so there are quite a few of us who have different opinions on how things are to be done.

Thus far, though, we have managed to resolve our disagreements amicably.

Thanks to the assistance of the Murphy Institute’s new Center for Ethics, we have not had the big problem of most new journals—getting high quality submissions. Because of the annual PPE conferences, we have been able to attract contributions by some of the most prominent people working in economics, political science, and philosophy.

Q. PPE has expressed a special interest in publishing essays that are “widely accessible.” Have you been successful on this count?

GG: Yes, I really think we have. We have been able to convince our more technical contributors to put most of their equations in an appendix (you can’t ask economists not to have any equations!). So by usual academic standards the text is very readable.

I’m also particularly happy we have been able to publish early parts of Ken Binmore’s book Natural Justice, which gives a thoroughly non-technical game theoretical analysis of moral rules. This is just the sort of thing we set out to do. Binmore is one of the great figures in contemporary game theory—a highly
We also have aimed at showing how ethics, politics, and economics are all necessary to really come to grips with fundamental public policy issues...
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12 Honors and Awards
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