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Fall 2018 • R 2:10–4:00pm • 716 Philosophy Hall

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Boundaries — From Politics to Metaphysics (and Back)

There is a basic distinction, in geography, between “natural” boundaries (borders, frontiers) and “artificial” ones. The former are just the physical boundaries of old, such as mountain ranges, coastlines, river banks, etc. The latter are exemplified especially by boundaries induced through human decisions and conventions and lie skew to any physical differentiations in the underlying territory, as with the frontier between Mexico and the United States, the borders of Wyoming, or the imaginary lines separating the US portion of Lake Erie from the Canadian portion. As we shall see, there is a lot to be said about the important role of this distinction in the history and dynamics of our political culture. But we can say more. For boundaries are not a prerogative of geography. They are at work in articulating *every* aspect of the world around us. Boundaries stand out in *every* map we draw, from the contents of perception to the scientific modeling of reality in terms of objects, kinds, and properties, and this ubiquity of boundaries goes hand in hand with the natural/artificial opposition. Indeed, once the opposition has been recognized, it can be drawn across the board: not merely in relation to boundaries but also in relation to those entities that *have* boundaries. If something enjoys a natural boundary, its existence and identity conditions appear to be independent of us; it is a *bona fide*, mind-independent entity of its own. By contrast, if its boundary is of the artificial sort, then the entity itself is to some degree a *fiat* entity, a construct, a product of our worldmaking. In short, the natural/artificial distinction betokens the general opposition between what is *found* or *discovered* and what is *made* or *created*, and this takes us straight to the metaphysical debate between realism and antirealism. Here we shall be especially interested in the antirealist stance corresponding to the limit case: What if there were *no* natural boundaries? What if all boundaries—hence all entities—were on closer look and to some extent the result of a *fiat* articulation reflecting our cognitive biases and our social practices and conventions?

Requirements

E-credit: Attendance + a short seminar presentation + a final paper

R-credit: Attendance + a short seminar presentation

TOPICS AND READINGS (very tentative)

1. Introduction

- Achille C. Varzi (2011) 'Boundaries, Conventions, and Realism', in J. K. Campbell, M. O'Rourke, and M. H. Slater (eds.), *Carving Nature at Its Joints: Natural Kinds in Metaphysics and Science*, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press, pp. 129–153.

2. Boundary concepts

- Avrum Stroll (1979) 'Two Concepts of Surfaces', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 4: 277–291.
- Avrum Stroll (1988) *Surfaces*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ernest Adams (1984), 'On the Superficial', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 65: 386–407.
- Ernest Adams (1986), 'On the Dimensionality of Surfaces, Solids, and Spaces', *Erkenntnis* 24: 137–201.
- Roderick M. Chisholm (1984), 'Boundaries as Dependent Particulars', *Grazer philosophische Studien* 10: 87–95.
- Peter M. Simons (1991) 'Faces, Boundaries, and Thin Layers', in A. P. Martinich and M. J. White (eds.), *Certainty and Surface in Epistemology and Philosophical Method. Essays in Honor of Avrum Stroll*, Lewiston, Edwin Mellen Press, pp. 87–99.

3. Contact and Ownership

- Bernard Bolzano (1851), *Paradoxien des Unendlichen*, Leipzig, Reclam (Eng. trans. by D. A. Steele: *Paradoxes of the Infinite*, London, Routledge, 1950), esp. §§66–67.
- Franz Brentano (1906), 'Nativistische, empiristische und anoetistische Theorie unserer Raumvorstellung', in his *Philosophische Untersuchungen zu Raum, Zeit und Kontinuum*, ed. by S. Körner and R. M. Chisholm, Hamburg, Meiner, 1976 (Eng. trans. by B. Smith: 'Nativistic, Empiricist and Anoetistic Theories of Our Presentation of Space', *Philosophical Investigations on Space, Time and the Continuum*, London, Croom Helm, 1988).
- David A. Kline and Carl A. Matheson (1987), 'The Impossibility of Collision', *Philosophy* 62: 509–515.
- Allen P. Hazen (1990), 'The Mathematical Philosophy of Contact', *Philosophy* 65: 205–211.
- Achille C. Varzi (1997) 'Boundaries, Continuity, and Contact', *Noûs* 31: 26–58.
- William Kilborn (2007), 'Contact and Continuity', *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* 3: 267–280.
- Antony P. Galton (2007), 'On the Paradoxical Nature of Surfaces: Ontology at the Physics/Geometry Interface', *The Monist* 90: 379–390.
- Zach Weber and Aaron J. Cotnoir (2015), 'Inconsistent Boundaries', *Synthese* 192: 1267–1294.

4. Ontological Antirealism

- Alfred N. Whitehead (1916) ‘La théorie relationniste de l'espace’, *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 23: 423–454 (Eng. trans. by P. J. Hurley, ‘The Relational Theory of Space’, *Philosophy Research Archives* 5 (1979): 712–741).
- Alfred N. Whitehead (1929), *Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology*, New York, Macmillan, part IV, “The Theory of Extension”
- Thomas de Laguna (1922), ‘Point, Line, and Surface, as Sets of Solids’, *Journal of Philosophy* 19: 449–461.
- Jean Nicod (1924), *La géométrie dans le monde sensible*, Paris: Alcan (Eng. trans. by J. Bell and M. Woods, ‘Geometry in the Sensible World’, in *Geometry and Induction*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1970), ch. 4, “Points and Volumes”.
- Peter Roeper (1997), ‘Region-based Topology’, *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 26: 251–309.
- Jeffrey T. Russell (2008), ‘The Structure of Gunk: Adventures in the Ontology of Space’, *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* 4: 248–274.

5. Natural vs artificial boundaries 1: Geography & Politics

- Friedrich Ratzel (1897) *Politische Geographie*, Berlin, Oldenbourg, Part VI (“Die Grenzen”)
- Lassa F. L. Oppenheim, L. F. L. (1905) *International Law: A Treatise. Volume I: Peace*, New York, Longmans, Green, and Co. §§198–202 (“Boundaries of State Territory”).
- George Curzon (1907) *Frontiers. The Romanes Lecture*, Oxford, Clarendon.
- Thomas H. Holdich, (1916) *Political Frontiers and Boundary Making*, London, Macmillan.
- Charles Fawcett (1918) *Frontiers. A Study in Political Geography*, Oxford, Clarendon.
- Jacques Ancel (1938) *Géographie des Frontières*, Paris, Gallimard.
- Jan O. M. Broek (1941) ‘The Problem of “Natural Frontiers”’, in J. O. M. Broek et al., *Frontiers of the Future*, Berkeley, University of California Press, pp. 3–20.
- John R. V. Prescott (1965) *The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries*, London, Hutchinson.
- Thomas Pakenham (1991) *The Scramble for Africa. White Man’s Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876–1912*, New York, Random House.
- Allen Buchanan and Margaret Moore, eds. (2003), *States, Nations and Borders: The Ethics of Making Boundaries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Juliet J. Fall (2010) ‘Artificial States? On the Enduring Geographical Myth of Natural Borders’, *Political Geography* 29: 140–147.

6. Natural vs artificial boundaries 2: Natural Sciences

- Catherine Z. Elgin (1995) ‘Unnatural Science’, *Journal of Philosophy* 92: 289–302.
- Ian Hacking (1999) *The social construction of what?* Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press.

- André Kukla (2000) *Social Construction and the Philosophy of Science*, London, Routledge.
- Helen Beebe and Nigel Sabbarton-Leary, eds. (2010), *The Semantics and Metaphysics of Natural Kinds*, London, Routledge.
- Joseph K. Campbell, Michael O'Rourke, and Matthew H. Slater, eds. (2011), *Carving Nature at Its Joints: Natural Kinds in Metaphysics and Science*, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press.
- Laura R. Franklin-Hall (2015) 'Natural Kinds as Categorical Bottlenecks', *Philosophical Studies* 172: 925-948.

7. Natural vs artificial boundaries 3: Metaphysics

- Mark Heller (1990), *The Ontology of Physical Objects. Four-Dimensional Hunks of Matter*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, ch. 2 ("Conventional Objects").
- Barry Smith (1995) 'On Drawing Lines on a Map', in A. U. Frank and W. Kuhn (eds.), *Spatial Information Theory. A Theoretical Basis for GIS*, Berlin, Springer, pp. 475–484.
- Barry Smith (2001) 'Fiat Objects', *Topoi* 20: 131–148.
- Barry Smith and Achille C. Varzi (2000) 'Fiat and Bona Fide Boundaries', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 60: 401–420.
- Antony P. Galton (2003) 'On the Ontological Status of Geographical Boundaries', in M. Duckham, M. F. Goodchild, and M. F. Worboys (eds.), *Foundations of Geographic Information Science*, London, Taylor & Francis, pp. 151–171.
- Sally Haslanger (2000) 'Feminism in metaphysics: Negotiating the Natural', in M. Fricker and J. Hornsby (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp. 107–126.

8. Metaphysical Antirealism

- Willard V. O. Quine (1957) 'Speaking of Objects', *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 31: 5–22.
- Nelson Goodman (1978) *Ways of Worldmaking*, Indianapolis, Hackett.
- Nelson Goodman (1983), 'Notes on the Well-Made World', *Erkenntnis*, 19: 99–107.
- Peter J. McCormick, ed. (1996) *Starmaking: Realism, Anti-Realism, and Irrealism*, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press.
- Jody Azzouni (2017), *Ontology Without Borders*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

9. Conventions and Social Objects

- John L. Austin (1962) *How to Do Things with Words* (ed. J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà), Oxford, Clarendon.
- David K. Lewis (1969), *Convention. A Philosophical Study*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Margaret Gilbert (1990) ‘Rationality, Coordination, and Convention’, *Synthese* 84: 1–21.
- Yemima Ben-Menahem (2006) *Conventionalism. From Poincaré to Quine*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Andrei Marmor (2009) *Social Conventions. From Language to Law*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- John R. Searle (1995) *The Construction of Social Reality*, New York, Free Press.
- Barry Smith and Leo Zaibert (2001) ‘The Metaphysics of Real Estate’, *Topoi* 20: 161–172.

10. ‘Race’ and Other Categories

- Anthony Appiah (1985) ‘The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race’, *Critical Inquiry* 12: 21-37
- Philip Kitcher (1999) ‘Race, Ethnicity, Biology, Culture’, in L. Harris (ed.), *Racism*, New York, Humanity Books, pp. 87-117.
- Robin Andreasen (2000) ‘Race: Biological Reality or Social Construct?’ *Philosophy of Science* 67 (Supplement): 653–666.
- Sally Haslanger (2000), ‘Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?’, *Noûs* 34: 31–55.
- Sally Haslanger (2008) ‘A Social Constructionist Analysis of Race’, in B. Koenig, S. Lee, and S. Richardson (eds.), *Revisiting Race in the Genomic Age*, New Brunswick (NJ), Rutgers University Press, pp. 56–69.
- Ron Mallon (2004) ‘Passing, Traveling and Reality: Social Constructionism and the Metaphysics of Race’, *Noûs* 38: 644–673.
- Joshua Glasgow (2005) ‘On the New Biology of Race’, *Journal of Philosophy* 100: 456-74.
- Quayshawn Spencer (2014) ‘A Radical Solution to the Race Problem’, *Philosophy of Science* 81: 1025-1038.
- Jonathan Michael Kaplan & Rasmus Grønfeldt Winther (2014) ‘Realism, Antirealism, and Conventionalism About Race’, *Philosophy of Science* 81: 1039-1052.

11. Vagueness
