

**Report on the Centre for Philosophy of Science of the University of Lisbon
CFCUL**

International External Committee
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The External Committee arrived on the premises at 14:00 on 3 December, 2013. The visit comprised two parts, each lasting respectively 2.5 and 2 hours; the visit ended shortly after 18:30.

- The first part was chaired by Centre's director prof. Olga Pombo, and included a large sample of the Centre's members, in particular representatives of the various component groups.

- The second part was devoted to an extended discussion between a group of about 20 PhD students and postdocs, on the one hand, and the External Committee, on the other, in the absence of the other members of CFCUL.

The first part of the visit in turn consisted in two phases. First, the Centre's director provided an overview of the major events since the Committee's last visit. Second, leaders or representatives of the six research groups reported on the achievements and prospects of their group. The following report will thus comprise four parts:

- (a) The general issues as presented by the Centre's director.
- (b) The reports of the six research groups.
- (c) The meeting with the students and post-docs.
- (d) Conclusions and recommendations of the External Committee.

a. General issues

The Centre's director prof. Olga Pombo informed the Committee of a series of important recent events :

1. The fusion of the University of Lisbon and the Technical University of Lisbon.
2. The attribution of a doctoral program in philosophy of science to CFCUL.
3. The strategic programme 2015-2020.

Regarding the fusion : the result is a global university with over 50,000 students, where all academic disciplines are represented. The Centre took an active part in the process leading to the fusion, by organizing a series of workshops under the heading "The place of philosophy of science in the new university of Lisbon"; the outcome comprises a volumes soon to appear. The Centre believes this fusion is a unique opportunity allowing philosophy of science to play an increased role in the development of research and teaching in all areas. Consequently, it envisages a transformation of its structure: CFCUL intends to propose to become a College within the new university, offering courses in all fields.

Regarding the doctoral programme, CFCUL is particularly proud of having obtained a 4-year doctoral programme from FCT, the only one in philosophy. This programme will be funded through 20 full-time doctoral grants, allowing 5 new doctoral students to enter the programme every year—among which 2 are strictly national, the remaining 3 allowing for stays abroad. Moreover, the programme will offer the residing postdocs of the Centre the possibility of teaching advanced courses, which significantly will expand their skills and employability. The programme is structured around 5 areas:

- Logic and philosophy of science
- Bioethics
- Science and art
- Philosophy of technology
- Science and society

The strategic programme is an opportunity for a thematic reorganization of the Centre, forcing it to renew its problematic, while taking into account the evolution of the present 6 research teams.

At the present time, the Centre is considering a structure comprising the following four groups:

1. Philosophy of technology
2. Bioethics
3. Science and art
4. Philosophy of science

Under the proposed scheme, the main research lines active today will be represented:

- *Unity of science* will blend into Group 4 (which may in fact inherit the present group's label)
- *Philosophy of natural sciences* will split between Group 2 and Group 4.
- *Philosophy of life sciences* will split between Group 2 and Group 4.
- *Philosophy of mathematics* (the head of which has recently retired, but still comprises several doctoral students) will blend into Group 4.
- *Philosophy of human sciences, ethics and politics* will feed mostly Group 1, and in part Groups 2 and 3.
- *Science and art* will remain in its present state as Group 3.

Next, the Committee was told about the recent development of the resident journal *Kairos*. Seven issues are now out (the last one online only, soon to come out in print). The journal made a big effort to follow the recommendations that the External Committee had formulated on its first visit: fixed periodicity, rigorous peer review, and externalization of the contributors, a majority of which have no connection to the Centre. The journal, now co-edited by Olga Pombo and Nuno Nelim, aims at obtaining the Int2 category in the ERIH classification.

The Centre, whose funding has undergone a considerable reduction (see below), decided to organize a major international conference, to mark its 10th anniversary and to symbolically affirm its resilience in the face of harsh conditions: "Philosophy of science in the 21st century—Challenges and tasks". The Conference is being held on December 4-6; speakers (both keynote and contributors and symposiasts) have manifested their support of the Centre by coming in large numbers (9 keynotes and nearly 200 contributions) to Lisbon on their own funds. This is a huge encouragement from the national and international community.

The University has also manifested its support to the Centre by providing space for the conference (with plenary and 5-track parallel sessions), not a small feat during the academic school year. The presence and warm welcome expressed by the vice-rector of the University, prof. Rogério Gaspar, and the vice-director of the Faculty of sciences, prof. Antonio Sa

Fonseca, during the opening ceremony the following day, manifested beyond any doubt, over and above formal niceties, not only the University's support but its acknowledgment of the Centre's unique contribution to the scientific and pedagogic project of the new, fused University of Lisbon. This support and acknowledgement is in stark contrast with the University's decision earlier this year *not* to open a chair in Philosophy and History of Science, and limit the chair instead to History of science, thus making it impossible for CFCUL to be anchored in a full university chair.

Finally, the issue of funding was presented by Ricardo S. Reis dos Santos. First, as Olga Pombo had announced, the yearly budget from FCT fell by 32% in the last years, from approx. €100,000 to €70,000, a sum which barely covers the salary of the three permanent part-time employees, making quite difficult and often impossible a number of planned activities, in particular traveling abroad. In the framework of the 2014 Strategic Plan, the Centre can hope for no more than the present level of support. However, in the 2015-2020 Strategic Project, the hope is to obtain a high grade, that would provide the Centre with a yearly stipend of between €75,000 to 150,000, according to its classification, possibly augmented by 50% due to the recognition of the [web site](#) created by the group as an important image data base that was an essential component of the activities of the Science and Art Group during its initial phase, and that is regarded as an important cultural asset.

b. Open presentations of the activities of the six component research groups

For each group, the Committee has selected for the purpose of the present report a small number of salient points, and has made no attempt to provide a full picture of its activities, as this picture is provided in the supporting documents.

Unity of Science

The head of the group, Olga Pombo, stressed the historical role of the Unity of Science thematic during the constitutive stage of the Centre and informed us of the group's intention to blend into a larger thematic, Philosophy of science in the new structure. During the last couple of years, the links with two important centres abroad have been maintained; with the Sevilla group a conference on Epistemology, Logic and Language, was organized 29-31 October 2012; with Ecole normale superieure in Paris, a Bachelard conference was held 10-11 December 2012. Several books have appeared, among which *O Círculo dos Saberes* by O. Pombo, *Rousseau e as Ciências*, edited by O. Pombo and N. Nelim. 3 PhD dissertations are being pursued in the group, 2 of which are nearing completion.

Philosophy of Life Sciences

The head of the group, Antonio Barbosa, was unfortunately unable to attend, so the group's activities were presented by the assistant head, Ricardo Santos. He explained the three projects : Bioethics, Philosophy of medicine, Epistemology and philosophy of biology. The philosophy of medicine theme was discontinued in 2012, but the plan is to propose a project in Personalized Medicine for the Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

The Bioethics project (Antonio Barbosa) is heavily invested in 3 master's degrees in bioethics, Palliative Care and Pain Sciences at the Faculty of Medicine, with a contribution from Marques da Silva in the Faculty of science. Two conferences were organized, with corresponding proceedings: a workshop on transplantation, and a large Luso-Brazilian conference in Lisbon. Five books were published in the period, covering both clinical and theoretical bioethics:

- Quantitative Research in Palliative Care, 328 pp.
- Qualitative Research in Palliative Care, 269 pp.
- Manual of Palliative Care, 814 pp
- Bioethical Gravitations, 368 pp.
- Lookings about the mourning, 284 pp.

In philosophy of biology, three news areas were added in the period:

- Biodiversity, led by a new postdoctoral member, Elena Caseti.
- Biology and Ideology
- Biology and Emergence theory

As noted in the previous reports of the External Committee, the group is extremely active, in terms of international connections, conferences and publications.

Philosophy of mathematics

The head of the group, Augusto Oliveira, professor of mathematics and logic, recently went into retirement, and did not attend the meeting. The situation of the group and its recent activities were presented by a doctoral student about to defend her thesis. One ongoing funded project is The physics of principles and the scientific epistemology: the cases of Mach, Hertz, and Poincaré, PI Isabel Serra. The connections with various international groups, such as Archives Poincaré in Nancy, have been maintained. However, the absence of a possible successor to Prof. Oliveira is forcing the group to be discontinued; the remaining members will join the Philosophy of natural science group in the new structure.

Philosophy of natural science

The head of the group, Prof. J.R. Croca, presented its work and projects, which have not undergone any major change. He mentioned an increasing international recognition of their original approach, which has been extended to all fields under the label of “eurhythmy”. A book just came out under the title of *A new look on physics*, stressing the interactive, holistic nature of phenomena; another book was published by Rui Moreira. *Psicologia, Filosofia e Física Quântica*. In addition to the traditional weekly meetings on Wednesday, the group organized 2 international conferences.

Science and art

The leader of the group, Catarina Nabais, presented the numerous and intensive activities of this group. Starting as an unconventional, disparate group, it has become well organized and coherent, with a much clearer vision of how to integrate the work of its 15 members (of which 5 PhD students, 5 post-docs, the rest artists as well as scientists and philosophers). The FCT-funded project, “Image in science and art”, is now completed, leaving an enduring web platform “[Lisbon Centre for Image in Science and Art](#)” which may earn the Centre extra funding in the 2015-2020 Strategic Project, as explained above.

New lines of research have been opened: going beyond the original theme of ontology of image in science and art, the group is now getting interested in territory (cartographies) and perspectives on body; moreover, it now means to include philosophy among the areas under study, next to science and art; new forms of cross-boundary artistic expressions such as nano-art, bio-art, land-art are being scrutinized and encouraged.

There is a highly successful course offered by the group on Science and art, open to students of all fields. Six books have been published, among which Catarina Nabais’ impressive *Philosophie et Littérature*, Paris: Harmattan.

The group organized a large summer school cum workshop on Deleuze this summer, with 400 participants from all over the world. Three volumes will be the editorial outcome, one book with Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, one with Edinburgh University Press, and a special issue of Kairos.

The group will offer in the doctoral programme three subjects :

- representation of reality
- creation in art and science
- performance, image and cognition

A web-based magazine is also envisaged for the 2015-2020 Project.

Philosophy of human sciences, ethics and politics

The head of the group is Nuno Nabais. He presented the main areas of interest of the group:

- The ethics and politics of science
- Citizenship and the knowledge society
- The foundations of the human and social sciences.

In the framework of the Strategic Project, the focus of the group will turn to Philosophy of Technology, Bioethics (enhancement, Converging Technologies [NBIC: 'nano-bio-info-cogno']..., 'transmed'...), and Science and Art.

As mentioned above, the group took an active part in the preparation of the fusion of the two universities.

Among recent activities, the conferences on Rousseau and on colonialism gave rise to the publication of two books; several other books and numerous publications were mentioned.

It was also pointed out that a member of the group, Diego Sardinha, was recently appointed as director of the Collège international de philosophie (CIPh) in Paris, a parallel institution which has played an important role in French philosophical life since its creation by Jacques Derrida some 30 years ago; it is the first time a non-French director has been appointed.

c. Meeting with the students and postdocs

As in the previous visit by the Committee, the general purpose of the meeting was to gather a candid opinion on how the Centre is serving the students' and postdocs' interests, on their scientific lives and on their prospects. The Committee knew several of the participants and had discussed with them on the occasion of the previous visit. However, there were quite a number of new students and postdocs, and that in itself is an auspicious sign: it confirms the recognition of CFCUL's role as a major European centre in philosophy of science, the only one in Portugal entirely devoted to that field, as well as a haven for students and postdocs, both from Portugal and other European countries, who are both funded and motivated to pursue difficult work with no assurance of professional security. The Committee did not notice important changes in the situation and attitude of this community. The feeling of overall satisfaction was quite general, where the focus is on the friendliness, ease of communication, mutual support, and non-hierarchical functioning: everybody, for

example, is in principle allowed and encouraged to launch new projects, to invite visitors and new collaborators. On the negative side, it was noted that the severe restriction on funding actually made most such invitations impossible of late, except when the invited scholar could pay for their visit; and, perhaps more importantly, it made most travelling of students and post-docs to conferences and other centres unfeasible. In this context, it was suggested that should funding be restored in the future (from 2015 on) to a reasonable level, some thought should be given to the distribution of the overall budget, with a smaller proportion devoted to domestic activities (those that occur in the Centre: projects, conferences, paper publications...) and a correspondingly larger proportion to travelling and linking up with sources abroad.

Some students also mentioned the pressure induced by the many meetings of the center, and suggested that more time be devoted to research and less to meetings.

Regarding the doctoral programme, the postdocs said how much they looked forward to the opportunity of teaching ; however it was also argued that it would be better if the courses were taught in English, so as to attract international students in the programme.

The mixed provenance of students was also discussed. On the one hand, it is good that the Centre welcomes students with little or no philosophical background. On the other hand, it was said that the philosophical training that is provided in the Centre for these students is insufficient, resulting in a heterogeneity which can be an obstacle. In the same line, the high number of different topics was seen by some as an obstacle in reaching the very highest level of production, one that can allow students and postdoc to attain a sufficient degree of recognition.

After the meeting, the Committee asked the Director for comments on the specific issue of lack of travelling funds. Prof. Pombo informed the Committee that funded PhD students (resp. post-docs) receive a monthly stipend of €980 (resp. €1480), to which a yearly budget of €750 is added specifically for professional travel. Some of them do not spend their travel funds, although they are encouraged to do so; and those who have exhausted their funds have invariably been funded by the Centre for any additional travelling they have requested. The Committee must conclude that some of the students and post-docs have perhaps unwittingly misinformed it: it would seem that the crisis that has hit the Centre very hard has in no way led to a restriction of the funds available to the students and postdocs. In addition, PCT should be lauded for providing these stipends, which are quite generous considering the cost of living in Lisbon, compared for example to London or Paris.

d. The External Committee's conclusions and recommendations.

The Centre has continued to make progress on the various dimensions of its activities since the Committee's last visit. In particular, the Science and Art group, the most recent and less integrated originally, is now obviously a driving force in the Centre. The other groups are all pursuing their goals at a satisfactory rate, more or less following the dynamics described in the last report, with the exception of *Philosophy of mathematics*. The rate of conferences and publications has not noticeably decreased, in fact it may well have increased somewhat. International connections are thriving, with new ones being made, especially in Bioethics and philosophy of life sciences, but in the other groups as well. The editorial improvement of *Kairos* is a very welcome development.

The Committee concludes once again that CFCUL fulfils its missions as a fully interdisciplinary centre in history and philosophy of science, with a wide scope, a willingness to include a large variety of concerns, and an ability to attract, train and give hope and energy to many students and young scholars, all of which make it quite unique. It has established itself as the main interlocutor in Portugal for the international community. The Committee strongly emphasizes once again that CFCUL is an essential piece in the national academic structure and should be encouraged, strengthened and preserved as a top priority.

In this perspective, the Committee wishes to make the following recommendations:

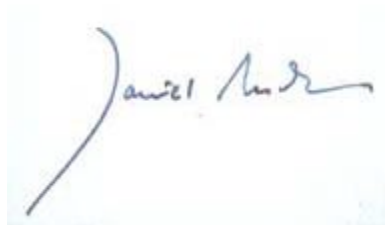
1. The University should make a decisive effort to open permanent positions for the Centre. Given the recent refusal to create a chair in Philosophy of science, it is now **absolutely vital** that at least one, and in the near future 2, **full-time, tenure-track positions** be opened with the right scientific profile (Philosophy of science), so that a younger member of the Centre, or a newcomer, may succeed the present Director after she has retired. **In the absence of such a recruitment, it is the Committee's considered opinion that the Centre will risk entering into decline.**

2. Almost as important is the requirement that the work, both administrative and academic, be more systematically organized and shared, so that things do not rest as much on the director's shoulders as is at present the case. Although the director receives a lot of help, she does need a second in command who can serve as general manager of the Centre. It would seem to be the responsibility of the University to provide the corresponding position. Meanwhile, the members of the Centre should think of ways to relieve the present director of at least some of her burden.

3. As already indicated in the previous report, the editorial production of the Centre, impressive as it is, and doubtless having filled a positive role in the early phase of

development of the Centre, is in the present situation largely excessive, given that the various groups have now established their scientific credibility and have shown that they can publish their output in independent venues. It is now the Committee's recommendation that the internal production of books and reports be *drastically* reduced, with the well-maintained website serving as main venue for in-house publishing.

Lisbon, 5 December 2013.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel Andler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Daniel Andler

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "María José Frápolli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

María José Frápolli