
KAMIL MAJCHEREK

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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION AND COMPETENCE

AOS: Medieval Philosophy

AOC: Early Modern Philosophy, Metaphysics

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Philosophy and in the Collaborative Program in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, University of Toronto (dissertation: <i>Medieval Metaphysics of Artifacts, 1250-1500</i> ; committee: Martin Pickavé (chair), Peter King, Deborah Black, Marleen Rozemond)	2018-present (expected 2022)
Recognised Visiting Student, University of Oxford (advisor: Cecilia Trifogli)	Hilary 2021
M.Phil. in Philosophy, University of Cambridge (dissertation: <i>Paul of Venice's Metaphysics of Artefacts</i> , graduated with distinction; supervisor: John Marenbon)	2017-2018
M.A. in Philosophy, Jagiellonian University, Poland (graduated with distinction; advisor: Marcin Karas)	2014-2016
B.A. in Philosophy, Jagiellonian University, Poland	2011-2014

PUBLICATIONS

"Paul of Venice's Metaphysics of Artefacts" (<i>British Journal for the History of Philosophy</i> 28(1): 29-48)	2020
"Walter Chatton's Rejection of Final Causality" (<i>Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy</i> 7: 212-42)	2019

ARTICLES UNDER REVIEW

"Why is a House Nothing More than Stones and Pieces of Wood? Ockham's Argument and Its Critics"

"Separability of Forms in Late Medieval Metaphysics: The Case of Artificial Forms"

ARTICLES IN PREPARATION

"Final Causality: Peter Auriol and His Critics"

"Nicole Oresme on the Metaphysical Status of Artefacts"

PRESENTATIONS

(* – invited talks)

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| “Medieval Realism about Artifacts: Artificial Forms as Accidents”
<i>(The Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy Inaugural Conference, South Bend, Notre Dame University, IN)</i> | 2021 |
| “Artificial Production and Natural Generation: A Late Medieval Debate”
<i>(Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress 2021, Edmonton, University of Alberta, AB)</i> | 2021 |
| “Final Causality: Peter Auriol and His Critics”*
<i>(The End? Final Causation in Natural Philosophy and Moral Psychology 1300-1700, University of Stockholm)</i> | 2021 |
| “William of Ockham on Artefacts”*
<i>(19th Meeting of Medieval Philosophy Network, The Warburg Institute, London; 6th Toronto-Cologne Graduate Student Colloquium)</i> | 2017, 2018 |

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

As an Instructor:

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| PHL103: Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality
<i>(University of Toronto)</i> | Summer 2021 |
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As a Teaching Assistant:

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| PHL206: Later Medieval Philosophy
<i>(University of Toronto, as tutorial leader; instructor: Simona Vucu)</i> | Winter 2021 |
| PHL205: Early Medieval Philosophy
<i>(University of Toronto, as tutorial leader; instructor: Martin Pickavé)</i> | Fall 2020 |
| PHL313: Topics in 17 th and 18 th Century Philosophy
<i>(University of Toronto, as grader; instructor: Valerie Bernard)</i> | Summer 2020 |
| PHL256: Philosophy in the Age of the Internet
<i>(University of Toronto, as grader; instructor: Mark Kingwell)</i> | Winter 2020 |
| PHL244: Human Nature
<i>(University of Toronto, as grader; instructor: Brendan de Kenessey)</i> | Fall 2019 |
| Metaphysics
<i>(Jagiellonian University, as tutorial leader; instructor: Jan Kielbasa)</i> | Fall 2016 |

OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITY

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| Research Assistant to Prof. Marleen Rozemond | 2021-2022 |
| Research Assistant to Prof. Martin Pickavé | 2018-2021 |
| Convenor of the “Medieval Philosophy Reading Group”
<i>(together with John Marenbon; University of Cambridge, Michaelmas and Lent terms)</i> | 2017-2018 |

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Canadian Philosophical Association

TRAINING

University of Toronto Teaching Assistants' Training Program 2020-2021
Teaching Fundamentals Certificate

AWARDS

Mary H. Beatty Fellowship 2021-2022
(10,000 CAD in two instalments, University of Toronto)

Jan Wojcik Memorial Prize 2020
(4,000 USD; awarded by the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* to one graduate student per year for archive research)

Dr. Richard W. Yee Fellowship in Medieval Philosophy 2018-2020
(1000 CAD/year, University of Toronto)

Timothy Joyce MPhil Studentship 2017-2018
(3,500 GBP, University of Cambridge)

Chancellor's Scholarship for the Best Students 2012-2015
(17,000 PLN in total, awarded three times, Jagiellonian University)

LANGUAGES

Polish (native)

English (fluent)

French (reading)

German (basic reading)

Italian (basic reading)

Latin (advanced reading of medieval Latin, including palaeography and textual editing)

REFERENCES

Martin Pickavé (supervisor)
University of Toronto
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Peter King
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Cecilia Trifogli
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John Marenbon
Trinity College, University of Cambridge
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Jessica Gelber (teaching mentor)
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Kamil Majcherek – Dissertation Abstract

My dissertation gives a comprehensive account and critical analysis of a medieval debate that has not been studied in depth before, about the metaphysical status of artifacts. Are artifacts, such as statues, chairs, and houses, things distinct from their component parts? For example, is a chair something over and above the pieces of wood out of which it has been made? It is well known that these issues are intensely debated in contemporary metaphysics. But what is much less known, even to historians of philosophy, is that the contemporary discussion had a precedent in the Middle Ages. The two main camps in the medieval debate were, on the one hand, realists, according to whom an artifact is a thing distinct from its natural components, because it adds over and above them a new form: the artificial form. For example, a chair is distinct from the pieces of wood because it adds over and above them the new form, the form of the chair. On the other hand, opposing the realists were the nominalists, according to whom an artifact is nothing over and above the natural things out of which it is made. The nominalists argued that artificial forms postulated by the realists should not be admitted into our ontology.

I was the sole recipient of the Jan Wojcik Memorial Prize, awarded by the *Journal for the History of Philosophy*, which allowed me to conduct extensive manuscript research in European libraries in the summer of 2020. Thanks to the possibility to examine almost all of the extant relevant texts from the period, including over seventy texts available in manuscript form only, I have been able to present an analysis of unprecedented breadth and depth. An appendix provides about 150 pages of critical editions of previously unpublished works.

From the historical perspective, the dissertation shows that it was reductionism about artifacts that was a vastly predominant view in the later fourteenth and in the fifteenth century. It also demonstrates that reductionism about artifacts was not a completely uniform movement. Rather, there were two main strands of it, one originating from Ockham and one from Buridan, with the latter being more popular in the late Middle Ages, especially in Central Europe.

From a more systematic perspective, one of my most important conclusions is that nominalism about artifacts has an upper hand in the debate. For at least several of the arguments proposed by the proponents of nominalism are based on premises that are not only plausible but also commonly accepted by the realists. For example, one of the most influential reductionist arguments, first advanced by Ockham, shows that artifacts made by composition, such as houses, cannot be anything more than their component parts, because the components that begin to compose a house can do so without acquiring any new form. As a result, the house can be made without the production of any new form. As I show, what makes Ockham's argument particularly devastating is the key assumption on which it rests, and which is also endorsed by many realists, that local motion is by itself not sufficient for the production of any new thing. Moving things in space only leads to the change in their location but not to the production of something new. Since the making of a house consists in moving stones and pieces of wood in space by putting them together, a house is not a genuinely new thing. My analysis of how the realists try to reply to this argument shows that their attempts are often inconsistent and unconvincing.

In addition, I show that realism about artifacts fails to deliver on one of its main promises, which was to show that (and how) an artifact (e.g., a chair) is a thing in its own right, distinct from its components. I show that artifact realists lack metaphysical resources to ground the real distinction between artificial and natural things. I explain that this shortcoming is mainly due to their commitment to the view that artificial forms are mere accidents, and that as a result artifacts are merely accidental unities. Because of that, artifacts are metaphysically closer to other accidental compounds, such as Socrates and his whiteness, than to essential unities such as the matter and (substantial) form of a dog. Because other accidental compounds are not things in their own right, neither are artifacts, which means a complete failure of the realist programme.