



# LUND UNIVERSITY

## Research in Practical Philosophy in Sweden: 1998 - 2008, appendix to Report of the International Panel for the Evaluation of Swedish Research in Philosophy to the Swedish Research Council

Rabinowicz, Wlodek

2009

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Rabinowicz, W. (2009). *Research in Practical Philosophy in Sweden: 1998 - 2008, appendix to Report of the International Panel for the Evaluation of Swedish Research in Philosophy to the Swedish Research Council.* Swedish Research Council.

*Total number of authors:*

1

### General rights

Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

### Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117  
221 00 Lund  
+46 46-222 00 00

Wlodek Rabinowicz

## Research in Practical Philosophy in Sweden: 1998-2008

In this short summary, which is aimed to give a rough picture of the main lines of research in practical philosophy in Sweden during the last decade, I have decided to organize the presentation by universities rather than by particular research subjects. It is to be hoped that this will give the reader a better grasp of what is going on at various departments. The summary is to a large extent a collective work: It is based on the reports prepared by professors **Erik Carlson**, Uppsala University, **Sven-Ove Hansson**, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, **Christian Munthe**, University of Gothenburg, **Bo Petersson**, Linköping University, **Hans Ruin**, Södertörn University College, **Torbjörn Tännsjö**, Stockholm University, and on my own report for Lund University.

### Gothenburg

The arrival in 1995 of Torbjörn Tännsjö as chaired professor in practical philosophy initiated a demanding process of giving the subject solidity, direction and international connection. Tännsjö's fields of interest at the time (normative ethics and bioethics) therefore dominated for some time. The arrival of postdoctoral fellow (forskarassistent) Claudio Tamburrini and lecturer Christian Munthe initially served to underline this trend, although both brought interests of their own, in the philosophy of law, sport, and applied ethics with a broader scope and a more empirically informed touch. The research at the department has then gradually broadened its focus, emphasised by Ingmar Persson taking over the chair in 2004, Gunnar Björnsson starting as a postdoctoral fellow, Bengt Brülde being employed as a lecturer, and Daniela Cutas taking up the position as a postdoctoral fellow. Parallel to this, practical philosophy has come to interact more closely both with theoretical philosophy and with other subjects, such as the history of ideas, cognitive science, linguistics, political science, medicine, economics, etc. In sum, the focus of the research nowadays can be described as a mix of applied philosophy and metaethics, with a strong focus on combining interdisciplinarity with solid basic research.

In the period up to his departure in 2002, Tännsjö published two international books (*Hedonistic Utilitarianism*, Edinburgh University Press, 1998; and *Coercive Care: The Ethics of Choice in Health and Medicine*, Routledge, 1999) and four books in Swedish, besides a number of papers in peer-reviewed journals.

In 1998, the department hosted an international research conference on Sports and Values, resulting in the seminal volume *Values in Sport* (E & FN SPON, 2000), edited by Tamburrini and Tännsjö (who also contributed chapters), and also containing a chapter by Munthe, besides contributions by other leading international scholars in the field.

Munthe (who was promoted to a full professor in 2004) secured two separate research grants in 1999-2000, for research in the fields of environmental ethics and the ethics of risk, and the ethics of genetic testing, respectively. The latter project, which is still running, involves

interdisciplinary cooperation with genetics, nursing, oncology and theology, and has produced peer-reviewed papers, books (one at CUP) and book chapters, including contributions to leading scientific encyclopaedias. The former project has produced one PhD dissertation (Petra Andersson: *Humanity and Nature*), and a book manuscript in English on the ethical basis of the precautionary principle, currently undergoing review by academic publishers.

In 2002-2005, several researchers and PhD candidates in practical philosophy partook in the project on Relativism (supported by the Bank of Sweden and including collaboration with Theoretical Philosophy and History of Ideas), which arranged an international research conference on this subject in 2004. Several contributions to this conference can be found in the volume *Lectures on Relativism*, published by the department. So far, one PhD dissertation (Ragnar Francén: *Metaethical Relativism*) has been produced within this project.

In 2003-2006, Munthe was a national partner in the project European public health ethics network, funded by the European Commission within FP5, and contributed heavily to its final report, as well as to a theory of the goals of public health, due to be published.

Brülde, who has been connected to the department for a long time, presented his PhD dissertation in 1998 (*The Human Good*), partook in the Relativism project, and has then pursued research in the field of the philosophy of health, health policy, happiness and quality of life, resulting in a standing as a world-leading expert in the intersection of these fields. He has published many peer-reviewed papers and several books within his area of research.

Ingmar Persson's main achievement is the book *The Retreat of Reason* (OUP, 2005), which covers issues in philosophical psychology, such as the nature of desire, sensation and emotion, practical reasons and rationality, personal identity, and responsibility and free will. He has also done research in applied ethics, in particular in a three-year research programme on stem cells and genetic ethics, issuing in a book, *Jämlikhet från början* [Equality from the beginning] (2004). He has published papers on equality, population problems, animal welfare and environmental issues. Currently, he is working on a book on the difference between consequentialist and deontological conceptions of responsibility and the connection between responsibility and practical reasons. He is in charge of a research project, supported by the Bank of Sweden, on morality and agent-relativity, which employs his former graduate student Caj Strandberg.

Gunnar Björnsson joined the department in 2005 as a postdoctoral fellow. His overall research interest is naturalistic analyses of modal and deontic judgments, and he has published in both peer-review journals and anthologies on various forms of modal judgments, emotivist or noncognitivist analysis of moral judgments, neo-kantian analysis of moral judgments, causal judgments and conditionals. His present focus is on moral disagreement and moral objectivity and relativity, with some forays into the analysis of judgments of moral responsibility. Some of his present work on moral relativity is in collaboration with Professor Stephen Finlay from USC Los Angeles, as well as with his former graduate student Ragnar Francén, who recently defended his dissertation on metaethical relativism, and with people in Theoretical Philosophy at University of Gothenburg.

Daniela Cutas joined the department in 2007 as a postdoctoral fellow. Her main research subject is reproductive ethics, but she has also published in other areas of practical philosophy (e.g. the ethics of immortality). Since her association with the department, she published a book on the ethics and policy of the technologies of assisted reproduction and genetic

engineering, as well as several peer-reviewed papers in international journals. Currently, she is co-authoring articles with researchers from the University of Birmingham and the University of Manchester, as well as writing independently. She is also developing a new book proposal for publication, on the ethics of parenting.

## Linköping

Research within the field of practical philosophy is carried out at three departments of the university, even if it is only in the philosophy department that the denomination “practical philosophy” is explicitly used. They are (1) the Department of Philosophy, (2) the Center for Applied Ethics and (3) the Department of Health and Society. There is a developed cooperation between these three departments in courses as well as research.

(1) The **philosophy department** is quite small. It was established in 1990. There is one professor of practical philosophy, Bo Petersson. His research deals with research ethics, moral theory and the history of modern Swedish philosophy. Most of his publications are written in Swedish, some are in English. He is now working on a study of the conceptual analysis of the Uppsala school (1900-1940). There is one PhD-student working on a treatise on Michael Walzer’s theory of justice. - The department arranged Filosofidagarna 2003 (a bi-annual meeting for philosophers in Sweden).

(2) In the **Center for Applied Ethics** (CTE) there are two professors of ethics: Göran Collste, Applied Ethics, and Anders Nordgren, Bio-ethics. CTE was established in 1995. Collste’s research deals with the ethics of information technology, global justice and human dignity. Nordgren focuses on four fields: the impact of evolutionary theory and genetics on the conceptions of human nature, the ethics of medical genetics, ethical issues raised by assisted reproductive technologies and animal ethics. Nordgren writes mainly in English, while Collste uses both Swedish and English. CTE has two PhD-students, one writing a thesis on *Judging in the Public Sphere* (supervisor: Anders Nordgren), and one working with issues on the borderline between ethics and economics (supervisor: Bo Petersson). CTE has arranged international conferences on e.g. reflective equilibrium, the ethics of nanotechnology, and the ethics of IT (within ETHICOMP).

(3) The **Department of Health and Society** is committed to thematic studies. It is the biggest department of the three here mentioned. Within the philosophy part of the department, there are three professors: Lennart Nordenfelt and Ingemar Nordin, professors of Health and Society, and Stellan Welin, professor of Gene-ethics (a relatively recent appointment). There are also post-docs working on ethical matters (Kristin Zeiler). The department was established in the beginning of the 1980s. Lennart Nordenfelt has long been an internationally recognized authority in the philosophy of medicine. His work in that area includes studies on health, illness, disability, welfare and quality of life. Most of his writings are in English. So far, he has guided 10 students to their PhD-degree. He is now working with questions dealing with animal ethics and the notion of dignity, involving a PhD-student in each subject. Within the field of practical philosophy, Ingemar Nordin (who also works on philosophy of science) deals with political philosophy and with questions of animal rights. His works are mainly published in Swedish. Stellan Welin has two PhD-students working on gene-ethical subjects. The Department of Health and Society has well established international contacts within the philosophy of medicine.

## Lund

The faculty of the practical philosophy unit consists of three full professors, Dan Egonsson, Wlodek Rabinowicz, Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen, an associate professor, Björn Petersson, two researchers, Johan Brännmark, David Alm, and one “adjunkt”, Jonas Josefsson.

The Swedish Research Council (VR) provides external funding for one faculty member (Alm), a long-term grant for a leading researcher (Rabinowicz), and has recently awarded a third member (Brännmark) a full-time four-year grant. During 1999 - 2002 and 2003 - 2006, respectively, the Tercentenary Foundation of the Bank of Sweden (RJ) financed two large four-year Lund-Uppsala projects: the first one on *acting over time* and the second on *philosophical theories of value*, both coordinated from Lund.

Much of the unit’s research in recent four or five years has revolved around value theory and especially on *formal axiology*. It is an area of study that focuses on the structural features of our value notions: on the logic of value, its measurement, distinctions between different value types, general taxonomy of value relations, conceptual connections between value and other normative notions, etc.

Other areas in which the unit conducts or has conducted research are practical rationality (Egonsson, Petersson, Rabinowicz), decision theory (Rabinowicz), quality of life (Egonsson), the concepts of desert, rights, and equality (Alm), group action and shared responsibility (Petersson), neo-Kantian ethics and virtue ethics (Brännmark). Graduate students have done work in formal axiology, political philosophy, moral realism, moral psychology, practical rationality, social ontology, Kantian ethics. Current PhD-projects focus on value analysis, hedonism, and the ‘practicality’ of moral theories.

Completed doctoral dissertations:

- Sven-Ove Hansson, *Structures of Value*, 1999, revised version published by Cambridge UP in 2001.
- Magnus Jiborn, *Voluntary Coercion: Collective action and the Social Contract*, 1999.
- Björn Petersson, *Belief & Desire : The standard model of intentional action - critique and defense*, 2000.
- Lena Halldenius, *Liberty Revisited: A Historical and Systematic Account of an Egalitarian Conception of Liberty and Legitimacy*, 2001.
- Johan Brännmark, *Morality and the pursuit of happiness: A study in Kantian ethics*, 2002.
- Kutte Jönsson, *Det förbjudna mödraskapet. En moralfilosofisk undersökning av surrogatmödraskap* [The forbidden motherhood: An ethical study of surrogate motherhood], 2003.
- Caj Strandberg, *Moral Reality -A Defence of Moral Realism*, 2004.
- Mats Johansson, *Empatisk förståelse - från inlevelse till osjälviskhet* [Empathic understanding – from Einfühlung to unselfishness], 2004.
- Åsa Andersson, *Power and Social Ontology*, 2007.

Practical philosophy in Lund has close ties to theoretical philosophy and cognitive science, which leads to a fair amount of research cooperation within the department. The links with other philosophical departments in Sweden, especially in Uppsala and to some extent in Stockholm and Gothenburg, are well-developed and there is a thriving cooperation with philosophers in other countries, especially in UK (Oxford, LSE, Reading), but also in US and Australia (Research School for Social Science at the Australian National University in Canberra).

The international standing of the unit is strong: Lund is considered to be one of the world centres for the research on value theory. Research in other areas has also been internationally visible.

The RJ-supported project on acting over time covered (i) dynamic inconsistency and backward induction, (ii) resolute choice in cooperation and conflict, (iii) time-related issues in moral philosophy: time-bias, consequentialism, the normative relevance of one's future actions. An important aspect of the project was cooperation with decision theorists working on related issues. This was facilitated by the fact that the coordinator (Rabinowicz) was at the same time an editor of the cross-disciplinary CUP journal *Economics and Philosophy*.

As mentioned before, the unit's most successful research area in recent years has been value theory. Here follows a short overview of some of the research issues in this area:

(1) *Analysis of value*. The so-called "buck-passing account" takes the value of  $x$  to consist in the existence of normative reasons for pro-attitudes towards  $x$ . While attractive, this analysis confronts a number of difficulties. (i) If pro-attitudes essentially involve evaluations of some sort, the account is in danger of being circular. (ii) Some reasons for pro-attitudes are of the 'wrong kind', so to speak, from the point of view of the analysis: There might be considerations that make the pro-attitude valuable, but not its object.

(2) *Typology of value*. Here, the focus is on distinctions between different value types: intrinsic versus extrinsic value, basic versus derived value, value for a person (or a group) versus value period, etc. Another set of problems within this sub-area concerns the taxonomy of value relations and in particular such issues as evaluative incommensurability.

(3) *Value bearers*. What kinds of objects can be value bearers? Among candidates there are both concrete and abstract entities. However, the theoretical goal of simplification has given rise to attempts to reduce all value to the value of states of affairs. Aggregating value is much easier if all value bearers are of the same ontological type. While attractive, it is questionable whether such a reduction is possible to accomplish.

(4) *Value measurement*. Can all values be weighed against each other? Aren't radically different values incomparable? And aren't some values 'infinitely' greater than some other values? Furthermore: How does the value of the whole relate to the values of its parts? If the former need not be a function of the latter, then it is difficult to formulate general principles for value aggregation.

The unit's research, which has been presented at many international conferences and published in prestigious philosophical journals, is widely known nowadays. The coordinator of the value project, Rabinowicz, is preparing a collection of his papers on the subject for Oxford University Press. Another member of the project, Rønnow-Rasmussen, works on a book on personal value. In 1995, he edited an anthology *Recent Work on Intrinsic Value* (Ashgate) together with an American colleague, professor Michael J. Zimmerman. One should also mention the contributions to the project by Johan Brännmark, several of which were published in international peer-reviewed journals.

## **Stockholm University**

### **Research group**

The group consists of Torgny Segerstedt Pro Futura Fellow Gustaf Arrhenius, professor emeritus Lars Bergström, FD Åsa Carlson, universitetslektor Björn Eriksson, docent Lars O. Ericsson, FD Jens Johansson, FD Ulrik Kihlbom (affiliated to Stockholm Bioethics Centre),

FK Hans Mathlein, professor Ragnar Ohlsson, FD Håkan Salwén, FD Claudio M. Tamburrini, professor Folke Tersman (until 1 January 2008 then professor of Practical Philosophy at Uppsala University) Uppsala) and Kristian-Claëson Professor of Practical Philosophy, Torbjörn Tännsjö. Two guest researchers are affiliated to the department as post-docs, FD Ann Heberlein and FD Attila Tanyi, both supported by the Swedish Research Council.

A wide area of subjects has been covered by the researches at the department. Here are only some examples:

### **Normative ethics**

Tännsjö has defended hedonistic utilitarianism in a book under the same title. In his dissertation, Kihlbom has defended moral particularism: a view according to which morality cannot be summarised in a set of general principles, however complicated they might be. Arrhenius has been working on issues in population ethics – his work in that area has been recognized worldwide. He has also published several papers, in leading international journals, on issues lying at the borderline between economics and philosophy (social choice, game theory, formal axiology).

### **Metaethics**

Folke Tersman, Gunnar Björnsson and Torbjörn Tännsjö have extensively published in metaethics. In *Moral Realism* Tännsjö defended the idea of a mind-independent objective and knowable moral reality, In his recent book, *Moral Disagreement*, Tersman questions this realistic view. Håkan Salwén has in his dissertation defended Hume's claim that normative conclusions cannot be derived from the description of empirical reality. Tännsjö, Bergström and Arrhenius have published several papers on the structure of normative and axiological theories. Tännsjö works on a book manuscript on practical reasons. Bergström, Tersman and Tännsjö have been involved in a research project on Relativism, supported by the Tercentenary Foundation of the Bank of Sweden, and they have all published within this project. Tännsjö was one of the project's coordinators, together with colleagues from Gothenburg.

### **Moral metaphysics**

Jens Johansson has published extensively on problems in moral metaphysics, in particular on death and personal identity.

### **Political philosophy**

Folke Tersman has lead an inter-disciplinary research project, Democracy Unbound, supported by the Swedish Research Council. Gustaf Arrhenius, Lars Bergström, Folke Tersman, Anna Petré and Torbjörn Tännsjö have all published papers in the project, and Tännsjö has published a book on *Global Democracy: The Case for a World Government* (2008).

Gustaf Arrhenius has lead a joint Swedish and South-African project on Ideology, Oppression, and Democracy, supported by SIDA and the Swedish Research Council. Arrhenius and Tännsjö have published extensively within this project.

### **Bioethics**

Stockholm Centre of Bioethics (SCB), led by Torbjörn Tännsjö, has been involved in two EU-projects, one on human enhancement, and one on tissue banking. The latter has just been initiated and the former (a joint cooperation between the universities in

Stockholm, Oxford, Bristol, Milano and Maastricht, supported by EU's Sixth Framework Programme) has just been finalised. Arrhenius, Tamburrini and Tännsjö have published extensively on human enhancement within the former project. Tamburrini and Tännsjö have jointly edited a book on genetic enhancement in sport. SCB has also been involved in a research project on IVF and social justice. Tännsjö has published several articles within the project.

## Stockholm, Royal Institute of Technology

Division of Philosophy at the Royal Institute of Technology was created in the year 2000. Its postgraduate education in philosophy is not divided into practical and theoretical philosophy as in most other Swedish universities. The division has a yearly output of about 40 articles in international journals. All licentiate and PhD theses are collections of papers for international journals.

Much of the division's work in ethics and decision theory is devoted to issues related to risk and uncertainty. Traditionally, moral philosophy has focused primarily on problems that can be staged in a deterministic setting, and it is largely left to decision theory to deal with the additional complications that follow when the consequences of alternative actions are not knowable beforehand. This has led to the neglect of the ethical aspects of risk taking *per se*. Researchers at this institute have investigated the difficulties that traditional moral theories have in treating problems of risk and uncertainty, and proposed ways to amend moral theory to account better for these problems. (cf. Sven Ove Hansson's papers on risk acceptance in *Erkenntnis* 2003 and on risk analysis in *Economics and Philosophy* 2006, and H el ene Hermansson's PhD thesis on *Rights at risk: ethical issues in risk management*, 2007.)

The traditional approach in risk analysis and risk-benefit analysis is straightforwardly utilitarian: Risks are weighed against benefits without regard to whom these risks and benefits accrue. In the works mentioned above, this approach is rejected, and the crucial research question is "Under what conditions can an act that exposes A to a risk be justified by the fact that it also gives rise to a larger benefit to B?" One major class of solutions that have been investigated are those that are based on mutual "risk exchanges" that are to everyone's advantage. With this method many risk exposures can be justified, but contrary to the traditional approach this approach will block exploitative arrangements in which some parts of the population are exposed to risks and others gain all the benefits.

The department also conducts research on other issues in ethics and decision theory such as:

- Preference logic and preference change (Till Gr une and Sven Ove Hansson, anthology on preference change, to be published by Springer)
- Axiomatic arguments for expected utility maximization (PhD Thesis by Martin Peterson)
- Measurement of uncertainty (Licentiate thesis and coming PhD thesis by Jonas Clausen)
- Bias in scientific judgment (Licentiate thesis and coming PhD thesis by Birgitte Wandall)
- Rationality in goal-setting (Licentiate theses and coming PhD theses by Karin Edvardsson and Holger Rosencrantz)
- Incomparability (Licentiate thesis by Nicolas Espinoza)
- Ethics of traffic safety and risks in road traffic (PhD thesis by Jessica Nihl ne Fahlquist, coming PhD theses by Holger Rosencrantz and Sara Svensson.)
- Ethics of radiation protection (Licentiate thesis and coming thesis by Per Wikman Svahn)
- The concept of safety (Licentiate thesis and coming thesis by Niklas M oller)



- The precautionary principle (PhD Thesis by Per Sandin, journal articles by Sven Ove Hansson and Christina Rudén)
- Ethics of crisis management (Postdoc work by Per Sandin)
- Workplace ethics, implications of the work contract (PhD Thesis by Anders Persson)
- Ethics of surveillance (PhD Thesis and postdoc research by Elin Palm)
- Ethical aspects of the ownership of biological material (Licentiate thesis and coming PhD thesis by Barbro Björkman)
- Trust (PhD thesis by Madeleine Hayenhjelm)
- Paternalism and public health (Licentiate thesis and coming PhD thesis by Kalle Grill)
- Philosophical issues in social insurance (Licentiate thesis and coming PhD thesis by Mikael Dubois)

## Södertörn University College

This is a research environment of a recent origin: It was created less than ten years ago. It is special in two respects: (i) there is a strong focus on continental philosophy and history of philosophy; (ii) as a matter of principle, there is no division between practical and theoretical philosophy.

Apart from professor Hans Ruin, the group of researchers consists of Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback, Fredrika Spindler, Lisa Käll, Hans-Roland Johansson, Niklas Forsberg, Marcel Quarfood and Sven-Olov Vallenstein.

Four large research projects should be especially mentioned. Projects (i), (iii) and (iv) are financed by grants from the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies, while project (iv) has financing from the Swedish Research Council:

(i) *Tradition as a Utopia*: on transformations in continental philosophy powered by the attempts to give new interpretations of the Greeks.

(ii) *The notion of liberal education* (bildning) - its transformations from Romanticism to the present time.

Output: a collection of essays entitled *Bildning och person* [Liberal education and Person].

(iii) *Aesthetics and Politics* - focus on Nietzsche's and Hannah Arendt's views on the relationship between the aesthetic and the political.

(iv) *Technology and Life-World* (ongoing) - phenomenological perspectives on the philosophy of technology.

## Uppsala

### Senior researchers:

The senior researchers at the department that have been active during the period 1998-2008 include the following philosophers:

Professor Emeritus. Sven Danielsson (b. 1939); held the chair in practical philosophy until 2008, when he was succeeded by Folke Tersman. Danielsson began his philosophical career as a deontic logician and decision-theorist. Later, he published on a wide range of issues, including social choice theory, philosophy of language, formal axiology, normative ethics, and meta-ethics.

Professor Jan Österberg (b. 1941); the author of a distinguished work on ethical egoism (*Self and Others*, Reidel 1986). He later published articles on, i.a., consequentialism and common-sense morality, morality and action-guidance, Sidgwick's ethics, population ethics, and aesthetics. He is a co-author (with Wlodek Rabinowicz) of a well-known paper on preferentialism, "Value Based on Preferences" (*Economics and Philosophy*, 1996).

Professor Erik Carlson (b. 1961). Carlson's peer-reviewed publications to date include one monograph, *Consequentialism Reconsidered* (Kluwer, 1995), and about twenty-five papers, in journals such as *Noûs*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Analysis*, *Philosophical Studies*, and *Economics and Philosophy*. His areas of research include consequentialist ethics, axiology, the problems of free will and moral responsibility, and decision theory. He has also published in metaphysics and philosophy of religion.

Docent Thomas Anderberg (b. 1956); works in environmental and applied ethics, aesthetics, and philosophy of religion. He has published several monographs (in Swedish), attracting attention outside the professional philosophical community. His book *Guds moral* [God's Morality], 1997, on the problem of evil, met with strong acclaim and has been widely discussed. Anderberg regularly writes on philosophical topics in the daily press, and is a sought-after public lecturer and debater.

#### **PhD dissertations:**

Seven PhD-students have successfully defended their dissertations at the department between 1998 and 2008: Gustaf Arrhenius (2000), Krister Bykvist (1999), John Eriksson (2006), Gert Helgesson (2002), Jonas Olson (2005), Tomasz Pol (2001), and Frans Svensson (2006). Bykvist got a permanent position as a tutorial fellow at Oxford less than two years after completing his dissertation (on preferentialism). Arrhenius' thesis in population ethics has rendered him a position as an internationally recognised expert in this field. Olson's thesis in formal axiology is according to the faculty opponent, Prof. Brad Hooker (Reading), "by a large margin" the best of the more than 20 dissertations he has to date examined, among them a number from Oxford and Cambridge. Immediately after receiving his Ph. D. in May 2005, Olson was offered a three-year tutorial fellowship at Oxford, as well as a three-year research position at Reading.

#### **Research topics:**

Two strong areas of research are formal axiology and normative ethics. The former subject investigates the structural properties of the concept of value, and value bearers. Examples of central questions are: What kinds of entities can be bearers of value? Does intrinsic value ("value for its own sake") coincide with final value ("value as an end")? Do bearers of intrinsic or final value possess their value by necessity, or may it vary with the context? Are there organic unities? Are there incomparable bearers of value? Is intrinsic or final value measurable, and if so, on what type of scale? Is the relation "better than" generally transitive? Danielsson, Carlson, Olson and Österberg all do research in this area, and have published a significant number of articles in leading journals. Within the field of substantial axiology, Danielsson and Österberg have discussed hedonism and preferentialism. The latter theory was also the subject of Krister Bykvist's Ph. D. thesis (1999).

In normative ethics, the lively debate on consequentialism and utilitarianism has had a prominent place in the Department's research profile. Danielsson has argued that the structural difference between consequentialist and deontological moral theories is only

apparent; a claim that has been disputed by Carlson. Danielsson, Carlson, and Österberg have all suggested solutions to some much-discussed coordination problems for consequence-sensitive moral theories. Österberg has, in a series of papers, investigated the relationship between consequentialism and common-sense morality. Further, he and Carlson have discussed whether consequentialist theories can be action-guiding. In the internationally well-received book *Consequentialism Reconsidered*, and some later articles, Carlson has investigated how central concepts like “alternative” and “outcome” should be understood within the framework of a consequentialist theory. Österberg and Carlson have published papers in population ethics. This is also the subject of Gustaf Arrhenius Ph. D. thesis, *Future Generations* (2000), which has attracted international attention. Österberg and Svensson have published papers in virtue ethics, which is also the subject of Svensson’s forthcoming Ph. D. thesis.

Another research area is philosophy of religion. Apart from Anderberg’s above-mentioned work, Carlson has published two papers (in collaboration with Erik Olsson) on contemporary versions of the teleological proof of God’s existence. Further, Danielsson has published some discussion papers in the area.

Carlson has written a number of papers on the problems of free will and (in)determinism, five of which are published in peer-reviewed journals. This is also the subject of the forthcoming dissertation of one of the present PhD-students (Peter Ryman).

Meta-ethical questions, concerning the semantics of moral judgements, as well as the ontological status of value properties, have been discussed by Danielsson, e.g., in a series of papers on the moral supervenience thesis. Olson and Eriksson have written on topics in moral psychology, such as motive internalism and externalism.

Anderberg has published extensively in applied and environmental ethics, and Danielsson, Österberg and Carlson have all made contributions to decision theory.

*National and international collaboration:*

From 2003 until the end of 2006 Carlson, Danielsson and Olson were involved in a four-year research project in axiology, in collaboration with a group of practical philosophers at Lund University, headed by Wlodek Rabinowicz. The project was funded by The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. The project has resulted in a large number of papers (compiled in volumes of preprints), several of which have been accepted, in revised version, for publication in international journals.

The Department is frequently visited by philosophers from Europe, North America, and Australasia. Practical philosophy has particularly close contacts with Oxford University, whose Philosophy Department ranks among the top three in the world. John Broome, White’s Professor in Moral Philosophy, has spent several sabbatical terms in Uppsala, and Danielsson and Carlson have both been invited to present papers at the Moral Philosophy seminar in Oxford. The fact that Bykvist and Olson presently hold positions there is likely to further enhance this collaboration.

Other frequent visitors to Uppsala include Howard Sobel, a distinguished decision-theorist and philosopher of religion from Toronto, who regularly spends part of the academic year at the department, and was recently awarded an honorary Ph.D, and Prof. Michael J. Zimmerman (Univ. of North Carolina) and Prof. Fred Feldman (Univ. of Massachusetts), who

are leading experts on formal and substantial axiology. Within the other Nordic countries, there is collaboration with, in particular, Copenhagen (Prof. Peter Sand e, Prof. Nils Holtug, Dr. Karsten Klint-Jensen, and others), and Roskilde (Prof. Jesper Ryberg).