# A Conversation with Sandra Leonie Field

In May 2021, Alan Bechaz, Racher Du, Will Cailes and Thomas Spiteri interviewed Sandra Leonie Field for UPJA's *Conversations from the Region*. A series of discussions that invites philosophers from or based in Australasia to share their student and academic experiences. The segment looks into what inspires people to study philosophy, how they pursue their philosophical interests, and gives our audiences a better idea of philosophy as an undergraduate.

*N.B. This interview was transcribed from an oral format*

**Alan: For our readers, could you introduce yourself a little bit, Sandra, in particular, your philosophical interests? And if there's a project you're working on at the moment, and share a little bit about that would be excellent.**

I'm an Assistant Professor at Yale-NUS College in Singapore. I'm a political philosopher and an historian of philosophy, so a lot of my research is in the history of philosophy, particularly Hobbes and Spinoza. However,

while I really respect the historians of philosophy, what drives my interest in a particular period is a bit less antiquarian, as I also have a foot strongly in political philosophy. So the thing I like about the history of philosophy is that it really gives you a way of getting outside of the headspace of whatever everybody agrees upon, and philosophically freeing yourself from contemporary presuppositions. What I find valuable about trying to do really rigorous history of philosophy is not going back to find things that confirm what you already thought, but rather to find things that are weird and surprising, and result in a kind of friction with present thought. I think political philosophy has this interesting position with respect to its own history because, there's a lot of things in the history of political thought that are very objectionable from our present point of view. But I find the distance between historical views and our own contemporary political commitments really opens up a bit of space, for understanding about the limits and the blindspots of what is now taken to be the only correct acceptable view to have. An example that I've thought about a lot is democracy. Once upon a time, democracy was not obviously good. It was controversial and in most people's opinion it was probably a bad idea. That attitude allows you to ask a lot more critical questions and be a lot more precise about what you're saying about democracy. I think democracy risks becoming so broad to kind of cover everything and encompass every virtue. I find that in history there is more friction because they don't have the same moral commitments as present writers do when discussing democracy.

To draw that together, sometimes I call myself a political theorist; I'm interested in questions of politics in quite a broad way, which is usefully informed by the history of political thought. I also teach more broadly because I'm in a liberal arts college. I teach contemporary egalitarianism, and I also have the great pleasure of teaching social theory. So my teaching is broader than my research and I've come to be very interested in that broader teaching. My current work has involved thinking about: *what do people mean when they're talking about a concept of power?* There are different literatures that have parsed this concept out in different ways and with different purposes; but in my own work, I've been

interested in 'the power of the people'. This is often thought of as something which is sort of good and reflects the people equally or something like that. So I am very interested in and suspicious of this idea of the power of the people and that was very much in my book.

**Alan: That's a really fascinating introduction. The next question is about what initially drew you to study philosophy. But I wonder if perhaps in answering that you might be able to pick up also on what you mentioned. In terms of that tension between the historical and political approach, were there any sort of early experiences that were instrumental in that as well as philosophy generally?**

I think I fell quite accidentally into philosophy, and I don't know if the degree I did when I was at University of Sydney still exists. It was called a "Bachelor of Liberal Arts" and they were trying to cook up something a bit like an American liberal arts programme which was like a small arts science degree. Initially I was primarily a science person, I was doing maths and chemistry and I had a language but I needed an arts discipline. I really had no particular commitment and so I took philosophy, a bit on a whim, and I found it kind of fun. The funny thing is initially, I found the wild science fiction thought experiment approach to philosophy was really quite fun and I was quite adept at it and it drew me in. Then Duncan Ivison, who I've got a lot of respect for, taught this stuff on the history of political philosophy and I remember thinking, "Oh, man, I can't stand this history of political philosophy". So my initial response is actually kind of the mirror image of where I've ended up and I don't know quite what to say about that except that when you're learning things, it takes a while to work out what grabs you.

I really enjoyed all the courses I did, but it was all a bit unsystematic and by the end of my undergraduate, I had a feeling I was missing something. So I did my honours at the University of New South Wales where there was a lot more continental philosophy. For graduate school, I applied both to philosophy and politics departments and I ended up studying in a politics department that was closely allied with the philosophy

department. So I've always had my interests in these socio-political topics which philosophy as a discipline has not always been totally accommodating of. I've always felt like my work counted as philosophy, even if it wasn't being reflected in philosophy. So I went where I needed to go to get the bits I needed to get and drew together the things that I needed over time. It's funny, I think, in retrospect, that as a student you have this inchoate sense that there is some kind of big idea that you're interested in, and you can't quite say what it is, but you find yourself drawn to certain topics and searching for what you need to get. That is kind of my experience of what I did to get where I am today.

**Alan: Sticking with the undergraduate experience, could you elaborate maybe a little more about the philosophical culture? I think you've already given us a sense of what it was like, and maybe what motivated moving to a different institution for particular interests. What might have changed since then? If you have any particularly memorable classes, that would be great to hear about too.**

There's the Russellian Society at the University of Sydney, and I wasn't very closely involved, but there were a bunch of really just kind of 'interesting' and quirky people floating around; doing the philosophy classes, and running these talks and you know, sitting around the jacaranda in the quadrangle. I think there was a bit of a sense of fun and excitement around being an arts student at that time, there were all these self-deprecating jokes people would tell about being an arts student, about how little hours you actually put in and how bad your job prospects were.

But there was quite a feeling of fun and feeling of excitement. In those days of course we didn't have much by way of online stuff. So they would list the courses every year, like on a bulletin board in the quadrangle, and you would go and look and see what the next course was going to be the next year. And there were these people from the community, who would come into the philosophy talks and lectures just for the pure love of it. And they were often quite crazy, and that was just really fun. Those people just

really loved being there, people from different walks of life, and you know... I mean, I don't want to romanticise it too much. I think there were some probably pretty terrible teaching practices in some parts, but also moments of wonderful teaching. Those old uncomfortable wooden benches — do they still even have them? — sometimes you get a lecturer droning on, and sometimes they're really onto something pretty exciting.

I can't remember exactly all of the courses I did — it's a little bit of a blur! But one which really stood out to me, partly from the course content but partly from the force of personality of the person taking it, was Moira Gatens' course on contemporary analytic political philosophy. Moira was quite a formidable intellectual presence, and just a big, big personality, pushing us to engage with these texts. And I remember I was busy at the time trying to be very radical, and complained about just learning about Rawls and stuff. But then in the end, I really appreciate the wisdom of being pressed to get that grounding in that mainstream, conceptual vocabulary and then you can do things from there.

There are also some more regrettable things I remember. I won't name names, but somebody told me that I had to take the "baby" logic course, because I was a woman. And then there were other things: there was a wonderful course on Kant. But it was this old school kind of course, where you go from the beginning to the end of *The Critique of Pure Reason*. And if you're not very diligent all the way through... I think I missed the week when we did The Categories. And so, my understanding of Kant has always had this problem, that I missed this week in this very sequential course.

I don't know what's changed since then, because I'm in a very different institution here. I have a feeling that when I was an undergraduate, there were these courses that were both wonderful and terrible, where you'd just sit down and work through one big, long fat book. And I think if the students are really motivated, that can be a great experience. If the students are not quite sure why this is an important book, or what the value is in doing it, it can be a terrible experience. I think in those days,

there were quite a few courses like that, and I think these days, we try to be a little bit more student-centred in deciding what we put together. If a student's got a finite number of courses, what do we want them to get through from the beginning, to by the time they're through? Is it worthwhile having a whole course on a particular text just because one Professor might like to teach that?

**Alan: In that case, one more question from me before I hand it over to Racher. Following on in this vein, about your perceptions of philosophy but also things you may have struggled with — some of those attitudes, or missing that crucial week of Kant — what perceptions did you have going in, and what kind of difficulties do you think you experienced?**

I was pretty overconfident, I think, as a student. I would just charge in there, thinking I'm the queen of the universe. I don't necessarily recommend that as a way to approach the world. But certainly, coming out of high school, I was a little bit like that. I found some things very narrow; I suppose things that were structured felt very narrow. And then things that weren't really narrow were sometimes ridiculously unstructured. So, you find you're a little bit lost in between. Maybe this is just the experience of being an undergraduate, that you feel like you've got things that you're interested in, that you want to know about, and the courses don't always match up with that, but you're not quite sure where else to go. As an undergraduate I sometimes felt like I had very different intuitions than other people in the courses. And that was more of an issue in some courses than others. It sometimes made me feel a little a little bit insane, that I had quite different intuitions on some issues. David Braddon-Mitchell, for whom I have a lot of respect and who taught me very well, I did a course with him on two very recently published books in analytic metaethics. And I remember just disagreeing with them so profoundly, but not being able to say why.  Because I was doing some continental philosophy courses and some analytic courses, and they had just fundamentally different presumptions and very little way to communicate about what those differences were. I was interested, I wanted to know

what was true, but I had these sort of "hermetically sealed" traditions that it felt hard to mediate between. In later times, that kind of subsided as I focused more on political philosophy and I didn't have to solve the world's philosophical problems between different traditions, I just had to think on the topic that I'm interested in, how does this play out? And that made it a bit more manageable.

Writing is always a struggle. But at least for me, after one or two times having that really hard paper where it just doesn't make sense, and you're not sure whether it's going to come together, and then it comes together; then the next time when you have that terrible feeling, you're like, I've had this feeling before, I just have to keep going! I just have to keep going, and I will get there. I don't know that it goes away, at least for me, it doesn't. You always have that feeling you don't know what you're doing. Just keep going. That's my advice for students.

**Racher: The advice you give to students is great because I think most students, at least in the Singapore context, struggle with understanding but they're not sure whether they should ask the professors about it. It's nice to know that even professors struggle with understanding sometimes, and we're all a little bit confused about the topics we're interested in. So, one question I have is, how do people react when they first learn that you're a philosopher?**

I suppose they just ask what do you do? Sometimes people say some jokey thing, like, 'am I a brain in a vat?' Or they talk about The Matrix or something. If it's not important I don't have the conversation too much. I just say I teach at a university, just sort of keep it simple like that. Most people who first learn I'm a philosopher are my students, so they're like 'oh you're the philosophy Prof?'

I have a friend for whom I have great respect; he's a writer, he writes all sorts of things in newspapers, like 'public intellectual' stuff in Australia. And he's like, "wow, I have a friend who's a philosopher" while I'm like "wow, I've got a friend who's a public intellectual". There's that sort of mutual mystery for a lot of these sorts of jobs that have their own very

specific kind of content; I think it's hard to describe to outsiders. Maybe I have a bit of an easier time than other people because I'm able to give some concrete examples from political philosophy. You know, 'when people say they want equality, what do they mean by that?' So often I'll give an example for people to think about that I teach to students of political philosophy. Outside of universities I don't think there's any animus or hostility towards philosophers. It's just viewed as a bit of a curiosity. I have to say philosophers have a little bit of a bad reputation within the university, with other disciplines, because they seem to be a little bit overconfident that they are the "queen" of the disciplines.



'There are also some more regrettable things I remember. I won't name names, but somebody told me that I had to take the "baby" logic course, because I was a woman.'

**Racher: Aside from pursuing academia, where might you recommend someone to direct their philosophical interest?**

Well, the funny thing about jobs is that they're never quite what they seem to be. I recently talked to someone who had worked all their life in public service, in tax policy. And they'd done their PhD part time — not in philosophy but in another discipline — through evenings, over many years. They got their book published and then, through a very unlikely route, they got a job here at the college. And they thought it was their dream come true, because they would finally get to have a job where they got to think about all the interesting things, and just do this research they've been fitting in in their spare time. Finally, they'd have a job that expressed that.

They lasted two years! And then they got annoyed about all of the ridiculous normal things of having a job in an academic institution, where you've got to do academic governance, you've got to deal with students, you got do grading, you've got to do stupid online teaching setups, *and* you have to try to do your research, to jump through hoops, and to please various people that you don't even care about.

So she quit — and went back to working in the public service where she would work a normal job, and then have her mind free to do interesting things after hours. So I suppose my first thing is, people's ideas of there being some jobs that are purely letting you do your passion, and then other jobs, which are somehow lesser — I don't think that quite captures it. So I just want to pull academia down a peg. There are different ways to have an interesting life and an interesting working life. And so I think it's quite right to be asking that question, not thinking 'I like philosophy, therefore, academia will be a job that will be perfect for me'.

That's even before you come to the difficulty of getting academic jobs. As for actually where people end up with philosophy degrees, the Australasian Association of Philosophy and the American Philosophical Association have these pages where they try to give you examples of people who have had philosophy degrees, and it really runs the full gamut. Of course philosophy is a discipline with people who have substantially different interests.  I increasingly think that in this day and age, job

security is hard to get, and it is just so valuable for your ability not to be stressed out and actually have a life when you can think. There's some people who get these incredible jobs, like "Resident Philosophers" at some think-tank or at some science research places. But there's probably so few of those jobs, it will be hard to set them as your life goal, because you might not make it there. Some of the most interesting sounding jobs are very random sort of jobs. There's another direction: there's a lot of interest in philosophy in schools these days. But being a school teacher is a vocation in itself, and some people who could be very good at philosophy could be extremely bad for young children. So that's not like an easy way out to find a direction. So for myself, I think if it hadn't been an academic job, I think I would have gone in a teaching direction or maybe in public service — there's something honourable about public service. There's no clear answer, except that it's nice to have a job that respects you and has good conditions for you to work and put food on the table and be able to buy philosophy books and think about stuff as well. And if the philosophy can come into the work, great. But that's not always going to be the case.

**Racher: Yeah, absolutely. And speaking of books, congratulations on your new book! Tell us a little bit about your book, *Potentia*, and what motivated you to write it?**

Yeah, so this book has been coming for a long time. It's been through many twists and turns over a number of years. The book is basically about what is popular power, and it's taking aim at certain pretty commonplace ways of thinking about popular power that I think are conceptual dead ends. In particular, one model is people think that when you have a mass plebiscite or referendum or vote of the people, this is 'the people speaking' and that's popular power. This is quite an American dream: to have constitutional moments when the people vote and say this is what we want. Another version of it in a different tradition is to say, when the people rise up on the street, in whatever social movement, that's popular power. I can see the appeal of both of these positions. But it seems to me that they lead you into this kind of oscillation of hope and despair about

democracy. Because sometimes mass votes give you nice answers, and sometimes they give you ridiculous answers. Sometimes the vote is set up in a ridiculous way. Sometimes the vote is captured by advertising that miscasts what's going on. Similarly, with social movements, you like the social movements you like, what about the social movements you don't like? And is a big social movement really a marker of popular power, even if you like its aims and goals? Consider two cases, first a really unjust society which is rocked by a big social movement protesting that injustice, and second, a society doesn't have a big protest movement because it runs itself in a less unjust way and so doesn't provoke big protests. It doesn't seem right to me to say that the first case shows more popular power than the second.

> *Sandra Field has discussed this in more depth [here.](here)*

I was facing these commonplace ideas about popular power, which seemed to me to lead down to these very strange places in terms of trying to think about why should you valorize the power of the people, why should you care about democracy? And does it even make sense to call these classic things "popular power"? Because sometimes they're neither popular nor powerful. And so that was my intellectual puzzle. I went on a massive detour through the history of philosophy and came up with my solution. I went back to Hobbes and Spinoza, who had a lot to say about politics. But they are also right in that moment, where in the history of philosophy of science, Descartes and his buddies are attacking the old way of talking about power in the natural sciences. The old Scholastics talked about power as some kind of inner essence or innate direction that explains why things are as they are and what they tend to do. A seed grows because it has the power to grow. Descartes and friends thought this was mystification and they sought to do natural science without appeal to innate powers. These new scientists were mostly very careful not to say anything about ethics and politics. But surely there were the implications of their ideas for ethics and politics? What would an anti-Scholastic notion of power look like in politics?

So I tried to carry that thought through and show that that's what's going on in Hobbes and Spinoza as politics, where they try to think of power of the people not being like the underlying essence that's waiting to be popped out, but rather thinking of power as this emergent feature of a complex system. The end result is that you shouldn't be looking to one little place to say 'That's popular power'. If there's popular power, it's a matter of stepping back and looking at how society operates. Is the society's power great, or to the contrary is it fragile and vulnerable when it faces a crisis? And is its power popular, does it maintain equal status amongst citizens, or to the contrary is the society's power oligarchic? Plebiscites and dramatic protests may make a difference to this popular power, but they don't define it.

A lot of the book is right down in the details of the history of philosophy, because I want to get that right. I think that really doing that hard work with people from a different time or place gives you different conceptual tools which haven't been on the table, then you've got to do a bit of work to make them usable in the present. That was the process with this book.

**Racher: That's lovely to hear. Given that you've spent so much of your career working in political philosophy, primarily looking at the political aspects of things, how has that shaped you or your thoughts, both in your work as well as your life?**

Yeah, it's interesting, isn't it? I think there's no guarantee that doing good philosophy actually makes you a better or more insightful  person; I can think of many examples where it doesn't. But we can try it. There are two philosophical lessons which I think have made a difference for me in everyday life. The first one, which I guess I find most directly in Spinoza, is the idea that we shouldn't spend so much time blaming people for not living up to moral standards of good behaviour. Yes, it's easy to look at bad things going on in the world and think 'That group of people, they do such bad things, they are terrible people'. But taking the (Spinozist) philosophical view, there are certain determinate causes that make the world the way it is, including the social world and people's behaviour in it.

If screaming and complaining about bad behaviour helps to fix it, great, but often the blame doesn't serve any purpose, and you would be better spending your energy trying to understand human behaviour rather than condemn it.

The other thing which I found very interesting is Rawls' idea of 'reasonable pluralism'. Sometimes philosophers tend to think that if only you could reason with people enough, they would all agree on the same thing. If only people would concentrate, we could all get everybody to agree on 'the true' and 'the right'. Political philosophers push quite hard on the idea that you can have a whole lot of reasonable people, and they're *just* not going to agree. I find that a very challenging idea, not intellectually but practically. Even if you can think of all the ways societies change over time, and improve and become more inclusive — still, people are not going to be able to be brought, even under the best conditions by force of argument, to agree on some things. And I find that very challenging, but also sort of interesting when you've got people that you really can't stand the views of, and that you think are completely wrong. You can try to critique, to give reasons, to explain the consequences. But in the end, those irreducible differences of conviction may remain, and that's what I find interesting.

**Racher: Yeah, it speaks to the intuition of 'agree to disagree'. You're not actually reaching a certain conclusion together, but you're just sort of cooperating and compromising in between. But there's no specific stance that you're on afterwards, after all that arguing.**

Yeah, sometimes 'agree to disagree' is just like: I've got my opinion, everybody's got their opinion, can't do anything about it. When we teach, that doesn't cut it. There's judgments, there's arguments, it's not good enough just to say 'I've got my opinion, you've got yours'. You've got to argue about it. But even when we do that engagement, that intellectual work, still there's this disagreement. Sometimes my students, particularly the very politically impassioned ones, just view differences of opinions — particularly about questions of liberation or rights — as there's the right

people, and there's the wrong people. Either the wrong people are terribly ignorant, or they've got some sinister interest. To some degree that's true, that there's going to be people with self-interests or ignorances or something. But even when you take away the self-interest, even when you take away that ignorance, there still can be differences. That's interesting to me.

**Will: You have already started to discuss a bit about the philosophical discipline, how it functioned when you were studying and a bit about how you think it's changed. Looking to the future, how do you think or hope philosophy will change and evolve over the next 20-30 years?**

I think academia is becoming sort of, in one sense, more rigorous. But there's always this curiosity, you know, trying to be more rigorous and have better scholarship. Whenever you try to rigorise anything  you get all sorts of perverse effects. And one is, that rigour also encourages incredibly narrow work. This is not just a problem for philosophy, it's a problem for any discipline. An undergraduate is a bit freer of this, and then it comes to sit on you very heavily once you become a grad student. To make a clear contribution that nobody can complain about, it has to be a very, very narrow one. This is a pressure on every discipline; and a pressure on philosophy too. But I think that way  is just a real risk for philosophy. And so I think that on the one hand, you have to have your core, as I said before, you have to have confidence in your philosophical methods. And sometimes really, if you want to make a point, well, you do really have to go really narrow. But I feel like I want to at least counterbalance that with the feeling of, there's a whole world of wonderful work out there in the disciplines. And maybe if I read that, I don't know how in advance, but maybe that would give me food for thought. And I've actually seen that happen sometimes. So for instance, once upon a time, most philosophers had nothing much to say about feminism, gender, or race. Work on those topics was really not welcomed in philosophy. But over recent years there has been more and more boundary crossing and now you have this very productive research programme on these

questions of structural injustice. And that's a nice example of where even with pressures to stay in your lane, sometimes you can reach out and bring in something new and exciting. And I think that that has to happen.

One other way that philosophy needs to evolve is to reckon with its own long tradition of Western chauvinism. There's still this conception–and sometimes self-conception–of philosophy and political theory carrying a unique Western heritage which needs to be protected, traceable back to the ancient Greeks and their invention of critical thinking and democracy. Well, I don't think that it is particularly intellectually viable, and indeed, the rest of the humanities have really moved beyond that and become much more global over recent decades. It has to happen in philosophy also, and I think that, here in Singapore, we have a bit of a head start, because we already have plenty of people working in different traditions of philosophy, and at Yale-NUS that's part of our undergraduate curriculum too. But there's no doubt that this kind of broadening is really hard work. Because you spend your whole time getting up to speed in one tradition. And it's no easy matter, professionally speaking, to jump across traditions. I think that's very much the case in the history of philosophy. I think that's something that has to change. There's been many efforts at that, some of them are false starts and some overly broad efforts to draw connections between things. But I think it's important to link disciplines together, for example history philosophy, to try to be a bit less parochial.

There's another pressure, which is kind of beyond the domain of just philosophy, which is the decline of the humanities. I think once upon a time it was a respectable thing to have your humanities major; these days, if people are a little bit nervous about their job prospects, they're going to really be cautious about humanities.

Sandra as an MA student, presenting at her first philosophy conference: 2004 AAP-NZ ,Waikato

**Will: You have sort touch on this when you're talking about the integration of critical race theory and feminist theory into philosophy; but could I get you discuss if you have noticed a change in how certain underrepresented groups are becoming representative philosophy during your time in philosophy?**

It's an interesting question. I can't really comment very precisely on the changing representation of racial/ethnic minorities in philosophy, because working in Singapore, we are just starting with a very different racial/ethnic makeup of society compared to Australian institutions. But certainly, in general terms, philosophy historically has been less successful than other humanities disciplines in accommodating women and minority groups. Some changes towards inclusion are also underway. So, in the past, if you were a woman or a person of colour and you wanted to write about that very central aspect of your lived experience, that was viewed as 'unphilosophical'. Now, since the incursion of feminist thought

and race theory into philosophy, these topics count as respectable. But that is only one facet of the problem–not every woman or person of colour wants to write on their lived experience. It's a separate question how to account for the low representation of women within logic. But here, there's some easy low-hanging fruit for the profession: if we can stop having faculty tell people not to do advanced logic because they're a girl, that would be kind of helpful, right?

It does seem like there's some headway, but it's slow. And I think we try to look at every way we can.  At least, now we're aware of that as an issue and so we try to make sure that we don't reward certain behaviours that are gendered behaviours, for instance, that are only very indirectly related to the quality of the work. We try to be very clear on that as different degrees of outspokenness or confidence don't necessarily actually match with the quality of the works. We try to think about that.

**Thomas: Can you maybe tell us, to conclude what's been a really interesting discussion, about a book or paper that had a particularly profound effect on your intellectual development?**

I think Nietzsche actually, in a funny way. It's funny because I don't work on Nietzsche now. You can imagine that when you read Nietzsche, it's a whole different way of starting to think about ideas and values, which is thinking about how they play in the world, what they do, where they come from, how they change over time. And so I think that Nietzsche kind of gave me permission to think about those questions that are asked;  if you ask 'what is the Just and the Good?' Nietzsche gives you the permission to go off the track and ask all the more suspicious and tricky questions.

It's not something that I've then worked on. I think I found the highly unsystematic form of it troublesome, and I think there's also something very strident about Nietzsche that that didn't appeal to me, but just that sort of " knocking philosophy off a pedestal" — I found that very bracing.

**Thomas: Thank you so much, Sandra. That concludes the second interview of our *Conversations from the Region* series.**

You can see more of Sandra Leonie Field's work [here](#) , or consider purchasing a copy of her book, *Potentia*.
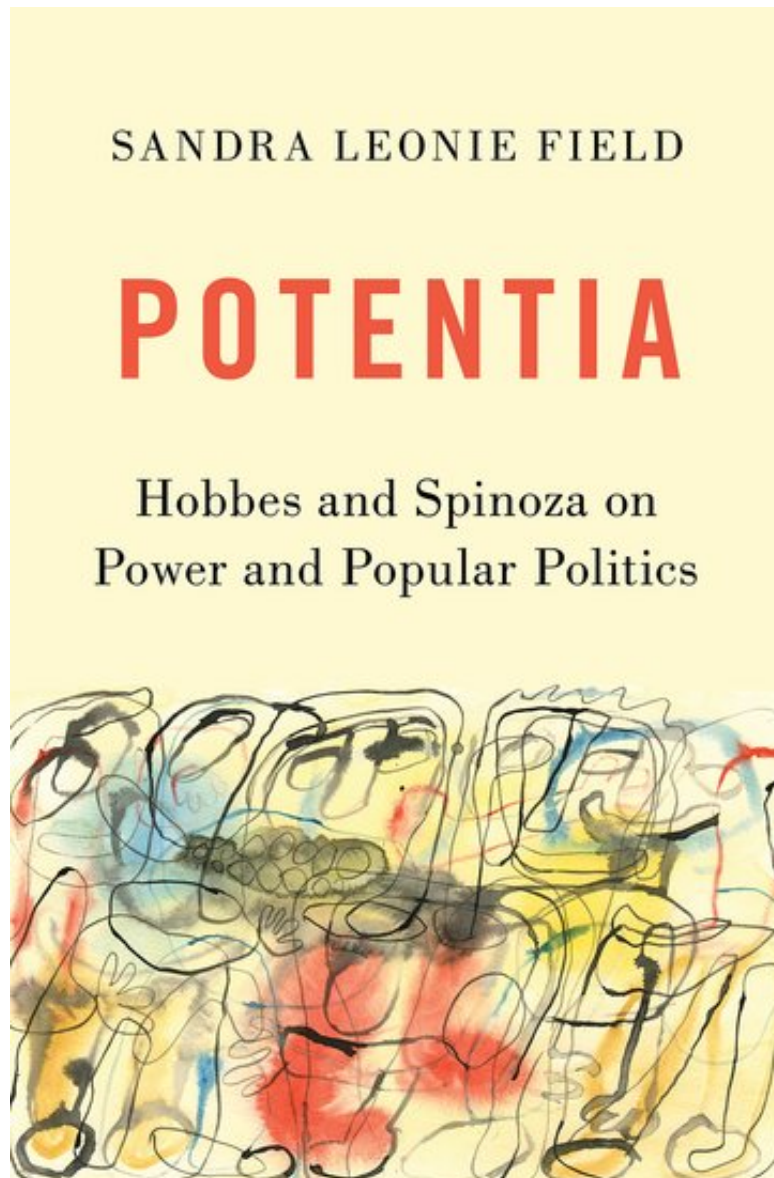


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# Volume 2, Issue 2 *December 2020*

## A Kantian Take on Mind Extension

**Levi Haeck,** *Ghent University*

*Abstract.* I assess Andy Clark and David Chalmers' groundbreaking exposition of the extended mind thesis (EMT), as originally put forward in 1998, from the viewpoint of Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism. Both stances are committed to investigating how extension might be constitutive of the mind, yet they do so on completely different terms. In Section 1, I set out how Kant relativises the Cartesian distinction between mind and world by showing how the very internality of the mind is necessarily constituted in relation to extension, giving rise to the suggestion that the mind is an activity. In Section 2, I use this Kantian dynamic to assess Clark and Chalmers' claim that at certain times and under certain conditions the mind is extended into the world. Although they compellingly show that the functions of the mind are sometimes *taken over* by the world, a close reading of their text reveals that this does not really challenge the Cartesian opposition between mind and extension. This allows for the conclusion that Kant's eighteenth-century approach to EMT stands much further from Cartesianism – but also from computationalism – than its twentieth-century competitor, thus preluding an alternative and perhaps more radical pathway to conceptualising mind extension.

*Levi Haeck has recently commenced a PhD at Ghent University, and specialises in Kant's transcendental logic and how this discloses a subtle yet fundamental relation between logic and metaphysics.*

## The Nature of Pleasure in Plato's *Philebus*

**Ruby Hornsby,** *University of Leeds*

*Abstract.* The central question in *Philebus* concerns whether the life of pleasure or the life or reason is most akin to the good human life.

Naturally, engagement in such discussion requires an adequate analysis of the natures of pleasure, rationality, and the good. It is the purpose of this paper to outline and defend a (non-exhaustive) two-fold account of pleasure as presented in the dialogue. Specifically, the paper will argue for the claim that Plato advocates an account of pleasure as a process of change that occurs in sentient beings either when the harmonious natural condition is genuinely or apparently restored (impure pleasure), or when certain potentials are actualised by the rational human (pure pleasure).

*Ruby Hornsby is pursuing her Master's degree in philosophy at the University of Leeds, England. Her research interests predominantly lie in ancient philosophy, with recent work focused on Platonic conceptions of pleasure, friendship, and the extent to which they are welcome in the good human life.*

## Star Models and the Semantics of Infectiousness

**Matthew W. G. McClure,** *University of Edinburgh*

*Abstract.* The first degree entailment (FDE) family is a group of logics, a many-valued semantics for each system of which is obtained from classical logic by adding to the classical truth-values *true* and *false* any subset of {*both*, *neither*, *indeterminate*}, where *indeterminate* is an *infectious* value (any formula containing a subformula with the value *indeterminate* itself has the value *indeterminate*). In this paper, we see how to extend a version of star semantics for the logics whose many-valued semantics lack *indeterminate* to star semantics for logics whose many-valued semantics include *indeterminate*. The equivalence of the many-valued semantics and star semantics is established by way of a soundness and completeness proof. The upshot of the novel semantics in terms of the applied semantics of these logics, and specifically infectiousness, is explored, settling on the idea that infectiousness concerns ineffability.

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