



PhD Research Proposal Form

China Scholarship Council (CSC)

2026

FIELD

ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Thesis subject title: The Cognitive Value of Fiction

Name of the French doctoral school/Ecole doctorale: ED 662: Sciences Cognitives

Name of the Research team/Equipe de recherche: Institut Jean-Nicod CNRS UMR 8129 | ENS-PSL | EHESS

Website: <http://www.institutnicod.org/?lang=en>

Name of the Supervisor/Directeur de thèse : Jérôme PELLETIER

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Lab Language/ Langue de travail : English

Research Proposal Abstract/Présentation du sujet:

The main aim of this dissertation is to examine in depth issues that lie at the heart of contemporary discussion in analytic philosophy regarding the cognitive value of fiction.

The PhD candidate will address some of the following research questions:

- In what ways do truth and knowledge retain significance within fiction, even if fiction is understood to turn away from empirical reality?
- How can the conception of fiction as an emotional or affective enterprise be reconciled with its cognitive or epistemic dimensions?
- What forms of understanding or insight can be derived from engagement with fictional narratives?
- Do fictional works possess cognitive content, and if so, in what sense?
- What kinds of knowledge of reality, if any, does fiction seek to convey—propositional, experiential, or otherwise?

- **How do the cognitive value and the aesthetic merits (or shortcomings) of a fictional work interact or influence one another?**
- **Does the use of fictional scenarios in scientific and philosophical thought experiments to uncover truths about the world provide support for a cognitivist account of fiction?**

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Type of PhD:

1. Full PhD

- Joint PhD/cotutelle (leading to a double diploma) : NO
- Regular PhD (leading to a single French diploma) : YES
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2. Visiting PhD (students enrolled at a Chinese institution who come to ENS for mobility period) : NO

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