

AOS Fictional Discourse, Modal Logic, Cumulative Cultural Knowledge, Philosophy of Language  
AOC Social Epistemology, Modal Epistemology, Formal Epistemology, Philosophy of Literature

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## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

PHD (SUBMITTED, VIVA: 16.07.26) RESEARCH ASSOCIATE (2021 – 2025)  
*University of Cologne,* *University of Cologne,*  
*Cologne Center for Contemporary* *Petrarch Institute,*  
*Epistemology and the Kantian Tradition,* Richard-Strauss-Str. 2,  
Albertus-Magnus-Platz 50931, Cologne, Germany  
50923, Cologne, Germany

VISITING SCHOLAR (2026) VISITING SCHOLAR (2025)  
*University of Oxford: Uehiro Oxford* *University of St Andrews: ARCHÉ*  
*Institute* (Hilary Term, 2026, hosted by *Philosophical Research Centre for Logic,*  
Neil Levy). *Language, Metaphysics and Epistemology*  
(trimester 2, 2025, hosted by Franz Berto).

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## PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

1. “Epistemology of Folk-Lore”. In: *Social Epistemology* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2025.2496199>. **Abstract:** Testimony is a central concept in the epistemological debate on knowledge and learning. It is therefore surprising that testimony plays a minor role in the empirical literature on cultural learning. This raises the question of whether our approach to knowledge in epistemology might be missing out on some things when applied to cultural knowledge and its transmission. By taking the semantic component of knowledge in the compound folk-lore at face value, we aim to explore whether the concept of folklore could potentially help out here. Three persistent puzzles concerning folklore and its study are discussed to this end: (1) What is the ontological status of folkloric objects of study? (2) How shall one safeguard folkloric objects, depending on different possible answers to the ontological question? (3) How could we distinguish fake-lore, i.e. folklore that is merely seemingly representative of epistemic groups, from more generally representative folklore?
2. “Should We Embrace Impossible Worlds Due to the Flaws of Normal Modal Logic?”. In: *Logica Universalis* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11787-024-00344-4>. **Abstract:** Some philosophers advance the claim that the phenomena of logical omniscience and of the indiscernibility of metaphysical statements, which arise in (certain) interpretations of normal modal logic, provide strong reasons in favour of impossible world approaches. These two specific lines of argument will be presented and discussed in this paper. Contrary to the recent much-held view that the characteristics of these two phenomena provide us with strong reasons to adopt impossible world approaches, the view defended here is that no such ‘knock-down arguments’ do emanate on those grounds. This is not to rule out that there cannot be any other good reasons for assuming impossible world semantics. However, the discussion of a further argument for impossible worlds will suggest that different attempts to argue for them likely present intertwined problems.
3. “Possible Arguments against Impossible Worlds in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*”. Forthcoming in: *South American Journal of Logic*. Preprint [here](#). **Abstract:** At first glance, impossible world semantics appear to be useful adaptations of normal modal logic. Proponents of impossible worlds argue, e.g., that in the context of metaphysical disagreement, impossible worlds would provide a key to modelling the respective dispute situation. The same philosophers also argue that we need impossible worlds to model what

they consider to be the conceivability of logical impossibilities. With the help of Wittgenstein's early philosophy, or, better said, with what I believe to be a visualisation of his ideas on nesting models for possibility, I develop some thoughts on the likely shared weaknesses of such arguments for non-normal world approaches. Said goes hand in hand with the supplementary proposal of rethinking our conventional nesting models for possibility.

4. "Opening Mystery Boxes – The Logical Substructure of Prima Facie Conception". Under review (*Synthese* – second round). **Abstract:** Prima facie conception can appear mysterious. Having a prima facie grasp of something means being 'on the edge' of conceiving. But it seems that often there is no way for us to know, if *what our intuitions tell us to prima facie conceive is actually conceivable*, i.e. conceivable under ideal rational reflection. We propose a novel account of prima facie conception: On the basis of working hypotheses concerning the logical interactions of conception, sensory imagination and prima facie conception, we isolate different subtypes of what we call *general prima facie conception*. With these tools, we explore (what seems to be) the deeper logical substructure of prima facie conception. We hint at how this could help us understand different reasons for different intuitions (for instance, regarding intuitive differences in the truth-value of conditionals with impossible antecedents).
5. "The Antlers of Homo Ludens – Towards an Anthropologically Informed Understanding of Information Disorder in the Age of AI". Under review (*Social Epistemology* – first round). **Abstract:** Current discourse on dis- and misinformation in some places is stuck in a 'cat-and-mouse game': AI gets better at faking, so we build AI better at detecting. Such ex post mitigation often treats the symptom rather than the systemic information disorder. This paper explores what is intended to be a complementary, conventionalist approach aimed at long-term, ex ante mitigation of information disorder. I do so by looking at our past. I start from an anthropological premise backed up by empirical evidence: Homo Sapiens is a playful, fiction- and narrative-craving animal whose brain is optimised to process counterfactuals. I argue that the corresponding part of our nature becomes – and often became – a threat to us in the face of new, or just poorly conventionalised, information environments. – Akin to how the oversized bodies and antlers became a threat to the Giant Elk in the Pleistocene. In this sense, playful/fictional discourse would not only be a Waltonian 'make-believe-sandbox', but also a highly conventionalised 'guardrail' that guarantees information order notwithstanding our nature: We can live out our nature there, while at the same time not taking what we receive at face value. From the general idea of a conventional guardrail aimed at diachronic information order, one can arguably learn about how to navigate some of the pressing challenges we face. I present five practical takeaways.

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## MONOGRAPHS (PHD, SUBMITTED; VIVA: 16.07.26)

### *Understanding Fictional Discourse – From the Logic of Our Minds to Its Power in the Streets*

**Book abstract:** While 'fiction' is often employed as a shorthand for works of fiction, this book breaks with this somewhat imprecise paradigm. The work is dedicated to the intricate relationship between fictions in terms of fictitious mental contents (for instance, what one imagines when reading about Sherlock Holmes smoking a pipe) and fictional discourse (the playful language use characteristic of novels, jokes, internet memes, and so on). It is argued that, with respect to (some types of) fictitious mental contents, it holds that an agent can entertain the respective mental content *x* without being aware of *x*'s fictitiousness. What follows is that (many types of) fictions can be the consequence of, say, fake news or propaganda. And fictional discourse, accordingly, is not only a Waltonian 'make-believe sandbox', in which we live out our playful nature, but also a 'conventional guardrail' that guarantees information order. – It 'domesticates' fictions by preventing them from 'running rampant'. Across several key dimensions of the relationship in question, it is argued that understanding fictional discourse is essential for managing the 'power' that fictions exert in the real-world:

**Ch. 1** I propose an epistemic modal logic (FIB) designed to discuss fictions in terms of (voluntary and involuntary) mental contents.

**Ch. 2** I compare different nominally related stances (e.g. mathematical fictionalism/fictions in law) and I argue against a comparative fictionalism.

**Ch. 3** I propose a conventionalist account of fictional discourse based on David Lewis's notion of convention. **Ch. 4** I propose epistemic norms which arguably govern non-immersive fictional reception.

**Ch. 5** I propose a Bayesian interpretation of non-immersive reception. In line with predictive processing accounts of the human brain, I derive a notion of immersive reception: Immersion is the (partial) absence of reality-monitoring due to the (partial) absence of prediction errors.

**Ch. 6** I suggest that fictional discourse is, among other things, a 'recipe' for navigating mis- and disinformation in present times.

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## TALKS (SELECTION)

1. "The Antlers of Homo Ludens – Towards an Anthropologically Informed, Conventionalist Understanding of Information Disorder in the Age of AI". At: *The Uehiro Oxford Institute, Internal Research Work-in-Progress Seminar*, University of Oxford, 17.02.2026.
2. "(Rational) Deference to Groups? The Case of Folk-Lore". At: *The 18th Cologne Summer School in Philosophy* (on Applied Epistemology, special guest: Alex Worsnip), 22.07.2025.
3. "Genuine problems and 'merely' possible worlds" [GE: Echte Probleme und 'bloß' mögliche Welten]. At: *Borderfictions – aesthetics and pragmatics of political borders*, 30.11.2024, University of Cologne.
4. "Should We Embrace Impossible Worlds?". At: *Springer Mathematics & Statistics webinars 2024*, February 14. Introduction: Jasmin Özel (University of Siegen). Moderation: Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen (Hong Kong Baptist University), [doi.org/10.52843/cassyni.ddvv89](https://doi.org/10.52843/cassyni.ddvv89).
5. "Impossible Worlds? 'Let us not be bewitched'". At: *First South American Logic Meeting (SALOME1)*, 12-15.01.2024, UNSAAC, Cuzco, Perú.
6. "Über die Freiheit fiktionaler Rede und die Gebundenheit von Simulation" [On the Independence of Fictional Speech and the Constraints of Simulation]. At: *Fiktion und Simulation: Wie entsteht und was bedeutet 'virtuelle Realität'?*, High-Performance Computing Center Stuttgart, 13./14.12.22

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## SCIENCE TO PUBLIC/JOURNALISM (SELECTION)

1. *Frankfurter Rundschau*, NR. 69, 22.03.2025 – "Allein der Westen kennt die Geschichtsschreibung"
2. *DIE WELT*, 25.12.2022 – „Erfundene Geschichte - Wie der Ukrainer Breschnew den russischen Krim-Mythos bis heute prägt“.
3. *DIE WELT*, 01.06.2022 – „Russische Identität - Der Folklore-Krieg“.

## TEACHING (SELECTION)

1. W. 2025: [Fiction and Reality] Fiktion und Wirklichkeit
2. W. 2025: [Introduction to literary theory] Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft
3. S. 2024: [Introduction to literary theory] Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft
4. W. 2023: [The boundaries of fictional speech] Genzgänge der Literatur
5. S. 2023: [Philosophy and Literature] Philosophie und Literatur
6. W. 2022: [Introduction to literary theory] Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft
7. W. 2022: [Introduction to literary theory] Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft
8. S. 2022: [The topicality of past science-fiction] Aktualität vergangener SciFi

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## CONFERENCE ORGANISATION/CONCEPTUALISATION (SELECTION)

1. *Grenzfiktionen - Ästhetik und Pragmatik politischer Grenzen* [*Boarderfictions - Aesthetics and Pragmatics of Political Borders*], 30. November 2024. (Conceptualisation)
2. *After the seventh centenary*. Loveno di Menaggio (IT), Villa Vigoni - German-Italian Centre for European Dialogue, 15/11/2023 to 18/11/. (Organisation)

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## ACADEMIC SERVICE (REFEREE/EXPERT OPINION)

1. *Social Epistemology* (2025)
2. *UK Metascience Unit* (2026)