

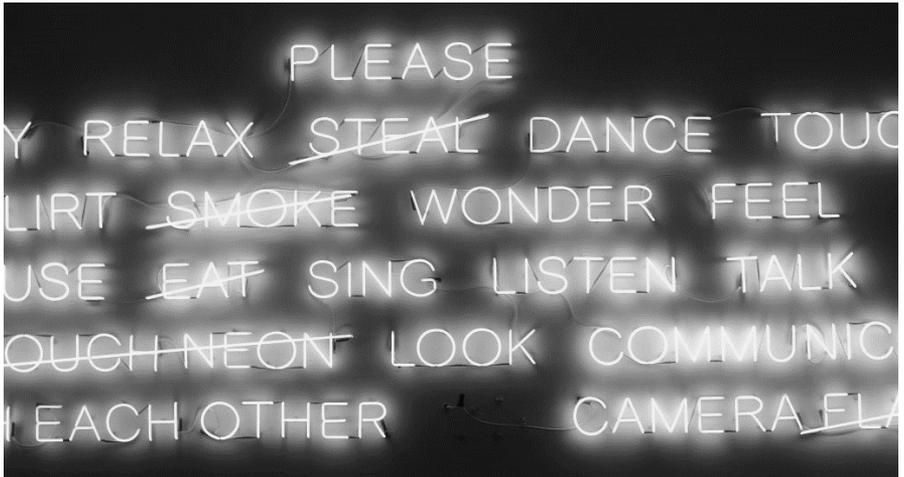
Summer Seminar

Hermeneutics as a Form of Epistemology

August 26-28, 2019

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

HG-03C01: Agora 1



Conference booklet

Index

Program	5
Speakers and abstracts	7-25
Contact details & addresses	27-28

August 26

09:00 - 09:30	Coffee & welcome	
09.30 - 11.00	Arie Zwiep	Biblical Hermeneutics I: Defining the Issues
11.00 - 11.15	Coffee break	
11.15 - 12.45	Richard Gaskin	What is Literary Humanism?
12.45 - 13.45	Lunch break	
13.45 - 15.15	Jean Wagemans	The Philosophy of Argument
15.15 - 15.30	Coffee break	
15.30 - 17.00	Tom Kindt	Interpretation in Literary Studies: Structures, Types, Tribes and Recent Developments
17.00 - 21.00	Evening program	Art Zuid tour (Sculpture Biennial) and dinner

August 27

09.30 - 11.00	Luis Oliveira	Interpretative Authority and Hermeneutical Injustices
11.00 - 11.15	Coffee break	
11.15 - 12.45	Darren Sarisky	The Need for Theological Interpretation of Scripture
12.45 - 13.45	Lunch break	
13.45 - 15.15	Arie Zwiep	Biblical Hermeneutics II: Exploring the Field
15.30 - 17.00	René van Woudenberg	Reading as a Source of Knowledge
16.45 - 18.00	Drinks	

August 28

09.30 - 11.00	Richard Gaskin	Do Authorial Intentions Fix Meaning?
11.00 - 11.15	Coffee break	
11.15 - 12.45	Jean Wagemans	Hermeneutic Aspects of Identifying Argument Types
12.45 - 13.45	Lunch break	
13.45 - 15.15	Darren Sarisky	What is Theological Interpretation of Scripture?
15.15 - 16.45	Tom Kindt	Relativism in Literary Interpretation?

Speakers

Dr. Arie Zwiep

Free University Amsterdam

Biblical Hermeneutics I: Defining the Issues

Faith communities have long-established reading practices of the Bible, often with firm ideas about normativity, interpretive procedures and ethical demands. In the post-World War II era, biblical hermeneutics has witnessed an explosion of new theories, perspectives and methods, approaches that sometimes easily linked up with traditional ways of interpreting the Bible and sometimes conflicted with almost everything that had been done in this field before. The influx of philosophical hermeneutics, literary studies, phenomenology and social studies on the study of Bible and theology made biblical hermeneutics undergo a mega-shift: from a strictly theological enterprise (a method to interpret and apply the message of the Christian scriptures), hermeneutics evolved into a general science to “understand understanding” in the

broadest possible way, as in Martin Heidegger's understanding of hermeneutics as ontology and self-understanding: from now on, hermeneutics had to deal with text *and* reader *and* their complex interaction *and* the historical "situatedness" of both text *and* reader. Hermeneutics had come of age. The leading question of this presentation is what all this means for the interpretation and use of the Bible in contemporary debates about science, religion, ethics, world views and so on.

Biblical Hermeneutics II: Exploring the Field

In this presentation "the conflict of interpretation" will be illustrated from the speaker's own work in New Testament exegesis and Biblical hermeneutics, with a special focus on the so-called Wesleyan Quadrilateral as a hermeneutical strategy for textual interpretation. Topics include, among others, the dynamics of Scripture and experience in early Christology (the use of Psalm 110 in the New Testament), the biblical figure of Judas Iscariot and antisemitism (the impact of reader aggression and the need for an ethics of interpretation), the discovery of historical consciousness, the discovery of the reader and the discovery of the other as

hermeneutical points-of-no-return; the need for rational method and openness, and new challenges for biblical studies in the context of academia (biblical scholarship and faith-based approaches).

Dr Arie W. Zwiep, PhD Durham University, UK (1996), is Associate Professor of New Testament and Hermeneutics and Director of the Graduate School of Religion and Theology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. His publications include, among others, The Ascension of the Messiah in Lukan Christology (Leiden 1997), Judas and the Choice of Matthias (Tübingen 2004), Christ, the Spirit and the Community of God (Tübingen 2010), and a two-volume history of biblical hermeneutics, Tussen tekst en lezer: een historische inleiding in de bijbelse hermeneutiek (Amsterdam 2009-2013). His most recent publication is Jairus's Daughter and the Haemorrhaging Woman (Tübingen 2019), which approaches a famous gospel story from a variety of (sometimes conflicting) exegetical and hermeneutical perspectives.

Dr. Richard Gaskin

University of Liverpool

What is Literary Humanism?

According to literary humanism, as I conceive that position, works of literature refer to the real world and make statements about that world which are of cognitive as well as aesthetic value; the two kinds of value are indeed intimately connected. My literary humanist also holds that such works have an objective meaning which is fixed at the time of their production and which is the same for all readers, then and thereafter. This is a traditional view, which in recent decades has come under attack from two different directions. On the one hand, some analytical aestheticians have argued that works of literature do not bear referentially on the world and do not make true statements about it; others hold that such works do not make a contribution to knowledge; others again allow that works of literature may have cognitive value, but deny that this depends on their having truth or reference. On the other hand, reception-theorists and deconstructionists have rejected the humanist's

objectivist conception of literary meaning, and typically take a pragmatist and anti-realist approach to truth and meaning. I shall defend literary humanism against both forms of attack.

Do Authorial Intentions Fix Meaning?

I start with the so-called intentional fallacy: this is the view, popularized by New Criticism, that it is fallacious to suppose that the meaning of a work of literature is fixed by the intentions (if any) of the author. Adopting and adapting a piece of legal terminology, according to which agents' intentions may be identified 'constructively'—that is, imputed to those agents on the basis of behaviour, regardless of what the agents themselves would say—I shall argue that, provided authorial intention is understood in a constructive sense, it is acceptable to identify the meaning of a work with what its author intends it to mean. Constructive intentions do not determine meaning, but they do determine which words an author utters, though in practice the constructive nature of the relevant intentions makes this less useful as a means of settling textual difficulties than might appear. Allusion, too, is a matter of authorial intention only in the

constructive sense, that is, we attribute intended allusions to an author only if that is what we judge to be the right interpretation of his work.

*Richard Gaskin has taught philosophy, English literature, and Classical Literature at the universities of Oxford, Sussex, and Liverpool, and has held visiting fellowships at the universities of Bonn, Edinburgh, and Mainz. He is currently Professor of Philosophy at the University of Liverpool. He has published extensively on both philosophy and literature. Recent books include *The Unity of the Proposition* (Oxford, 2008), *Language, Truth, and Literature: a Defence of Literary Humanism* (Oxford, 2013); *Horace and Housman* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); and *Tragedy and Redress in Western Literature: a Philosophical**

Dr. Jean Wagemans

University of Amsterdam

The Philosophy of Argument

In his first lecture, Wagemans will prepare the ground for elucidating how scholars in the field of argumentation theory and rhetoric interpret argumentative texts, i.e., texts that are aimed at convincing an audience of the acceptability of a particular point of view. Wagemans starts with giving a short introduction into the field by providing its historical and philosophical backgrounds in the classical disciplines of logic, dialectic, and rhetoric. After having explained the crucial differences and commonalities between these disciplines, he elucidates how the terminology and theoretical concepts developed within antiquity are reflected in present-day approaches to argumentation.

Wagemans then continues with a discussion of the theoretical starting points of the general hermeneutical practice in the field, thereby answering the question: “What is it to ‘interpret’ an argumentative text?”. He will first situate this practice within the context of other applications of

argumentation theoretical and rhetorical insights, namely the production, analysis, and evaluation of argumentative texts, and subsequently focus on the procedure of analyzing such texts.

Hermeneutic Aspects of Identifying Argument Types

In his second lecture, Wagemans will provide a concrete illustration of the hermeneutics of argumentative texts by outlining and applying a procedure for identifying the types of argument contained in such texts. On the basis of the starting points laid out in the first lecture, he will elucidate the subsequent steps that are taken by the analyst in order to arrive at a theoretically informed representation of the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of arguments expressed in natural language.

Wagemans starts with a general overview of the steps that constitute this Argument Type Identification Procedure (ATIP). He will then illustrate each step by means of analyzing concrete examples of various types of arguments. In explaining which theoretical insights govern the identification of these arguments, he will address the questions: “When is an interpretation of an

argumentative text ‘justified’?” and “What kinds of evidence are relevant when it comes to interpreting such a text?”. Wagemans concludes the lecture with a discussion of the relevance of the outlined hermeneutics of argumentative texts for the evaluation of the quality of the argumentation they contain.

Dr. Jean H.M. Wagemans is a philosopher specialized in rhetoric, argumentation, and debate. He is currently working as a senior researcher in the Argumentation and Rhetoric Group Amsterdam (ARGA) of the Amsterdam Centre for Language and Communication (ACLC) at the University of Amsterdam. Wagemans is the initiator of the Periodic Table of Arguments. He co-authored Argumentation and debate (in Dutch) and the Handbook of Argumentation Theory, and published articles, book reviews, and popularizing columns on rhetoric and argumentation. For more info and downloads, please visit his Academia Pages.

Dr. Tom Kindt

University of Freiburg

Interpretation in Literary Studies: Structures, Types, Tribes and Recent Developments

The presentation gives an overview of the theories and practices of interpretation in literary studies. I begin by introducing some basic understandings of interpretation; particular attention will be paid to the distinction between interpretation as a cognitive process (*parsing*) and interpretation as a social practice (*explaining*). Starting from this distinction, I will develop a more detailed picture of the structures and variations of the social practice of literary interpretation, firstly, by clarifying its normative dimension, i.e., the rules and principles embedded in the practice, and secondly, by distinguishing three fundamental genres of literary interpretation and looking at how they are related to each other, namely, explanatory, explicative, and appreciative interpretation of literary texts. The third and final part of the lecture looks at the specific forms these genres have taken in the history and present of literary studies. I examine and

compare approaches, which are often misleadingly referred to as “methods”, but are more aptly described – following Ronald Dworkin – as “tribes” of literary interpretation, like, for example, hermeneutics, structuralism, deconstruction or psychoanalytic interpretation. I will conclude by taking a brief look at recent developments in the field of study (naturalistic hermeneutics, ecocriticism, interpretation in digital humanities, etc.).

Relativism in Literary Interpretation?

Interpretation in literary studies is characterized by a striking plurality of opinion, both in terms of general approaches to interpreting texts and specific interpretations of literary works. Often, this situation is seen to reflect a fundamental relativism in literary interpretation and a reason for abandoning traditional concepts of truth and justification in the field. In the lecture, I aim to examine in three steps if such a position is sound, i.e. whether interpretive pluralism necessarily goes hand in hand with interpretive relativism. First, I will reconstruct some basic variants in which the relativistic claim can be spelled out. On the basis of proposals by Göran Hermerén and Robert Stecker, I

then develop suggestions on how diversity and disagreement in literary interpretation can be conceived of. Given the explications of the relativistic claim and the interpretive diversity, I finally argue that, in the domain of literary interpretation, pluralism and relativism should be distinguished and truth and justification should remain of crucial importance.

Tom Kindt is Professor of German and Comparative Literature at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). He studied German Literature, Philosophy and Linguistics at the University of Hamburg where he completed his PhD in 2001 and worked as a Postdoctoral Fellow of the Narratology Research Group from 2001 to 2003. From 2004 to 2010, he was Assistant Professor of German Philology at the University of Göttingen; from 2011 to 2014 Professor of German Literature at the University of Jena. In 2013/24 he was Feodor Lynen-Fellow at the Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures, Harvard University (Cambridge, Ma.). In 2014, he became Professor in Fribourg.

The core areas of Tom Kindt's work are German literature from the enlightenment to the 21st

century, theory of literary interpretation, narrative and humor studies, and the history of the humanities. He is currently directing two interdisciplinary research projects funded by the Swiss Science Foundation (Schweizerischer Nationalfonds).

*Tom Kindt is the author of *Unzuverlässiges Erzählen und literarische Moderne* (2008), *Literatur und Komik* (2011) and *Brecht und die Folgen* (2018) and the co-author of *Brechts frühe Lyrik* (2002), *The Implied Author* (2006), *Ungeheuer Brecht* (2008) and *Erzähltheorie* (2014), in addition to numerous articles. He has edited and co-edited thirteen books and special issues of journals, including, e.g., *Ecos Echos* (2000), *What Is Narratology?* (2003), *Moderne Interpretationstheorien* (2008) *Unreliable Narration* (2011) and *Medienästhetik der Komik* (2019). Since 2015, he one of the editors of *JLT – Journal of Literary Theory*.*

Dr. Luis Oliveira

University of Houston

Interpretative Authority and Hermeneutical Injustices

Hermeneutics, broadly construed, is the study of interpretation. Though its primary focus as a discipline has been on the interpretation of texts, interpretation is itself a much more pervasive phenomena than that. In the most fundamental of ways, hermeneutics is at bottom the study of our conceptual engagement with our experiences—or of what I will call our *basic hermeneutical activity*. With this activity in mind, analytic social epistemologists, following Miranda Fricker (2007), have recently debated whether individuals can suffer *hermeneutical injustices*: wrongs or harms related to the undue influencing, co-opting, or coercing of one's basic hermeneutical activity, particularly in ways that sustain the status quo and benefit historically well-established power relations. Yet making sense of these alleged injustices seems to require substantive commitments with respect to certain traditional

questions in the study of interpretation. In this lecture, I examine one such commitment and one such question: is there ever a privileged interpretation of a text, or are there always only equally legitimate alternatives? Both sides of this dichotomy have been ably defended in the traditional literature and each has momentous implications for the recent analytic debate. To accept the former option is to endorse some version of what has been called *standpoint epistemology*, and to accept the latter is put in question the very possibility of hermeneutical injustices instead.

Luis Oliveira is an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Houston and the director of international project LATAM Bridges in the Epistemology of Religion. He works primarily in normative epistemology, meta ethics, and in the philosophy of religion. His work in each of these areas has appeared in leading international journals.

Dr. Darren Sarisky

University of Oxford

The Need for Theological Interpretation of Scripture

This presentation deals with the interpretation of Christian scriptural texts. The question it asks is whether there are conditions under which Christian faith commitments can have a positive role within the process of interpretation. Do they function as prejudice, when they are integral to a reading of the Bible, so that they are better kept out of the process of reading? Or could it be fitting to read the book that has been foundational for the Christian faith with a faith commitment in place? If so, what are the conditions for this to be an appropriate way to read?

What is Theological Interpretation of Scripture?

This presentation picks up where the previous one left off. Having dealt with the rationale for theological reading in my first talk, this presentation offers some detail on what theological reading looks like. First, theological reading involves having a theological conception of the interpreter of the Bible, seeing the reader as one who has a faith commitment and whose faith shapes how texts are read. Second, theological interpretation also involves having a theological construal of the text of Scripture, taking it to be a sign pointing toward the transcendent God. Finally, theological reading involves reading with the aim of furthering one's knowledge of God by using a set of reading strategies that will be detailed in the presentation.

*Dr Darren Sarisky is a Departmental Lecturer in Modern Theology at the Faculty of Theology and Religion of the University of Oxford. His most recent book is *Reading the Bible Theologically*, which was published by Cambridge University Press in 2019.*

Dr. René van Woudenberg

Free University Amsterdam

Reading as a Source of Knowledge

Epistemologists have virtually ignored reading as a source of knowledge. This paper, first, argues that neither the epistemology of seeing, nor the epistemology of testimony can adequately deal with reading. Next an analysis of reading is offered that highlights the relation between seeing and reading. Subsequently the notion of ‘source of knowledge’ is discussed, and a number of conceptual distinctions between sources are introduced: it is argued that reading is both a transmissive and an original source of knowledge, that it is a non-basic source, that not so very long ago it was a non-essential source but has become essential for many people, and is both unique and non-unique.

René van Woudenberg is a professor of Epistemology and Metaphysics at the VU, Amsterdam. Most of his current research and writing is part of “The Epistemic Responsibilities of the University” project, which is

sponsored by the Templeton World Charity Foundation. Within that project he work on three topics:
(1) What is the nature of the humanities, what epistemic contributions can we expect them to deliver, and how do they relate to the natural sciences.

(2) Reading as a source of knowledge: what is reading? Why have epistemologists paid no attention to it? How do reading and interpretation relate?

(3) What are the core epistemic responsibilities of the university?

Other projects he has been working on and that are still on his radar, are:

- *The problems of scientism*
- *The epistemology and metaphysics of Thomas Reid*
- *Personal identity*
- *Chance, randomness and design*
- *Responsible belief*
- *Christianity and philosophy*

René is the director of the Abraham Kuyper Center for Science and the Big Questions. Some recent publications:

- *“Collective Ignorance: An Information-Theoretic Account” (with Chris Ranalli), Synthese 2019.*
- *“Three Transparency Claims Examined” (with Naomi Kloosterboer”. Journal of Philosophical Research 2019*
- *“The Nature of the Humanities”, Philosophy 93 (2018): 109-140*

Contact details & addresses

Conference Venue

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Room HG-03C01 (Agora foyer 1)
De Boelelaan 1105
1081 HV Amsterdam

Evening program of August 26

- **Art Zuid (Sculpture Biennial) tour**
18.00 – 19.30 hrs
Starting and ending point:
Gershwinplein, Amsterdam
- **Dinner at restaurant Circl**
From 19.30 hrs
Gustav Mahlerplein 1B
1082 MS Amsterdam
<https://circl.nl/>

Contact details organizing committee

Elisa Matse MA

Program & communication manager

+316 129 562 80

e.n.matse@vu.nl

Abraham Kuyper Center

<http://www.abrahamkuypercenter.nl>



Sponsor

We kindly thank our sponsor for supporting us in realizing this conference.

