

Dear friends of the Quartet,

A belated happy new year to you all!

In case you missed it, you can now watch Lawrence Blum's wonderful Christmas Lecture on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/P-ZB7050R3E>

As the next newsletter is due only in April, here are a few updates on calls for papers and funding opportunities with deadlines coming up in February:

1. A CfA for the 2nd Predoctoral Conference on the quartet in Manchester in June (deadline 20 February, see below)
2. A call for applicants for the Women-in-Paranthesis Graduate Reading Party on Jane Heal's book manuscript *Taking Us Seriously* in Almouth in May (deadline 13 February, see attachment)
3. A CfA for the Quartet-in-Film Symposium: Vice and Violence in Winchester in June (deadline 27 February, see attachment).
4. A call for applicants for doctoral studentships at Durham University (deadline 26 February, see attachment)

All the best,
Eva (WiP Newsletter Editor)

[1] A CfA for the 2nd Predoctoral Conference on the quartet

We are excited to announce that Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) will host this year's pre-doctoral conference on the Wartime Quartet of Iris Murdoch, Mary Midgley, Philippa Foot, and Elizabeth Anscombe. If you are a pre-doctoral (undergraduate or master's) student and would like to present a paper on the Wartime Quartet, please send a 250-word abstract to: wartimequartetpredoctoralconference@outlook.com. Papers are to be about 20-minutes, or 2000-2500-words, in length.

Topics may include:

- Comparative or individual analysis of the Quartet's work
- Philosophical themes (explored) "in the spirit of" Anscombe, Foot, Murdoch, or Midgley
- The impact of the Quartet on 20th-century analytic philosophy
- Connected figures in the Quartet+

The event will be taking place in Manchester on 18th-19th June, 2026. Venue details will be distributed later in the year to those hoping to attend.

Deadline: Please have abstracts sent before 20th February 2026.

We will be hosting 'poster sessions' at the event, so, if you would like to give your presentation in the form of a poster, please specify in your application. Furthermore, the event will be in hybrid form, so if you would like to attend remotely, please let us know in advance and we will send you a link to the conference in due course.

This event is collaboratively organised by students and staff of MMU and the University of Liverpool, as part of the work of the research centre 'Women in Parenthesis.' For more information on the centre's work, visit: <https://www.womeninparenthesis.co.uk/>. A link to the sister website for the conference itself will be distributed shortly.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Wartime Quartet Pre-Doctoral Conference 2026 Organising Committee

[2] In Parenthesis Graduate Reading Party, Alnmouth, May 2026, Call for Expressions of Interest

Jane Heal has recently completed a manuscript on plural intentionality and co-agency, entitled **Taking Us Seriously**.

"We went for a meal out together and enjoyed it". Happenings like this, reported with the first-person plural are, conceptually and metaphysically, as fundamental as ones reported with the first-person singular. When philosophers assume that reports with 'I/me' are more fundamental than those with 'we/us' they deny themselves an adequate conceptual toolbox for understanding the profoundly social nature of human life and what it is for things to go well for us. Plural intentionality is an unmysterious, everyday matter. And taking it seriously opens up helpful ways of looking at issues, not only in ethics and meta-ethics but also in philosophy of mind and action and in philosophy of science and metaphysics.

These are the themes of the short book. Do the claims make sense? Does the picture sketched hang together? That is what it would be good to discuss together.

We are thrilled that Prof Heal is in a position to facilitate a workshop on the manuscript, specifically for ECRs, graduate students (or those who are on track for doctoral research).

We envisage up to 12 places for participants working on any area of philosophy, but whose philosophical work invokes, in some sense, concepts of agency, or involves reflection on human groups and activity.

The workshop will take place 8-10 May 2026 in Alnmouth, which is a coastal town in Northumberland on the East Coast Train Line, starting on Friday and finishing on Sunday. There will be an evening event on Friday, followed by 2 3-hour sessions on Saturday and Sunday, with departure on Sunday afternoon.

Students are encouraged to approach their departments and faculties for support with associated costs. Accommodation costs can be covered for those who do not have access to funding, but students will need to be able to cover their transport costs.

To apply please send a paragraph outlining your research (maximum 500 words) and why you feel your work would benefit from this activity by 13 February 2026.

[3] Vice and Violence: A Quartet Symposium

Building on the success of the first 'Filming Metaphysical Animals' symposium, held at Anglia Ruskin University in May 2024, the baton has been passed on and we move to the University of

Winchester for further discussion of how the work of the philosophers Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Mary Midgley, and Iris Murdoch (collectively known as ‘the Quartet’) might be brought to bear on the study of film, as well as how film might reframe our understanding of their philosophy.

Wickedness was a central concern to the Quartet. As Benjamin Lipscomb writes in ‘Midgley on Wickedness,’ ‘Foot told multiple interviewers that she first intuited her task as a moral philosopher upon seeing postwar newsreels detailing Nazi atrocities.’ In this, Foot was responding to the violence of the twentieth century with philosophy, as did Murdoch more broadly in her emphasis on the machinations of ‘the fat relentless ego,’ Anscombe on ‘the endless twistiness of the human mind’ (a phrase she used in the context of an attack on pacifism), and, of course, Midgley with her work on human ‘wickedness.’

The response to violence was no less marked in the cinema. George Stevens described the gun violence in his revisionist Western, *Shane* (1953), as a ‘holocaust’—hardly a casual reference for a man who documented the liberation of Dachau, which caused, he said, a ‘profound adjustment’ in his thinking. But questions of vice and violence are not only relevant to film when it comes to matters of global atrocity. Films can be equally rich sites for moral enquiry as can literature: whether, for example, in portraying situations the appropriate ethical description of which is very hard to determine, or by inviting reflection on our relationship to the violence we are shown.

We warmly welcome papers on any aspect of vice and violence in the Quartet’s work and its resonances with film: including, but not limited to, subjective, interpersonal, epistemic, and / or structural violence; vice and agency; vice and character; the relationship between vice and virtue; the relationship between vice and violence; the historically and culturally specific dimensions of vice and violence.

This one-day symposium will be held at the University of Winchester on Friday 19th June 2026.

- Please email abstracts of 200 words, plus a very short bio to Elizabeth Mackintosh (elizabeth.mackintos1@winchester.ac.uk) and Daniel Varndell (Daniel_Varndell@hotmail.com) by 27th February, 2026.

[4] Leverhulme Centre for Algorithmic Life PhD studentships (x4) and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Focal Awards in the Leverhulme Centre for Algorithmic Life (x3) at Durham University

The Leverhulme Centre for Algorithmic Life is pleased to announce 7 new doctoral studentships at Durham University, commencing with students entering in Autumn 2026. The PhD studentships (3.5 – 4 years full-time or equivalent part-time) are focused on the interdisciplinary study of algorithmic life and will be based in the Leverhulme Centre for Algorithmic Life at Durham University.

For more information about the Leverhulme Centre for Algorithmic Life, please see our website at <https://leverhulmecal.webspace.durham.ac.uk/> Enquiries may be sent to the leadership team of the Centre at lcal@durham.ac.uk. Please note that the studentship application deadline is 4pm on 26 February 2026.