

BARNABY R. HUTCHINS

Department of Philosophy and Moral Science
Ghent University
Blandijnberg 2, 9000 Gent
Belgium

bhutchins@gmail.com | brhutchins.com

Current position

BOF Postdoctoral Fellow, Ghent University, Belgium (2017–2018/2019–2021)

Postdoctoral Researcher, Alpen-Adria-University, Klagenfurt, Austria (2016–2017/2018–2019)

Areas of specialisation

Early modern philosophy, history and philosophy of science

Areas of competence

Philosophy of biology, general philosophy of science, continental philosophy

Previous academic appointments

Research Fellow, Department of Philosophy, Bar-Ilan University, Israel, 2015–2016 (Project: ‘Leibniz and the Life Sciences in Early Modern Philosophy’, PI: Ohad Nachtomy)

Visiting Scholar, Center for Philosophy of Biology, Duke University, USA. Spring 2014.

Visiting Lecturer, Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Middlesex University, London, UK. Academic year 2008–9.

Visiting Lecturer, University of Westminster, London, UK. Academic years 2007–9.

Education

PhD, Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences/Sarton Centre for the History of Science, Ghent University, Belgium (BOF scholarship), 2016

Supervisor: Eric Schliesser

Examination committee: Dennis Des Chene (WashU, St Louis), Alison Simmons (Harvard), Sophie Roux (École normale supérieure, Paris), Charles Wolfe (Ghent), Maarten Van Dyck (Ghent)

Dissertation title: *Obscurity and confusion: Nonreductionism in Descartes's biology and philosophy*

ABSTRACT: I argue that Descartes is a nonreductionist in certain areas of his philosophy and natural philosophy (biology and the mind–body union in particular). Descartes is usually taken to be a strict reductionist, and he frequently describes his work in reductionist terms. This might seem like simple inconsistency, or a mismatch between Descartes's ambitions and his achievements. I argue that it is more than this: nonreductionism is compatible with his wider commitments; moreover, allowing for irreducibles increases the explanatory power of his system.

MA Continental Philosophy, University of Warwick, UK, 2006

BA Philosophy, University of Warwick, UK, 2004

Papers

Refereed journal articles

- ‘Descartes, corpuscles and reductionism: Mechanism and systems in Descartes's physiology’, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 2015.

- ‘Does Descartes have a principle of life? Hierarchy and interdependence in Descartes’s physiology’, *Perspectives on Science*, 2016.
- ‘Descartes and the dissolution of life’, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 2016.

Solicited book chapters

- ‘The embodied Descartes: Contemporary readings of *L’Homme*’, in *Descartes’ Treatise on Man and its Reception*, eds Delphine Antoine-Mahut and Stephen Gaukroger, 2016 (New York: Springer) (with Charles T. Wolfe and Christoffer Basse Eriksen)
- ‘Descartes on Psychology and Cognitive Science’, in *The Cartesian Mind*, eds Jorge Secada and Cecilia Wee, forthcoming (New York: Routledge)
- “‘Everyone knows what life is’: Life as an irreducible in Descartes’s biology and metaphysics’, in *Life and Death in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Susan James, forthcoming (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- ‘Knowledge for Humans and the Epistemological Role of the Notion of God’s Intellect’, in *The Blackwell Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Yitzhak Melamed, commissioned (Oxford: Blackwell) (with Ursula Renz)

Encyclopaedia articles

- ‘Life, Mechanization of’, in *The Springer Encyclopedia of Early Modern Philosophy and the Sciences*, eds Dana Jalobeanu and Charles T. Wolfe, forthcoming 2018 (New York: Springer)

In progress

- ‘Reduction, integration, and early modern mechanism’
- ‘Activities vs. ontological parsimony in Descartes’s biological mechanisms’
- ‘The priority of the union in Descartes’s epistemology and metaphysics’
- ‘Spinoza, the attributes, and standpoint metaphysics’

Translations

- Maurice Halbwachs, *The Social Frameworks of Memory [Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire]*, forthcoming (Oxford: Oxford University Press) (with Charles T. Wolfe)

Book reviews

- Richard F. Hassing, *Cartesian Psychophysics and the Whole Nature of Man: On Descartes’s Passions of the Soul* (London: Lexington Books), in *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 6/2, 2017
- Eric Watkins (ed.), *The Divine Order, the Human Order, and the Order of Nature: Historical Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press), in *Isis* 106/3, 2015

Selected talks

1. December 2017, *Research methods in philosophy and history of science*, Ghent, Belgium: ‘Anti-objectivity: Metametaphysical pluralism and the early modern canon’
2. June 2017, *Spinoza and Metaphysics*, Klagenfurt, Austria: ‘The attributes: Perspectives and standpoints’ (invited)
3. April 2016, *British Society for the History of Philosophy/European Society for Early Modern Philosophy*, London, UK: ‘Descartes’s “vitalism”’
4. March 2016, Turin University, Italy: ‘Descartes on life: Eliminativism and vitalism’ (invited)
5. February 2016, *Israeli Philosophical Association Conference*, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel: ‘Descartes on life: Eliminativism and vitalism’
6. July 2015, *International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology (ISHPSSB) Annual Conference*, Montreal, Canada: ‘Activities vs. ontological parsimony in Descartes’s biological mechanisms’
7. November 2014, *The Philosophy of Science Association (PSA) Biennial Meeting*, Chicago: ‘Reduction, integration and mechanism in Descartes’s biology’
8. October 2014, *Machines of life, development and assimilation: Vitalist themes*, Ghent University, Belgium: “‘Everyone knows what life is’: Reductionism and indefinability in Descartes’s biology’ (invited)

9. July 2014, *History of Philosophy of Science (HOPOS) Biennial Meeting*, Ghent University, Belgium: 'Reduction, integration and mechanism in Descartes's biology'
10. July 2013, *ISHPSSB*, Montpellier, France: 'Reductionism, eliminativism, and the concept of life in Descartes' biology'
11. June 2013, *Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science Annual Meeting*, Victoria, BC, Canada: 'The fire without light and interdependence in Descartes' physiology'
12. February 2013, *New York City Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy*, Fordham University, New York, USA: 'The (missing) foundation of life in Descartes' physiology'
13. July 2012, *3 Societies Meeting* (History of Science Society, Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science, and British Society for the History of Science), University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA: 'Descartes' principle of life (and how doesn't have one)'
14. June 2012, *HOPOS*, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada: 'Descartes' principle of life (and how doesn't have one)' & 'Descartes and the dissolution of life'

Teaching

Full teaching responsibility

Modern Philosophy, Bar-Ilan University, Israel (mixed undergraduate and postgraduate)

- Covering Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant.

History of Ideas (penultimate-year undergraduate), University of Westminster, UK

- Covering pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Rousseau, Voltaire, Hegel, and Marx.

Twentieth-Century Thought (final-year undergraduate), University of Westminster, UK

- Covering Russell, Wittgenstein, Ayer, Heidegger, Sartre, Beauvoir, Levinas, Foucault, Irigaray, and Derrida.

Existentialism (final-year undergraduate), Middlesex University, UK

- Covering Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*; Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*; and Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Guest teaching

Philosophy for Biochemists (undergraduate), Ghent University, February 2015

- Philosophy of mechanisms

Capita Selecta From the Scientific Revolution to the Enlightenment (postgraduate), Ghent University, December 2014

- Function in biology

Capita Selecta From the Scientific Revolution to the Enlightenment (postgraduate), Ghent University, October 2013

- Mechanism and the embodied Descartes

Academic awards

- BOF (Special Research Fund) postdoctoral fellowship, Ghent University, Belgium, 2016
- Postdoctoral Fellowship, Jacques Loeb Centre for the History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, 2016–2017 (declined)
- BOF PhD bursary, Ghent University, Belgium, 2011–2015

Service

Refereeing and conferences

- Referee for *Synthese*, *Early Science and Medicine*, *Biological Theory*, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Springer *History*, *Philosophy and Theory of the Life Sciences* series, and *Society and Politics*
- Conference referee for *The North Sea Early Modern Philosophy Workshop 2012*
- Organiser, *The North Sea Early Modern Philosophy Workshop 2012* (with Eric Schliesser)
- Local organising committee, website, and graphic design for *HOPOS 2014*, Ghent University
- Practical organisation for various workshops at Ghent University, 2011–2016

Admin

- Website, administration, and communications for the *Sarton Centre for History of Science*, Ghent University (2011–2015)

- Administration and website for *Mephisco Joint Programme in Philosophy of Science* collaborative funding bid (UGent, University of Groningen, University of Bucharest, University of Kent, Paris 7, Complutense University of Madrid, LMU Munich) for *Erasmus Mundus* (2011)

Languages

English (native), French (very good reading knowledge), German (GCSE), Latin (fair reading knowledge), Ancient Greek (basic reading knowledge)

Nationality

British

Contact

Email: bhutchins@gmail.com

Website: brhutchins.com