

A Portrait of the Hartist as A Young Man

CONVENORS: Gregory Bligh (Paris Est Créteil University)
Mathieu Carpentier (Toulouse 1 Capitole University)
Charles-Maxime Panaccio (University of Ottawa)

This workshop focuses on HLA Hart's early forays into philosophy and jurisprudence. Over a short period spanning from his return to Oxford in 1945 to his accession to the Chair of Jurisprudence in 1953 – to the publication of the *Concept of Law* in 1961 –, the (relatively) young Hart published a number of papers tackling a wide range of issues, not only in legal philosophy, but also in epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of action, moral philosophy and metaethics. Even if Hart did not keep pursuing all these interests in his later years, these early writings are of no little interest both for contemporary philosophers and for historians of philosophy. However, their importance is often overlooked nowadays, in part because Hart chose not to include almost any of them in either of his three collections, and when he did, it was always with a very self-critical eye. He even repudiated two of these earlier articles outright ["The Ascription of Responsibility and Rights", "Are There Any Natural Rights?"].

The purpose of this workshop is to re-evaluate Hart's early contributions to philosophy and jurisprudence. Three lines of inquiry will be followed:

- We will try to situate this body of work in its philosophical context, and more generally in its intellectual milieu. Among possible topics: the influence of JL Austin and post-war Oxford philosophy on Hart's philosophical outlook, Hart's rejection of logical positivism, the reception of the ideas of Wittgenstein and Waismann, and so on.

- We also shall assess how much of his early ideas remains in his later, better-known writings. Hart shifted positions many times in his intellectual career, and he explicitly repudiated many of his earlier works. Still, it may be argued that some of those shifts were not full upheavals but mere tactical readjustments, or even simply a way of refining ideas which were formerly in the rough. We shall therefore study the ruptures and continuities in Hart's thought with a focus on questions such as: ascriptivism and its repudiation; Hart's alleged expressivism; the semantics/pragmatics distinction; defeasibility and open texture; the analysis of legal concepts ...

- Contributions on individual papers by the young Hart are also welcome, with an emphasis on their strength and weaknesses compared to the work of other philosophers of his time and their fruitfulness and relevance in today's philosophical landscape.

Please send abstracts of no more than 500 words to Mathieu Carpentier (mathieu.carpentier@ut-capitole.fr), Gregory Bligh (greg.bligh@yahoo.fr) and Charles-Maxime Panaccio (Charles-Maxime.Panaccio@uottawa.ca) by **February 28, 2019**. We will notify the authors of accepted proposals by March 15.