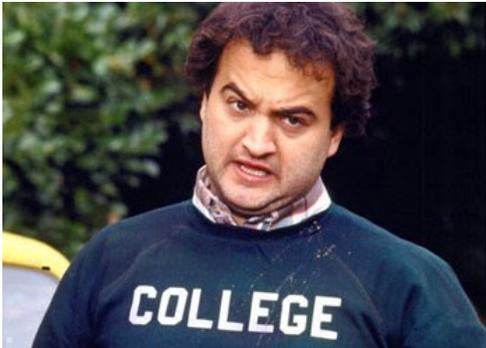


# THE STETSON GADFLY



## DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY NEWSLETTER

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Differences and Commonalities  
R.Hall

A central theme discussed in our department this year has been human and non-human animal differences and commonalities. I have gained much regarding this issue from Stephen Mulhall's book *The Wounded Animal: J.M. Coetzee and the Difficulty of Reality in Literature and Philosophy*. What is fascinating to me about this book is Mullhall's attempt to offer a corrective to his mentors, in particular Heidegger and Wittgenstein, both of whom emphasize differences over commonalities. Without denying these radical differences, Mulhall proposes an interesting point of entry into the consideration of commonalities. He suggests that philosophy has much to learn from literature about the imagination, especially from fiction. Good writers imaginatively project themselves into the fictional characters they create and do so in just the way that will engage their readers to do the same. Perhaps philosophers have something to learn from this literary technique. Indeed, the philosophical focus on differences, may disclose an impoverished imagination. Such a defect leads too quickly to the conclusion that we simply cannot know

## Animal House?

what it is like to be a non-human animal, a conclusion that in turn seems to close off issues of commonality.

(Consider Nagel's famous question of whether we can know what it is like to be a bat.) To continue this discussion, I assemble some remarks from Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Mullhall.

**Heidegger** -In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger says that the human animal is world-building, the non-human animal is "poor" in world, and stones are world-less. He says: "There an important and fundamental question here: Can we transpose ourselves into an animal at all. For we are hardly able to transpose ourselves into another being of our own kind, into another human being.

**Wittgenstein** -Why can't a dog simulate pain? Is he too honest? Could one teach a dog to simulate pain? Perhaps it is possible to teach him to howl on particular occasions as if he were in pain, even when he is not. But the surroundings which are necessary for this behavior to be real simulation are missing. We do not say that *possibly* a dog talks to itself. We say a dog is afraid his master will beat him; but not, he is afraid his master will beat him to-morrow. Why not? A dog believes his master is at the door. But can he also believe his master will come the day after to-morrow?— A dog cannot be a hypocrite, but neither can he be sincere. It is sometimes said that animals do not talk

because they lack the mental capacity. And this means: "they do not think, and that is why they do not talk." But—they simply do not talk. If a lion could talk, we could not understand him.

**Mulhall**- I know that Nagel is only using bats...as aids in order to pose questions of his own about the nature of consciousness...the actual reality of a bat-life is of precisely no relevance to Nagel's bat... Nagel places other human minds more nearly within the grasp of his own mind than he does bats...to be a living bat is to be full of being; being fully a bat is like being fully human. I can [imagine] my way into the existence of a bat or a chimpanzee, or an oyster, any being with whom I share a substrate of life... Nagel's assumption is that differences in modalities are more important than the commonality of life, of aliveness, of embodied existence...

By Ronald Hall



"I am that gadfly which God has attached to the state, and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you." -Socrates

## SENIOR THESES & FUTURE PLANS

**Kevin Buchanan:** Senior Thesis: "Brian Leiter's Legal Realism: The 'Easy Cases' and normative Reason-Types" Plans: Howard Law School

**Kayleigh Watson:** "The War on Individual Rights: Hypocrisy of Torture in Democratic Society" I plan to work for Levin Financial Group, a partner of Mass Mutual as a financial sales agent at the end of May.

**David Nutting:** "An Ethical Approach to the Environment: The Virtue of Prudence" Plans: I'm taking a gap year, possibly to travel, before applying to grad school in environmental ethics

**John Dieck:** "Assimilation, Association, or Heterotopia ? French Colonialism and Urban Planning in Algeria and Morocco, 1830-1914. Plans: City Year, Tutoring at-risk students in (at yet to be determined) South Florida locations.

**Sean Cahill:** Senior Thesis: "The Sickness of Democracy: Campaign Finance Reform and Corruption in the United States." Plans: In the process of becoming a correctional officer with the Florida Department of Corrections.

**Tatiana Lyne:** Senior Thesis: "The Availability of Philosophy" Plans: Gap year

**Melanie Fredericks:** "Integrating a Feminist Theory of Disability" I'm planning to enter the United States Marine Corps in July 2015. I will be going to law school through the Marine Corps and be an active JAG officer.

**Luke Ford :** Senior Thesis: "Fair Play: Ethics in the Game World" Plans: Gap year

**Kayleigh Watson :** The War on Individual Rights: Hypocrisy of Torture in Democratic Society

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

**Kameron St. Clare**— 2011: First publication is in the anthology "*Dimensions of Moral Agency*"; Cambridge 2014 .ISBN: 978-1443866927

**Amanda Mc Mullen**— 2012: U. Of Miami. After having completed my third year of the PhD program at the University of Miami, my focus is primarily concentrated on my dissertation proposal, the subject of which is the semantics of pejorative terms.

**Shannon Abelson**- 2013: finishing MA at VA Tech and entering PhD program at Indiana. My experience at Virginia Tech has been very challenging but equally rewarding. I tried something a bit new for my master's thesis and evaluated the significance of experimental philosophy to Sellarsian systematic approaches to philosophy. I am however, looking forward to working again on ordinary language philosophy (grad school has not managed to pour cold water on that, thankfully!) I will be attending Indiana University, Bloomington this fall for my PhD, where I have been awarded a University Fellowship.

**Allen Love**- 2014: going to Cornell Law.



### Animal Care and Humane treatment in labs at Stetson

IACUC is the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. The term IACUC was formally introduced in 1986 with an amendment to the Animal Welfare Act and corresponding changes in Public Health Service policy. Although much of the animal welfare law comes from the Animal Welfare Act, which is enforced by the USDA, the full set of regulations over IACUCs comes from PHS Policy. Twice-yearly inspections of animal use facilities were mandated. The modern composition of IACUCs was thus established. The IACUC must have a minimum of three members, one of whom is a Chairman appointed by the institution. This is our own Dr. David Stock in the Department of Biology. The appointed members must be qualified to regulate animal care at that institution. Our local veterinarian is Dr. Emmet Smith. It must also include a scientist with experience using experimental animals, and a nonscientist. One of the non-scientists is our own Dr. Ronald Hall. You see him pictured above in a cage (which some think makes us all safer) that is designed for the emergency evacuation of animals used in experiments in Sage Hall. His Committee meets to approve proposals for the use of animals in experiments and to inspect the housing and care of these animals. At Stetson, the proposals do not involve primates and more usually involve rats, snakes, and many species of small fish.



### Stetson is a pet-friendly university!

#### Animal Friendly Housing at Stetson

Stetson University is unique in allowing residents of a designated area to live with their pets or to be a dog trainer for a service dog organization. [The policy allows the following pets to live in the animal friendly dorms:](#) fish, rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, chinchillas, guinea pigs, rats, mice, cats, and certain dog breeds and sizes. Dogs may not exceed fifty pounds in weight when fully grown. The Department of Housing and Residential life provides guideline for obtaining permission to bring a pet to live on campus. Students are allowed to bring well-behaved dogs to classes.

## Philosophy Club and Visitors

The Philosophy Club had a busy year of meetings and conversations. We collaborated with everyone from the French Club (for a French film screening at Cinematique in Daytona Beach in September) to the National Phi Beta Kappa organization Visiting Scholar program (we invited Dr. David Schmitz to visit our Club in January).

As a centerpiece to many of our classroom conversations on the boundary between the animal and the human, our final Philosophy Club meeting of the year linked us with Dr. Erin Holder, local wild animal veterinarian and the daughter of Ronald Hall. The National Geographic Channel featured Dr. Holder on their program *Unlikely Animal Friends*, which investigated cross-species friendships. We watched a clip from the episode and then discussed the similarities and differences in capacities of humans and animals for friendship. The meeting was well-attended and students brought much of what they had discussed in the classroom to the debate. On a pet-friendly and environmentally-conscious campus like Stetson, these conversations are of great importance!

We hosted many other visitors in a series of exciting meetings. In the fall, in collaboration with the Cross-Cultural Center, the philosophy department brought Dr. Tracey Nicholls (Lewis University, Philosophy) as a visitor to campus. She led bystander training workshops, visited Stetson classrooms, and gave a public lecture on the importance of metaphors in sexist and unjust discourse. She also visited our Philosophy Club to discuss her book, *An Ethics of Improvisation*. Our boundary-crossing conversation brought many interested students to the Club.

Stetson's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa brought Dr. David Schmitz (University of Arizona, Philosophy) to campus in January as part of the national Phi Beta Kappa scholar program. During his time here, Dr. Schmitz visited several classrooms, including Dr. Melinda Hall's Environmental Ethics course, and gave a public lecture on democratic deliberation and consent. He also visited our Philosophy Club and had a lively discussion with our students about the relationship between teachers

and students.

In February, the department collaborated with Collective (an alternative faith community in DeLand) to bring Peter Rollins, a theologian based in LA, to campus. He gave a public lecture on atheism and led a very successful Philosophy Club meeting with a talk entitled "Philosophy at the Intersection of Religion and Humanism."

Finally, in March, the department also collaborated with STAND, Stetson's human rights and anti-genocide student organization, to bring Dr. Sarah Tyson (UC-Denver, Philosophy) for a visit. While here, she visited classrooms and gave a talk on prisons and sexual abuse in conjunction with the Gender and Sexual Diversity conference. She is an advocate of prison abolition and so this was central to her work. During that conference, Dr. Tyson connected with students from many disciplines and made an impact on the social justice conversation here at Stetson.

This was a highly engaged year for the department. We look forward to continuing collaboration with philosophers across the US both in our Club meetings and across campus!

By Melinda Hall



Dr. Erin Holder, local wild animal veterinarian and the daughter of Ronald Hall during the filming of National Geographic Channel's *Unlikely Animal Friends* episode.

## Faculty News



**Ronald Hall:** Continues to serve as Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*. Last June he presented a paper at Yale entitled, "Dethroning Epistemology". He is currently co-editing a book entitled: *Recovering the Personal*. In the spring of 2016 he will be on sabbatical leave.

**Susan Peppers-Bates:** Presented "De-Racing Place: Care, Respect, Desegregation & Implicit Bias in American Society" at two conferences, Stetson's Democracy and Human Rights Conference March 2014, and at a national interdisciplinary conference on Race & Place: Cultural Landscapes of Black Life in America the University of Southern Florida/The Institute on Black Life February 2014. She will be on Sabbatical leave in the fall of 2015 and plans to study Nicolas Malebranche's role in the 17-18<sup>th</sup> century fight over quietist and disinterested love of God. She plans to write an article on this subject and has been invited to contribute it to the Oxford Handbook on Malebranche.

**Joshua Rust:** Published "Indulgent Sympathy and the Impartial Spectator" in *Propriety and Prosperity: New Studies on the Philosophy of Adam Smith*. He argued that Smith thinks it is possible to be *too* empathetic (he uses the term "sympathetic"), despite the centrality of this concept to his moral outlook. He continues to serve as the Secretary-Treasurer for the Florida Philosophical Association.

**Melinda Hall:** presented ongoing research at the APA (Pacific Division), the Florida Philosophical Association, and the American Comparative Literature Association. She also had the pleasure of seeing "Continental Approaches in Bioethics" published in the *Philosophy Compass*. She edited a volume entry of critical essays on Kristeva's classic book *Powers of Horror* for Gale: Cengage Learning. She also applied for and received a Stetson summer grant to explore the notion of risk in public health, and the risk assessment to subjectivity and responsibility in medical discourse.

### *H is for Hawk*

Helen McDonald is an affiliated research scholar in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at Cambridge. She recently wrote book called *H is for Hawk* which chronicles her decision to tame a goshawk following the death of her father. The book is a kind of antidote to oh-so-cute-tiger-nurses-a-baby-pig pictures I see in my Facebook feed now and then. For her the relationship underscores the distance between creatures who nevertheless share a bond. Indeed, it was the following quotation from the [New York Review of Books](#) which convinced me to read McDonald's book: Macdonald gives her bird the very human name of Mabel, on account of the name's connotations of "antimacassars and afternoon teas," but she does so rather perversely, because it's the strangeness of the hawk that she most admires. "She is a conjuring trick," Macdonald writes, of her first sight of the animal. "A reptile. A fallen angel." How does one bridge the gulf between person and reptile? "As the hawk became tamer I was growing wilder."

By Joshua Rust



### HALL AWARD

The Department proudly presented the 2014 Ronald L. and Margaret S. Hall Philosophy Award to Luke Ford. Luke has been an outstanding student and Philosophy

