
Noûsletter

No. 10

June 1998

Adjunct Faculty Enhance the Philosophy Department

The Philosophy Department has found a way to use philosophical talent from other departments to enhance the Department's breadth and diversity. During the past academic year, three new adjunct appointments have been made to the Philosophy Department. Previously there were three adjuncts, **Lee Dryden**, Director of the Interdisciplinary Program in Social Science, **William Rapaport** of the Computer Science Department, and **Stephen Wear** whose appointment is in the Medical School. These three have made large contributions to the Department by teaching and by serving on advisory committees and dissertation committees for graduate students.

Adjuncts normally have a professional interest in philosophy or do some research in philosophy. Lee Dryden has a Ph.D. from our Department, and specializes in medical ethics. Bill Rapaport has a Ph.D. in philosophy from Indiana University, and works in logic, philosophy of mind, and artificial intelligence. Stephen Wear also has a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Texas, and specializes in medical ethics. He is Co-Director of the Center for Clinical Ethics and Humanities in Health Care.

Adjunct appointments highlight the interdisciplinary character of the Department, and strengthen our ties with other departments. They are additional valuable resources for our graduate students, and provide welcome intellectual interactions for our faculty. Beyond this, adjuncts enhance the reputation of the Department and help us attract talented graduate students. We are fortunate this year to have added the following adjuncts:

David Nyberg, Ph.D., Stanford University, is a philosopher of education and a researcher/writer on topics in ethics. He is a professor both in the Graduate School of Education and in the Department of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo. He has had numerous books and articles published on the philosophy of education and ethics. His recent book, *The Varnished Truth: Truth*

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Telling and Deceiving in Ordinary Life, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993, is a philosophical investigation of what it means to "tell the truth," what deception and self-deception are for, and how deception fits in with moral decency; it was selected by Choice (The American Library Association) as one of the Outstanding Academic Books in Philosophy for 1994.

Rodolphe Gasché, Ph.D., Freie Universität, Berlin, is Eugenio Donato Professor of Comparative Literature, Department of Comparative Literature at the University at Buffalo. He is a distinguished and widely published member of the faculty who has advanced degrees in philosophy and has written extensively on philosophy. He is currently writing *Form, Presentation and the Imagination: On Kant* as well as *Alongside the Horizon: On the Philosophical Concept of Europe*. Many of
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Retirement for Richard T. Hull

After years of service and dedication to the Philosophy Department, Dick Hull "retired" but only to move on out west. He wrote, "I am very excited to announce that, as of September 1, 1997, I will be leaving the Philosophy Department at the University at Buffalo to become Executive Director for the Texas Council for the Humanities in Austin, Texas. It is a position with enormous, open-ended opportunities for personal growth and service to the Texas community: it offers opportunities for leadership in education, and it provides challenges to assist humanities scholars in higher education to interact positively and effectively with non-academic institutions and dimensions of society..."

Given the nature of his retirement and our years of tolerating his "pun-iness", we gave him a well-deserved send-off using the theme "Dick's Hull-A-Bull-oo" held at UB's Center for Tomorrow on May 3rd, 1998. (Western dress was optional.) A trombone quartet, the Slide Works, featuring Rob Richardson, provided lively musical interludes. We all wish Dick and Elaine much success in their new endeavors.

Remarks at his retirement party,
by Richard Hull

Many have expressed surprise at my taking retirement at an early age, shortly after promotion to full professor. The surprise wasn't limited to my UB friends: that was the substance of the first question I was asked in my interview: "Why would a tenured full professor in a graduate department want to throw that away and take this job?" It is a question I have asked myself many times in the past year, as an occa-
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Birth of the Buffalo Socratic Society

The department witnessed the inception of a new philosophical discussion and debate group this spring semester. The Buffalo Socratic Society is the creation of a group of UB graduate philosophy students, spearheaded by David Kaspar, who wished to generate and facilitate genuine discussion of seminal philosophical issues. The Society's hope was both to focus on issues of general interest from a fresh perspective, and to provide an environment where such issues could be presented and probed effectively. The format

for the Society's events took the form of a debate followed by a general discussion.

Taking into account the Buffalo Socratic Society's youth, it is safe to say that it has thus far met with remarkable success. There were four events this past semester, with attendance ranging from fifteen to thirty participants. The issues examined this semester were the following: (1) *Are There Moral Absolutes?* David Kaspar and Lamont Johnson were the presenters, Jonathan Weidenbaum the moderator. (2) *Is Mystical Experience a Kind of Knowledge?*

Robert Delfino and Omar Lughod were the presenters, David Kaspar the moderator. (3) *Philosophy: Reason or Rationalization?* Professors Gracia and Lawler were

the presenters, Berit Brogaard-Pederson the moderator. (4) *A Blind Debate*. The topic announced at this event was, *What is Law?* Professor Smith and David Garren were the presenters, Jonathan Sanford the moderator.

The core members of the Buffalo Socratic Society are Berit Brogaard-Pederson, Robert Kieffer, Lamont Johnson, Jonathan Sanford, Jonathan Weidenbaum, and the Society's leader, David Kaspar. These members of the Buffalo Socratic Society would like to thank everyone who helped in making the Society's first semester a success. Special thanks to all presenters, as well as to those who aided in taking care of logistical details. Finally, thanks to all participants whose interest has inspired the Society to begin planning for next year.

submitted by Jonathan Sanford

Faculty News...

John Corcoran gave lectures in Spring of 1997 at Stanford (Mathematics) and San Francisco State (Philosophy). His lecture at State was attended by former UB professor John Glanville and former UB doctoral student Ann Robertson, Ph.D. 1976, who are both Professors of Philosophy at State. In January of 1998, Corcoran delivered an invited address, "Was Aristotle the first mathematical logician?" at a Joint Meeting of the American Mathematical Society and the Association for Symbolic Logic.



Jorge J.E. Gracia has declined an offer from Fordham. He was appointed Samuel P. Capen Professor (this is equivalent to having a chair, but

the chair does not permanently belong to the Department).



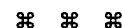
In March, John Kearns was an invited speaker at the conference. "The Naturalization of the Mind," held at the Universidad Nacional in Bogotá, Colombia. The conference was devoted to cognitive science, and included speakers from a number of different departments. Kearns gave a talk arguing that computers can't think or engage in cognitive activity. One of the organizers of the conference was Jaime Ramos, a Ph.D. student in our Department, who is a member of the department of the Universidad Nacional. Jaime also gave a talk at the conference, on "Symbolism versus Connectionism."

Adjunct Faculty

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our graduate students have taken his courses and he has served on a number of our dissertation committees.

F. William Lawvere, Ph.D., Columbia University, is a professor Mathematics at the University at Buffalo. He is a prolific, original thinker whose work incorporates the philosophy of mathematics into research in geometry and mechanics and his research was instrumental in initiating a field known as categorical logic. One of his books, *Conceptual Mathematics*, co-written with S.H. Schanuel, based on a course introducing categories to freshmen and published by Cambridge University Press in 1997, is widely used by many who intend to apply his earlier discoveries to theoretical computer science.



Applied Ontology: A New Discipline is Born

The following appeared (in Italian) in the distinguished Italian newspaper *Il Sole-24 Ore* (said to be Italian equivalent of the Wall Street Journal) on Sunday May 24, 1998, as part of a full-page spread on the Department's Marvin Farber Conference held in April:

The discipline of applied ethics already has a certain familiarity in the Anglo-Saxon world, above all through the work of Peter Singer. Applied ethics uses the tools of moral philosophy to resolve practical problems of the sort which arise, for example, in the running of hospitals.

In the University at Buffalo (New York) there was organized on April 24-25 1998 the world's first conference on a new, sister discipline, the discipline of applied ontology. Applied ontologists seek to apply ontological tools to solving practical problems of the sort which arise in various extra-philosophical domains.

One source of applied ontology is work on expert systems in the artificial intelligence field. In constructing software tools for merging large databases, it has proved fruitful to develop common ontologies in terms of which divergent bodies of data derived from different sources can be unified together into a single system. Ontological engineering of this sort was pioneered by Tom Gruber and his colleagues on the Knowledge Interchange Project in Stanford. It is represented in Italy by Nicola Guarino and his co-workers at the CNR in Padua.

A second source of applied ontology is in the domain of legal analysis. As David Koepsell, [Ph.D. 1997], one of the organizers of the Buffalo conference points out: "Legal systems in general are composed of legal entities, such as laws, contracts, obligations, and rights. Their application yields new categories of entities such as: corporations, trademarks, marriages, and parcels of real estate. But the categorization of these entities by different legal systems has not, by-and-large, been conducted in ways which exploit the tools of modern ontology. Consequently, contra-

dictions and inconsistencies often arise in the law when, for instance, one type of entity is forced into two mutually exclusive categories (e.g., when software is considered to be both patentable and copyrightable)."

The growth in importance of ontology turns on the fact that, in an age of rapid technological progress, legislators, jurists and lawyers must grapple with constantly changing domains of objects. The expansion of trading blocks and treaty organizations, and the concomitant growth in importance of international law, have subjected the processes of law-making and enforcement to challenges of increasing intensity. Legal systems have been forced to try to fit such things as genetically engineered life forms, artificial intelligences, "virtual" currencies, DNA fingerprinting,

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and the Internet into legal schemes which, when initially developed, anticipated no such phenomena.

Legal schemes need to be continuously updated in light of technological and other innovations. Given the myriad forces at work in constraining legislation, revision has been carried out primarily in an ad hoc manner. The resultant legislation is in consequence marked by a general failure to examine or develop categorical schemes, or ontologies, of sufficient generality and robustness to comprehend both old and new varieties of objects. Examples abound of new types of objects with which the law has failed to come to grips in reasoned fashion. Do national boundaries exist on the Internet? Are genetically engineered

life forms *expressions*, which ought to be afforded the protection of intellectual property law? If so, are they expressions of the sort which may be patented, or are they expressions of the sort which may be copyrighted? The answers to such questions must reflect ethical, economic and other considerations. But the questions themselves are ontological: they are questions about how given entities are properly to be categorized, and the task of providing answers to such questions can be aided through the development of legal-ontological theories, theories of intellectual property law, of artefacts, and of biological entities. It is ontological questions which are at issue in the current dispute between Microsoft and the U.S. Justice Department over the question: *what is an operating system?*

The discipline of applied ontology is a new field, but it has already become recognized as an area of growing importance, and ontological methods have already successfully been applied in the medical and other domains. (See Andrew Frank, "Ontology: A Consumer's Point of View" in *Spatial and Temporal Reasoning*. Oliviero Stock (ed.), Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998.)

Applied ontology has been used by governments, for example in the design and construction of new computerized systems of land registration in the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe. And it has entered also into the business world; the firm Ontek—short for 'ontological technology'—of Laguna Beach, California employs ontologists in the design of software systems to serve as 'white collar robots' in the running of repair shops for large aircraft maintenance. Such systems require ontologies embracing within a single framework not only aircraft parts and functions, but also the raw-materials and processes involved in repair, the times these processes and sub-processes take, job-shop space and equipment, an array of different types of personnel, as well as counterparts of the costs and other economic properties of all of these

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Asian Scholars Visit Buffalo

For a number of years now, UB's Department of Philosophy has been attracting scholars from Korea and Japan to give lectures and carry out research. Tae Hoon Cho from Choong-Nam University first came here in the early eighties to collect materials on Mead for his Ph.D., and came back in 1996 for another year of research. During 1996-97, The Korea Research Foundation grant allowed Professor Oh-Hyun Shin to give lectures on Asian and Korean Philosophy for two semesters.

Professor Shin-Hwan Kwak, a leading scholar of Chinese philosophy in Korea and chair of Philosophy at Soongsil University, stayed a year during 1997-98, and gave a colloquy lecture on "Nature in I Ching (Book of Change)".

Also, Professor Dong-Jun Yi of Sunggyun Kwan University, which is the oldest Korean University and is known for its Confucian tradition, spoke on Neo-Confucianism last year.

Currently, we have Professor Hyun-Soo Ahn from Kyunggi University of Seoul,

whose interest is in social philosophy, but who is attending several courses to familiarize himself with teaching and research at UB. He will stay for a year. Another professor who announced his arrival in August is Dr. Wangjoo Lee from Pusan National University, author of several popular introductory books in philosophy. He plans to stay one year and do some research in the area of phenomenology.

Last year, we had two well-known feminist scholars, Professors Kiyoko Shimizu and Aiko Ogoshi, from Osaka, Japan, who gave colloquy presentations on Japanese feminism. Other Japanese visitors during the past two to three years were Professor Masahiro Hamashita of Kobe University and Professor Junichi Murata of Tokyo University. They gave lectures on aesthetics and philosophy of science respectively. And finally, Professor Kwang-Myung Kim of Soongsil University spoke on Korean Art in the Fall of 1996.

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Eric Reitan, Ph.D. 1993 writes the following poem celebrating the banking profession.

The Banker's Dilemma

Once, they say,
We were apes
On the savannah
And we surely ate bananas with the peel.
Is that why we hide today
Within our walls of lemon creme? Behind
blue screens?
Why wood slats neatly range round
Truculent moons
Seen in slivers
As if to cage the sky
(the banker's chandelier)?
Why the green is in its place against the
entry
Almost tamed but clawing
For the slanting light
And the plastic promises:
"save, invest, and earn"
"save, invest and earn"
Gibberish in the woods but
Suspended now in red and blue
(and, of course, in gold)--
Artifice and prejudice and
Beveled oak
Enfolding lolling apes in polyester coats?
Sometimes it seems fair to ask how many
Long to run off
Screaming
Through the parking lots
Waving bananas (or mangoes) at the sky.

Visiting Professor Helps Meet Course Demand

In the 1998-99 academic year, Scott DeVito will be a visiting professor in the Department. Scott received the Ph.D. from the University of Rochester in 1996, and has been a postdoctoral fellow in the Philosophy Department at Bowling Green University. Scott specializes in medical ethics, and will help the Department meet the demand for courses in this area. Since Dick Hull's retirement, the Department has been without a faculty member specializing in bioethics/medical ethics, and has been hard-pressed to offer enough sections to satisfy the needs of students in health-related professions.

The Other Face of Metaphysics

Another piece from the feature in *Il Sole -24 Ore* on our Farber Conference.

Achille Varzi
Columbia University

Consider the vase on the table and the lump of clay from which it is made. Is this one single entity before us? Or two? Common sense suggests the first answer. But on reflection we notice that the clay existed even before the vase (and would continue to exist even if the vase were smashed into pieces). Therefore there would seem to be two things with distinct histories. If however we distinguish the vase from the clay, will we also have to distinguish the vase from the sum of its molecules? (The vase, but not the sum, survives the loss of even a small fragment.) Shall we distinguish the sum of the molecules of the vase from the sum of the clay fragments? (Some parts could have been of different material.) If we follow down this road we run the risk of ending up with an infinity of things, all distinguished from each other yet all perfectly coinciding in the very same region of space.

Dilemmas such as this have long been studied in the history of philosophy. They are to be encountered in that branch of metaphysics which is called ontology, the science of 'being qua being' (as Aristotle has it), or of 'something in general' (as Husserl says). It is easy to suppose that ontology deals with abstruse and inconclusive problems, and perhaps it is just this appearance of abstrusiveness and inconclusiveness that explains the lack of consideration which it receives in the culture of today. There is a clear sense in which logic, ethics, and even the philosophy of mind are of significance also outside the narrow circle of professional philosophers. Philosophers' reflections on problems in logic and the philosophy of mind have inspired research in recent years in computer science and in the neurosciences. There are

lively debates in bioethics which have consequences recognized by the wider public. But what sense does it have today to raise ontological questions, immaterial dilem-

It is significant...that lately the interest in metaphysical issues has been increasing not only among philosophers, but also among those outside philosophy who take a practical attitude and put the concerns of application before those of a pure theory.

mas on which philosophers themselves have not been able to reach agreement in the course of the centuries?

In fact, however, to consider whether the vase and the clay are the same entity (as an example) means to raise deep philosophical issues concerning the nature of things, their persistence and conditions of

identity in time, their relations of dependency---more generally, the preconditions for our being able to speak about the world at all. To this extent metaphysics is a far from marginal affair, and even its marginalization is relative. As a matter of fact, it is a discipline that among analytic philosophers is enjoying a period of optimal health. In the last year in the United States dozens of events served to bear witness to this fact; and there have also been several events in Europe which attest to this re-evaluation of metaphysics, and above all of ontology. To take just two examples, consider the conference "Analytical Ontology" held in Innsbruck last autumn, or the convention on "Thought and Ontology" held in Genoa some time ago, whose proceedings have just been published. The fact remains that if it is health, it could simply be academic health.

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News of our Graduates...

George Giacaman, Ph.D. 1976, is Dean of Graduate Studies at Birzeit University on the West Bank.

José M. Sagüillo, who received the MA from our Department in 1981, has been teaching in the Department of Logic of the University of Santiago de Compostela in the northwestern corner of Spain. Besides his teaching, research and lecturing he has been serving as Secretary-Treasurer of the Spanish Society for Logic and Philosophy of Science. His most recent article, "Logical Consequence Revisited", *Bulletin of Symbolic Logic* 3 (1997) 216-241, was based on a presentation that he made to the



Buffalo Logic Colloquium. When José was a student here he worked with Charles Lambros, John Kearns, John Corcoran, Nicolas Goodman, Richard Vesley and others. He keeps in touch with many current and former members of our Department by email. His address is lfllgsagu@usc.es.

John R. Shook, Ph.D. 1994, has just published *Pragmatism: An Annotated Bibliography, 1898-1940* (Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1998). This 600-page volume includes contributions from Lesley Friedman, Ph.D. 1993, and a Foreword by Peter Hare.

Retirement for Richard T. Hull

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sional error has been pounced upon by my Executive Committee, or I have received a letter of resignation from an arch conservative gubernatorial appointee that accused the organization of corruption, sweetheart deals, funding trivial projects, racism for aiming at an ethnic balance on the board, and other venalities, or I have struggled with creating a suitable program celebrating 25 years of history of an organization whose history I don't know.

I think I have found at least part of the answer in the first primary philosophical text I ever read: Plato's *Republic*. My first semester in graduate school at Indiana in 1963 was a rather dramatic one: we were admitted to graduate study at the last moment in the summer, we moved four times in three months, and the Monday after we arrived on campus I was handed 5 texts and told to teach them to two classes of 28 students each, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated; I had operations on both jaws and one foot; our apartment was flooded with sewage; we were moved into the apartment of a faculty member who had just shot himself in suicide; Elaine went from failing her statistics course to a solid B+; we thought for a time that Elaine was pregnant: just the usual sort of first semester of graduate school excitement!

Back to Plato's *Republic*. You may recall that in Book VII, Socrates creates for Glaucon an elaborate allegorical image of the Cave, which illustrates the aim of education. I'm going to quote from that presentation, because this allegory has formed the justification for many of us who have entered into the study and profession of philosophy, an expression as clear as a complex metaphor or simile can make it, of the motivation, rationale, and necessity for such study and such a profession. It is good for us to return to the most powerful justifications for our existence lest we, and others, forget them.

[Here the Noûsletter editors invite our readers to pull a copy of the *Republic* off their book shelves and to reread Book VII.]

As one deeply moved in my life by the calling of philosophy as a vocation, I have had to take seriously the latter parts of Plato's Allegory of the Cave. As this is not the kind of government Plato thought ideal, but rather is a democracy, I have had to repose the question of the nature of the

"Why would a tenured full professor in a graduate department want to throw that away and take this job?"

calling to service after my education. Both Plato and Socrates prescinded from government, finding their calling to be that of the educator of youth and young adults, and I have followed for a fair portion of my life in that path. But, this is a democracy, a country in which the kind of starting over that Plato fantasizes in the *Republic*, requiring taking children from their parents and raising them under the influence of only philosopher-kings, isn't exactly possible. Moreover, Plato never told us what was to become of those in the *Re-*

public who had not benefitted from an education, those who remained in the Cave. Nonetheless, we are called to return to the Cave, the world of the non-academic, go through the period of bewilderment, to be ridiculed and accused and opposed before we can adjust our eyes to see again in the murk.

Following this calling, I have left the pleasure of your company, of the contemplative life, compelled by some inner sense that that is a fitting part of my life. As an individual person, it is wrenching and saddening to do so. I have known such joy as a teacher and colleague, such pleasure and pride in the accomplishments of the young lives that have come for a time into my life, only to leave and go forth to pursue their own vision of the good as I have done. I have returned into the Cave on several occasions, for a year or two, of which excursions the Department and University have been wonderfully tolerant, if not seeing those excursions as a part of my duties, at least acknowledging them as a part of my calling.

Last summer, the tenor and tone of my calling changed. The call came for a perma-

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Dick Hull...fit to be tied!

Webb Dordick: Peirce Researcher and Rare Book Dealer

Webb Dordick for many years has lived in the Boston area practicing the profession of rare book dealer, specializing in medical books. Simultaneously he has been a tireless, unpaid Peirce researcher.

He was drafted into Peirce research by Max Fisch 1969-70 when Max was a visiting our department and was planning a new, chronologically arranged edition of Peirce's writings. From Indianapolis where the Peirce Edition Project was (and still is) based, Max regularly asked Webb to do research in Harvard's Houghton Library where Peirce's papers are housed or in the Widener Library where Peirce's personal library is located. As Nathan Houser, current director of PEP, explains, Webb performed "almost every imaginable kind of research task, from searching archives for evidence of [Peirce's mysterious wife's] identity

to examining Peirce's manuscripts in the Houghton for watermarks and colors." Hilary Putnam at Harvard has annually had Webb appointed his unpaid research assistant. As Putnam's assistant, he has been able to do library research for PEP, including searches for Peirce annotations in books of his that are still in the library. He has also, Houser reports "often put in long days documenting Peirce annotations to manuscripts or helping with team proofreading at the Houghton—he volunteers his time for the sake of Peirce scholarship." Webb's expertise as a rare book dealer has as well been useful to PEP—searching for special

books needed in Indianapolis. For example, he found a set of the Imperial Dictionary for PEP, which PEP had to have to edit Peirce's contributions to the Century Dictionary, which was based on the Imperial.

Since Indiana University Press plans publication of 30 volumes of Peirce papers and only 5 have so far been published, PEP expects to rely on Webb's services for

many years to come. Fortunately or unfortunately, the Press does not plan publication of all Peirce's significant papers. That would require more than 100 volumes and another half century of Webb's services.

Webb performed "almost every imaginable kind of research task, from searching archives for evidence of Juliette's [Peirce's mysterious wife's] identity to examining Peirce's manuscripts in the Houghton for watermarks and colors."

UB Philosophy Major Organizes Freethought Alliance



David Schummer of SUNY: Humanists "promote a secular viewpoint and offer a balance to the tremendous inundation of religious groups on college campuses."

The Chronicle of Higher Education, April 17, 1998, A43



Hourani Fellowships

Jason Adsit and Idris Hamid received Hourani Fellowships for the spring 1998 semester. These scholarships are provided by the George F. Hourani Memorial Fund, established in memory of former Distinguished Professor and Department Chair George Hourani. Fellowships are granted to outstanding graduate students specializing in ethics or Islamic philosophy.

Perry Dissertation Prize

Mark Meli, Ph.D. 1997, and Leonardo Zaibert, Ph.D. 1997, are the two winners of the Philosophy Department's Thomas D. Perry Dissertation Prize for 1998. Dissertation titles are *The Genesis of Aware: Emotion, Perception, and Aesthetic Value in Early Japanese Poetry* and *Intentionality and Blame: A Study on the Foundations of Culpability* by Meli and Zaibert, respectively.

Mary C. Whitman Scholarship

Christopher Fritton and David Schummer, both Philosophy majors, will share the Mary C. Whitman Scholarship for 1998-99. Congratulations are extended to these deserving students.

The Other Face of Metaphysics

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It is significant, therefore, that lately the interest in metaphysical issues has been increasing not only among philosophers, but also among those outside philosophy who take a practical attitude and put the concerns of application before those of a pure theory. The conference held in Buffalo clearly exemplifies this tendency. But this is not an isolated case. Some weeks ago there was held in Bielefeld a convention on ontology and the cognitive sciences. Trenton will in June serve as host to an international conference on ontology in information systems; and immediately thereafter there will take place in Maine (USA) a convention on the ontology of geographic information systems. And this list could be continued further, including, for example, initiatives in the medical and engineering fields.

Apart from the specific contents, an interesting aspect of this tendency lies in the idea that a robust and well-pondered ontology can enhance the robustness and descriptive power of a theory, whatever its domain might be. The first to recognize this possibility were researchers in robotics and artificial intelligence, who took seriously the "Manifesto of Naïve Physics" launched by Pat Hayes in 1979. According to this approach, for a system to be in a position to operate effectively in the real world (rather than merely in the "toy worlds" of the research labs), it is not only necessary that it possess a sound basic capacity of reasoning, but also and above all the capacity to represent the world. In other words, it is necessary to put the system in the condition where it can scan the physical reality and develop a fundamental theory of objects, events, properties in such a way as to provide a basis for its own actions. It is necessary, in short, to provide the system with an ontology. And although this notion of ontology does not coincide exactly with that of the philo-

sophical tradition, it should not surprise us if there has occurred on this topic a progressive convergence of interests between engineers and metaphysicians.

These same considerations apply today in several other fields in which the conviction is maturing that many fundamental issues have a common ontological root. Take the geopolitical world. We draw lines on a map and a new province is born, a region dies, a nation is divided in two. What exactly happens in these cases? What sorts of entities are these? What relationship obtains between a geographic unit and its underlying territory? Here we find ourselves once again with the problem of

...a robust and well-pondered ontology can enhance the robustness and descriptive power of a theory, whatever its domain might be.

the vase and the clay. The Principality of Liechtenstein has existed since 1719, the corresponding territory was there already a million years ago. Do we have to distinguish two entities here, or accept that one and the same entity has in the course of time acquired different properties? And if we distinguish between geographic units and underlying territories, how do we define their relationship? And how do we define the relationship of each of these to the corresponding population? What would ensue if all the inhabitants of Liechtenstein were transferred to the island of Malta, and all the Maltese were transferred to Liechtenstein?

Or take the case of A who shoots B in self-defense. There is a shooting, there is a killing. Is this the same event, or two distinct events? Someone will insist that the

killing would not have taken place had A missed the target, and that therefore the shooting and the killing have distinct properties and should thus be counted as distinct. On the other hand common sense seems to suggest the opposite answer: A performed one single action, he shot, and that shot turned out to be a killing. How will the judge decide? How many crimes has A committed? For how many actions is he responsible?

I do not want to suggest that identity and the relations of spatial coincidence between parts are the only issues of ontology that can provoke general interest. Even more fundamental than these issues are the problems of selection and classification of the types of the entities to which we want to grant a place in our ontological inventory. In relation to some categories there is little to discuss: a vase, a stone, a satellite are physical objects; the killing of B and Mike Tyson's biting of his opponent's ear are events. Beside these clear cases, however, there is a range of entities whose ontological characterization is far from obvious. What is money? What is a computer program? What is a parcel of real estate? What is a national border? What are smiles, illusions, hairdos, art works? What kinds of entities are these and in what relations do they stand to other entities?

From this perspective, metaphysics loses that air of abstrusiveness and abstractness that seemed always to affect it. The questions which it raises concern the world of every day: the nature of our actions, the tie between thought and reality, the existence of the objects of common sense. And it should not surprise us if someone begins to find something of interest, and perhaps also something of profit, in this metaphysics of old.

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Richard T. Hull Retires

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nent return to the Cave, to spend not only enough time there to adjust my vision and make the world a bit better before returning to the ecstasy of the contemplative life, but to spend the rest of my days among the rest of our fellow humans, to go to them, seek them out, provide them outside of the academy with alternative ways of engaging in public discourse and of reaching a more contemplative life. I have found the Texas Council for the Humanities such an opportunity, an opportunity to engage in the practice of the humanities with the public.

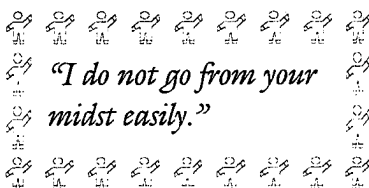
There are benefits to what I have done for me as well. Despite the Department's being widely tolerant of diversity of approach and subject matter, it has, because of the nature of the institution in which it serves, come to expect of its faculty the delivery of courses as a service to other departments. And those expectations naturally fall repeatedly on ones who have performed the services before. So, there is a kind of narrowing of interests that can occur over the years in the department, as the result of these roles and expectations. One recoils from causing disruption in the contemplations of others, and so continues to teach courses and fulfill roles beyond their natural period of attractiveness.

In my new position I have found the liberty to read and be active in programming in the humanities that ranges much more widely than was possible in the department. So there has been a broadening and expanding of interests that has been most gratifying.

Perhaps the most gratifying aspect of the present work is the enormous sense of appreciation expressed by the public for the kinds of programming we do. I recently announced that one of our grants had supported the making of a documentary, "Divided Highways: the Story of the Interstate System and its Impact on American Culture." And it is enormously gratifying to think that that program has been seen by, and perhaps has brought a deeper understanding to, over six million citizens. But the most meaningful comments come from small communities in Texas, commu-

nities like Troop, Texas, a town of just a few hundred in the Piney Woods of East Texas. We have a packaged programs and speaker's bureau grant program that allows such communities as Troop, which lacks a college or other source of scholarship, to invite scholars in to talk in the town library about a wide range of issues in history, public policy, archaeology, politics, even philosophy. The letters we get after such programs are staged are enormously heartening and give us the sense that what we do truly transforms the lives of those still in the cave.

And, lest you think I have abandoned my interests in placement, I would like to encourage our graduate students to consider careers in public humanities along



*"I do not go from your
midst easily."*

with those in universities and colleges, as filled with opportunities to assist the public in life-long learning, opportunities to write and speak, opportunities to do much of what the classroom affords. Such careers, I have come to learn from those who are involved in them, afford a rich opportunity for service, growth, and indulgence of the love of learning.

In closing, let me say that my years with the department have been the best of my life to date. The friendships, the stimulation, the opportunity to acquire intellectual daughters and sons, has been profoundly fulfilling. I do not go from your midst easily. But I go in response to motives of both a personal and professional nature, in response to that calling an ancient penned so many centuries ago, back into the Cave. Hopefully, at some point, my vision will clear and I will be able to start functioning as Plato described, and thereby repay the state for the privilege of thirty years in your midst.

A continuation of Dick's retirement remarks (May 14, 1998).

First, a hearty word of thanks to you

all for your contributions to my wonderful send-off. If I had known how nice it would be, I would have done it years ago!

I have heard some minor grumbling about the relative lack of humor in my remarks. One always risks in making excuses, but I must say that it is entirely the fault of the Texas Legislature. With remarks like the following, my poor brand of humor has gotten virtually squelched since I came to Texas.

As Molly Ivins put it, "Circuses never do well in Austin, because you can go to the legislature for free."

The following are actual quotes from (actual) Texas politicians:

1. "It just makes good sense to put all your eggs in one basket." Texas Rep. Joe Salem speaking on an amendment requiring all revenues to go into the state treasury
2. "Lemme give ya' a hypothetic." Texas Rep. Renal Rosson
3. "Ain't nothin' in the middle of the road but yellow stripes and dead armadillos." Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower
4. "And now, will y'all stand and be recognized?" Texas House Speaker Gib Lewis to a group of handicapped people in wheelchairs
5. "No thanks, once was enough." Texas Governor Bill Clements, asked if he had been born again
6. "I am filled with humidity." Texas House Speaker Gib Lewis
7. "If ignorance ever goes to \$40 a barrel, I want drillin' rights on that man's head." Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower discussing President George Bush's policies
8. "...idiots, imbeciles, aliens, the insane and women..." Law standing in Texas until 1918 regulating who could not vote
9. "It's the sediment of the House that we adjourn." Texas House Speaker Wayne Clayton.
10. "There's a lot of uncertainty that's not clear in my mind." Texas House Speaker Gib Lewis

Luis' Complaint

A short story by Zosimo E. Lee

Zosimo E. Lee, Ph.D. 1990, who lectures at the University of the Philippines, wrote the following short story while he was attending a workshop on teaching philosophy to children several years ago in New Jersey.

Luis probably went to the hill nearby. There are more dragonflies there, and flowers, fruit trees, and there is a view of the lake. And I know he likes the lake.

Some bananas are missing from the kitchen, he might have taken them. He will be gone for some time, he has something to eat. He won't be hungry for a while.

He does not like staying inside the house much, doing nothing while waiting to finish his chores, playing with the dog, watching the chickens. He would rather run and play and chase frogs.

I worry whether he will get hurt, but he knows how to take care of himself. He will find his way back home.

"I don't like doing my chores, Tatay," he complained this morning. "Why do I always have to bring the water buffaloes out to the mud holes, or bring the cows back from grazing, or feed the chickens, and clean the pig sty? Why does Ate have to clean the house and cook the rice, and take care of Antonia. Why do we have to do our chores?"

This is one of those times when I get impatient myself, we have talked about this a few times already. This time he is more persistent.

"Well, we each have a role to play in the house and if we do not fulfill our share of the work, we will not be able to feed ourselves, and keep order in our farm and in the house. Your mother and I are working hard to provide you with the things we need to survive, and have a good life, and you have to contribute your share. Besides, if you contribute to the work in the house that should make you feel you are already grown up and that you are useful."

"Yes, but I see other children, and they seem to only play the whole time, and enjoy themselves, and they don't seem to have any responsibilities at home. Ate and I seem to be working all the time, we don't have enough time for ourselves."

"Is that really the case? I see some of them helping out their parents, also. Anyway, when you finish your chores, and when everything has been taken care of, you get to play with the other children."

"Yes, but by then we have to do our school work."

"So why don't you do your school work while you are waiting for the cow to finish grazing? Why all of these complaints? The work you do is relatively easy compared to the work that I do," Tatay pointed out. "I have to work on the farm, till the land, plow the soil, repair the culverts, trim the roots of the trees beside our land. And we do not have machines, we only have our carabaos. Don't complain about your chores, compared to what I do, that is easy. I work hard."

"Yes, Tatay, I know you work hard, but for me, all the things I do is work as well. I get tired running after the cows. The water buffaloes smell awful after coming from their mud baths. I hate the smell of chicken shit and the pig really stinks. For me, that's work, and it's awful work. I don't like it at all!"

"Look, son, each of us in the family has to do our share so that we have food in the house. If you did not do your share of the work, and somebody else has to do it, then some of the things that need to be done will either not get done, or get done poorly. So if you do your chores well, it helps everyone in the household."

"Tatay, I just wonder why I feel that my chores are work for me. If I changed my attitude about these chores, will they cease to be work, and will I begin to enjoy them? But I really cannot imagine enjoying these things—they're awful."

At this point, Nanay, my wife, and Alejandra, my eldest daughter, come home from the market day in town. They have

bought a few things for the house, and bring some goodies for Luis and Antonia.

"Mr. Guevarra paid well for the pieces I made," my wife reports. "He has given a new set of materials so that I can sew the children's clothes for next week."

My wife earns extra money for us by doing piece-work for a labor contractor in town. We have a sewing machine at home and my wife is good at sewing. They call this arrangement the labor only deal—he gives the raw material, my wife makes the clothes and she gets paid for her labor. Several women in our village do this to augment the income of the household.

"Nanay, is what you do for Mr. Guevarra work?" Luis picked up the discussion.

"Well, Luis, I don't really have to do it. I can make clothes for the people here in the village, and I would get something, not much. Or I could bake some rice cakes and sell them in town, and still make some extra money. Mr. Guevarra does not force me to do these things, and we will still manage, even if I do not do this kind of work, but then the extra income does help, and I enjoy sewing anyway. So it is not work in the sense that I *have* to do it, but it *is* work in the sense that it's something I do and it gives us money."

"So, work is something you have to do and you are paid for it. If you enjoy what you are doing and you do not get paid for it, does that mean that it is not work anymore?" the boy asks.

"Well, I am not forced to do it. Not really. And I do enjoy sewing, especially children's clothes. I think of all the girls and boys who will wear the clothes I am making and it makes me happy. Just as it makes me happy to make clothes for you. Yes, it is not work for me because I enjoy what I am doing."

"But not during the rush seasons, Nanay," interjected my eldest daughter. "Just before the Christmas season, when there are plenty of orders for pretty clothes
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Applied Ontology

continued from page 3

entities, including costs of transport, storage, and much much more.

The major part of the Buffalo conference was devoted to the ontology of social reality developed by John Searle in his book *The Construction of Social Reality*. On Searle's view social institutions arise when parts of physical reality are deemed, in certain contexts, to have special sorts of powers or to have a special sort of status. Thus this man counts in a certain context as *president*, and that man as *judge*. Searle's cognitive theory of social institutions was the object of talks in Buffalo by Raimo Tuomela (Helsinki, Finland), Ingvar Johansson (Umeå, Sweden), Anthonie Meijers (Tilburg, Netherlands) and Fernando Atria (Edinburgh, Scotland). **Mariam Thalos** (Buffalo, NY) presented an account of decision-making in the social world based on the idea that social institutions can serve to reduce the number of degrees of freedom facing social actors in their processes of decision-making. Dieter Münch (Berlin) and Randall Dipert (West Point) spoke on the ontology of artifacts, and more specifically on the multidimensional ontologies needed to cope satisfactorily with large-scale technical systems of the sort which are involved in the provision of medical services to rural areas via computer. Clark Hare (Webwithe Publishing, California) spoke on the ontology of intellectual property, and **Leonardo Zaibert** (Caracas, Venezuela), [Ph.D. 1997],

applied Searle's theory of institutional facts to the phenomena of real estate. Trevor Bench-Capon and Pepijn Visser (both of the institute of Legal Informatics at Liverpool)

spoke on the use of ontologies in the field of expert systems research, and on the idea of a virtual ontological library within which the ontologies developed for different purposes could be indexed and compared in systematic fashion. Lars Lundsten (Helsinki, Finland), finally, spoke on the ontology of television and of mass media in general, which he saw—in terms derived

resentation by a television production team of carefully manipulated images which are selected and broadcast for specific purposes. The proceedings of the conference are available on the web at <http://wings.buffalo.edu/philosophy/farber>, and they will be published in book form in due course.

submitted by **Barry Smith**

IL SOLE-24 ORE — Domenica 24 Maggio 1998 - N. 140 — PAGINA 35

Scienza e filosofia

L'altra faccia della metafisica



Ontologo, il mestiere del futuro

Che diritto hanno le cose senza corpo?

Così si definisce un ente immobiliare

A full page on the Farber Conference "Applied Ontology" in the Italian newspaper Il Sole-24 Ore

from speech act theory—not in terms of the perception by the audience of a scene (for example of bombing in the Gulf War), but rather in terms of the rep-

F a m e i n I t a l y !

Helps to Young Authors

From David Stove, *Popper and After: Four Modern Irrationalists*, Oxford: Pergamon, 1982, Appendix to Chapter 1 (submitted by Barry Smith).

Neutralising success words, after the manner of the best authorities.

How to rewrite the sentence: Cook discovered Cook Strait.

Lakatos: Cook 'discovered' Cook Strait.

Popper: Among an infinity of equally impossible alternatives, one hypothesis which has been especially fruitful in suggesting problems for further research and critical discussion is the conjecture (first 'confirmed' by the work of Cook) that a strait separates northern from southern New Zealand.

Kuhn: It would of course be a gross anachronism to call the flat-earth paradigm in geography mistaken. It is simply incommensurable with later paradigms: as is evident from the fact that, for example, problems of antipodean geography could not even be posed under it. Under the Magellanic paradigm, however, one of the problems posed, and solved in the negative, was that of whether New Zealand is a single land mass. That this problem was solved by Cook is, however, a vulgar error of whig historians, utterly discredited by re-

cent historiography. Discovery of the Strait would have been impossible, or at least would not have been science, but for the presence of the Royal Society on board, in the person of Sir Joseph Banks. Much more research by my graduate students into the current sociology of the geographical profession will be needed, however, before it will be known whether, under present paradigms, the problem of the existence of Cook Strait remains solved, or has become unsolved again, or an un-problem.

Feyerabend: Long before the constipated and boneheaded Cook, whose knowledge of the optics of his telescopes was minimal, rationally imposed, by means of tricks, jokes, and non-sequiturs, the myth of Cook Strait on the 'educated' world, Maori scientists not only 'knew' of the existence of the Strait but often crossed it by turning themselves into birds. Now, however, not only this ability but the very knowledge of the 'existence' of the Strait has been lost forever. This is owing to the malignant influence exercised on education by authoritarian scientists and philosophers, especially the LSE critical rationalists, who have not accepted my criticisms and should be sacked. "No doubt this financial criticism of ideas will be more effective than...intellectual criticism, and it should be used." (*Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. LVIII, 1978, p. 144.)

Graduate Students

Shannon Kincaid presented "Democracy, Ideology, and Nationalism" at the Conference on Democracy and the Post-Totalitarian Experience, sponsored by the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy and its Polish affiliate in Karpacz, Poland in May 1998.

Sriram Nambiar, presented "Boole's Philosophy of Logic: The Influences of Aristotelian Logic" at a conference in Luzern, Switzerland in September 1997 celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first work on mathematical logic (Boole, 1847).

Barry's Myth:

the belief in the existence of a threshold of confidence, which if achieved for any view, makes it true. Common among the English.

(inspired by the Symposium on Truth-Makers and submitted by Sriram Nambiar)

Luis' Complaint

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to sell during Christmas, and Mr. Guevarra asks you to make so many clothes in only a few weeks, and I see you working during the day and even into the night, I don't think it is fun anymore. Then it really becomes hard work."

"Yes, at those times I do feel that it is work, or more than that, that I am only my legs and arms and eyes and my aching back, and that my only purpose in life is to sew. I almost feel like I am working in

a factory, like your Tita Rosing, and there is a clock ticking the whole time and I have to make every second count, and I do not really enjoy anymore making clothes and I cannot think anymore of the children who will wear the clothes I make. I am just running after the time, because Mr. Guevarra will be running after me, and I do want us to have some money for Christmas."

"And that's when I feel that Mr.

Guevarra is exploiting you, Nanay," laments my daughter.

"Yes, and when it is not fun, it is work," Luis interjects.

"But what Nanay is doing, Luis, are not chores, she is making something," I hasten to add.

"What is the difference between making something and doing something, Tatay?" my son asks.

"Well, I suppose that when you are

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Luis' Complaint

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making something you are also doing something, but when you do something you are not necessarily making something."

"Like when we are making mud pies, we are also doing something, Luis. But when we do our chores, are we making something?" the elder sister asks.

"Yes, we are making the animals feel taken care of, and when they feel all right, they provide us with what we need, or they are more useful to us," the brother answers.

"Yes, don't you see you are also making something when you do your chores, you are making the animals happy," I add.

"Yes, Tatay, but when we do our chores, are we creating something new, like Nanay makes something new when she makes children's clothes?" my son immediately asks. He is sharp today, asking difficult questions.

"Well," I attempt an answer, "you are not creating something new, but providing the conditions so that the animals can be useful to us, so that they can create new babies, or for the water buffaloes to help me create agricultural products."

"But, Tatay, I don't think you really create the rice, or the corn, you only help nature so that it can do its job. just like my doing my chores also only help nature, the cows, the carabaos, the chickens, the pigs, so that they feel better, and provide for us."

"You're right, I do not create, I only help nature. That my labor provides the opportunity for nature to do its work. But I do not think it is not only really helping nature. It is also providing the conditions for nature to do its job well. That is why I have to prepare the soil well, plant the rice in neat rows, see to it that there is enough water at certain times, and then weed the rows of the rice plants. Without my work, nature would find it hard to produce and produce well. So, while I do not create, my labor makes nature do its work."

"Are labor and work the same, Tatay?"

inquires Alejandra.

"I think they are not, but I am not sure where they are different."

"Work is something that is required, that is necessary to do. Labor is the energy needed to achieve what is necessary to do," Nanay contributed.

"I use my labor when I am working," I realize. "But do I also labor when I am working?" I continue, perplexed.

"But now I think work is what we need to do in order to survive. Labor is what

"If you enjoy what you are doing and you do not get paid for it, does that mean that it is not work anymore?" the boy asks.

we are doing when we do that which gives us fulfillment, or makes us feel proud about what we have done," Nanay

suggests.

"But sometimes I think Mr. Guevarra is just taking advantage of your labor, Nanay, especially because he knows that you enjoy making children's clothes, and that we need the money, also," the elder sister comments. "I'm sure he makes a big profit from the clothes that you make, even if he is the one who spends for the materials and he has to be the one to worry about selling them. But I hear that he exports them and he must be earning a lot of money from the labor of many women like you."

"You don't really know that he makes a lot of money, do you? I am contented

continued on page with the fact that he makes it possible for some of us to earn extra incomes, especially during those times what we do not have products from the farm to sell. And while I feel sometimes that I do not own myself anymore, it is something that I do to myself."

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Tall Tex



Dick Hull at his retirement party

The Metaphysics of Real Estate

Translated from *Il Sole -24 Ore*,
24 May 1998

Roberto Casati

A typical case in which conceptual analysis must be pushed into the high spheres of ontology is that of the coordination of different databases. In what way can the data obtained, say, from the Italian land registry and those obtained from its English counterpart be compared? When one says that the percentage of Italians who possess immovable assets is higher than the corresponding percentage among the English, have we kept adequate account of the differences of the land structure? Does a land parcel have the same charter, the same nature in Italy and in the United Kingdom? In what does real estate consist? Among the contributions to the Buffalo conference on Applied Ontology which came close to the interests of economists and legislators was that of Leonardo Zaibert, [Ph.D. 1997], of the University of Caracas concerning the nature of immovable assets ("Real Estate as Institutional Fact": <http://wings.buffalo.edu/philosophy/farber/zaibert.html>).

After critically summarizing the traditional conceptions of real estate and the rights annexed thereto, Zaibert introduces the criteria which will enable us to distinguish between real estate (landed property) and land (raw or virgin land). A piece of real estate (property) must have (1) borders, (2) access, (3) three-dimensional structure, and it must typically (4) respect obligations to the neighbors who surround it.

Moreover (5) a parcel of property is not of necessity constituted by the stuff that in fact composes it (it is possible to replace all the earth in one property without altering the annexed rights). The criteria of identity of the property therefore are distinct from those of the corresponding chunk of land.

An ontological conflict between different legal systems can for example concern point (3). A land parcel can be treated conceptually either as a surface or as a volume.

In the United States the owner owns a volume of land extending to the Earth's center, in Mexico he owns only the superficial portion (the topsoil). The oil found beneath the land in the United States will belong to the owner of the land; in Mexico it will belong to the state. (At the end of the '80s in Switzerland an express railway connection had been planned between Geneva and Zurich. It turned out to be more convenient to dig a tunnel beneath the ground than to expropriate the land on the surface.)

One problem with Zaibert's contribution is his insistence—not supported by a precise argument—on the abstract nature of real estate objects. What happens if Mary's property slides physically down the hill onto that of John, so that Mary's house and trees now fall within the abstract borders of what had been John's property? It is not obvious how the redistribution of rights would have to be affected in such a case, but a compromise would almost certainly have to take account not only of the abstract borders of the respective properties, but also of the content (land, soil, associated assets) of Mary's parcel. There are many difficulties lawyers face regarding the complex problems which arise in cases like this as a result of our conflicting intuitions. Some, at least, of these problems might be surmounted through a satisfactory ontological approach to the matters in hand.

* * *

How do you remove a Ph.D. in
Philosophy from your front porch?

Simple, just pay him for the pizza.

Leonard Jacuzzo



Luis' Complaint

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"I don't think he would continue doing it unless he was somehow making some profit out of it, Nanay."

"I'm confused," Luis sighs. "What I understand you saying is that there are many activities we do, some we can call work, some we can call labor. The two sometimes are the same, and sometimes the two are different. But when are they the same and when are they different?"

"I'll have to think about that," I say. "And then I am reminded also of Lolo Ising. He enjoyed making bamboo baskets, or weaving bamboo mats for drying the corn. He would choose his materials well, he would dry them, then he would see to it that they were the same kind. He knew where to find the best bamboo, and he knew when they should be cut so that the skin would be nice and smooth. And when he cut them, he sharpened his long knife well, and cut the bamboo with almost loving care, so that he would get the consistently right width and thickness. It was a labor of love, and sometimes he would spend days working on one basket, making sure it was perfect and all the parts fitted together, so that the basket became one whole, and I felt sometimes that it was a work of art, whatever that means. I would call him an artist, a very devoted craftsman."

I continued. "He didn't care too much about selling his baskets, although sometimes he had to because he did not have food, and since he could not farm too much anymore, he needed the money he could earn from making the baskets. But he would spend too much time making one basket and he put so much affection into making one, it was almost like a baby to him that he had to give up when he would part with his baskets. People who bought his baskets knew that they were made by a craftsman, and they could feel a part of him in the basket, and people really said that his baskets lasted so long, it would almost be black and rotting before they would part with one. Lolo Ising knew what he was doing, and he made the best bamboo baskets in Bituan. And even people in the town center knew about this. Whenever I go to the town center, people

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Walking on Beans...dissertation dizziness

Eric Bronson, Ph.D. 1998, wrote the following poem during the dark winter of 1997 while writing his dissertation.

Walking on Beans:
An Enquiry into the Nature of Dissertation Anxiety over Winter Break

Ferrill filled with elation
When his dissertation was met
With a standing ovation.

All were pleased and agreed
He'd easily receive his Ph.D.
When his advisor cleared his throat,
Whispered and wheezed,
"Excuse me."

"I admit I am smitten
With this dissertation you have written
Your thoughts are refined, your writing
sublime
Prophetically majestic, dialectically di-
vine."

"I am pleased that you mention the
encouraging resurgence
Of tensions and trends that came to an
end
Upon the emergence of two unasked
questions
That though never stated, were implied,
then negated."

"Still, I have one objection (just a tiny
correction)
On your unexplained claim
In a footnote you wrote on page two hun-
dred nine.
It is where you opine, 'Philosophers are
oftentimes walking on beans.'"

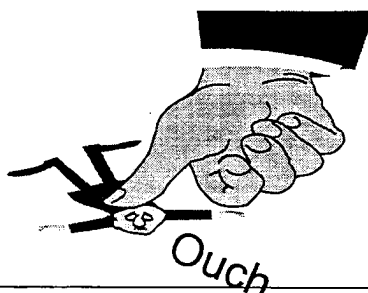
"You'll have to admit that it doesn't quite
fit
It's beyond all defense (since it doesn't
make sense)
You can't prove it phenomenologically,
nor argue it logically

Ontologically it's untenable and ethically
questionable
And strange as it seems, I've no idea what
you mean
When you say that philosophers are walk-
ing on beans!"

"You persist that they do, I insist that's
not true
Furthermore I declare it
Impossible, o contraire!
There never has been, nor has anyone seen
Anyone ever walking on beans!"

"In short, allow me a moment for a brief
retort."
"One or two lapses and your argument
collapses
The conclusion you drew is no longer true
And your entire defense is invalidated too
All due to the line on page two hundred
nine
When you mean that philosophers are
walking on beans."

"Your plans are now thwarted, your fu-
ture's aborted
Your argument's done so go back to
square one
Pick up the pieces and begin a new thesis.
Good luck and good riddance
And have a very merry Christmas."



Luis' Complaint

continued from page 14

would sometimes ask me if I could get them a basket from Lolo Ising but I told them, even I found it hard to get one from him. His baskets were his babies, and you do not part easily with your babies."

"That's what I call a labor of love," added my wife.

"So there is work, and there is labor, and now there is a labor of love," Luis concludes.

"Yes, Luis. Some of us work and we do work well. But there are some who create, who are artists because they make something out of nothing. From raw materials they are able to produce something beautiful. What makes it beautiful is that they put a lot of care into what they do. The products carry a part of them, there is beauty and even perfection, almost—in what is made. Of course, not all people who work are able to do this. The ones who are able to achieve this can be called craftsmen, and artists."

"What makes their products beautiful, Tatay?" Luis persists.

"When you do your work well, that is sufficient to get the work done well, but you have not yet achieved what is beautiful. There seems to be another element, another ingredient necessary in the labor that is expended. One element perhaps is the knowledge that guides your work. Do you know what you are doing when you are doing it?"

"Do you mean, Tatay, that some people work without knowing what they are doing?"

"Yes, some people just do what they have learned to do without understanding why they are doing these things."

"But what does it mean to know what you are doing? Understand why you are doing what you are doing?"

"Well, in the case of Lolo Ising, he knew why he had to choose a particular type of bamboo. He knew when to cut the bamboo, he knew how to cut the bamboo, he knew where to find the bamboo he needed, and he could even explain the necessary factors for bamboo to grow the way he needed them to grow. He knew so

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Luis' Complaint

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much about bamboo, you could imagine that he talked with the bamboo! Perhaps he did!" And it occurred to me that that added a certain mystery, indeed, to Lolo Ising. People thought he could talk with the wind, and the soil, among others.

My wife added, "Lolo Ising was an artist not only because he liked what he was doing and he knew what he was doing, it was as if he was creating himself each time he was making a bamboo basket, or a bamboo mat."

"What does that mean, Nanay?" the two children asked, almost in unison.

"Each time I make a child's dress, I am organizing myself again in the work that I do. I lay out the patterns, and then I sew them together, and bit by bit I am completing something. And with the dress slowly taking shape, it is as if I am also taking shape. I am fulfilled by what I do. When the dress is finally finished, I am both happy and sad. Happy that I have accomplished something, happy that my hands can create something that was not there before, out of the raw materials I have, and sad because now I have to let it go. Life is like that."

The children are silent for a while, thinking.

"Now, does all this talking make you understand why you have to do your chores?" I butt in.

Alejandra goes to attend to Antonia, who has awakened. My wife slowly gets up to prepare dinner. I lean on the window to see if the carabaos are settled. I did not notice Luis sneak out.

He has gone to the hill.

☼ ☼ ☼

Ethnic Conference

The Samuel P. Capen Chair in Philosophy Presents Symposia on Ethnic Identity, Culture and Group Rights

On October 3 and 24, and November 14, 1998, the Samuel P. Capen Chair in Philosophy will present the first in a series of symposia to be held every year during the fall semester at the University at Buffalo. This year the topic is "Ethnic Identity, Culture, and Group Rights: A Discussion Across the Disciplines on the Situation of Hispanics/Latinos in America." The organizers are **Jorge J. E. Gracia**, Samuel P. Capen Chair and SUNY Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, and **Pablo DeGreiff**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy. A group of distinguished specialists have been invited to speak. On Oct. 3: Linda Martín Alcoff (Syracuse), Angelo Corlett (San Diego), Jorge J. E. Gracia (Buffalo), Eduardo Mendieta (San Francisco), Paula Moya (Stanford), and Thomas Pogge (Columbia). On Oct. 24: Rodolfo O. de la Garza (Texas at Austin), John Ladd (Brown), **Elizabeth Millán** (Simón Bolívar), Ofelia Schutte (Florida at Gainesville), Leandro Soto (Mount Holyoke), and **Leonardo Zaibert** (Mexico). On Nov. 14: Pablo DeGreiff (Buffalo), Walter Mignolo (Duke), Suzanne Oboler (Brown), Iris Young (Pittsburgh), Margarita Vargas (Buffalo), and Víctor Velarde (Rutgers).

The purpose of the symposia is to raise some of the fundamental issues that affect Hispanics/Latinos in American society today. The number of Hispanics/Latinos is increasing at a fast rate. According to some projections they will constitute the largest minority group in the country by the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Indeed, in some areas of the country they already constitute the largest minority and in a few others they constitute a majority. This entails that their presence and impact on American society cannot be ignored. Their values, views, and rights must be taken into account by the American

population at large. But Hispanics/Latinos are not homogeneous. They differ in terms of origin, race, language, religion, political affiliation, customs, social attitudes, physical appearance, class, economic status, education, and taste, among others. This raises questions both about their identity and their rights. Is there a Hispanic/Latino identity, or are there many identities based on class, origin, and so on? Do Hispanics/Latinos as such have rights, or are their rights related only to their particular origin or situation? Does affirmative action apply to all Hispanics/Latinos, or just to some? And what is the justification of affirmative action in their case?

There are also questions and issues that arise particularly in the context of American democracy. Does the existence of ethnic groups, and especially Hispanics/Latinos, threaten the very foundations of our democratic society? Can a democracy survive in a pluralistic society where there is no homogeneity, where values differ in fundamental ways and there is no common commitment that unites the society? Are the traits which many associate with Hispanics/Latinos compatible with "the American way of life"? Moreover, what role should Hispanics/Latinos play in American politics? Can they play a role as a group or can they only be effective as Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, and so on?

These and other questions will be raised at the conference. Some of the participants have already well-defined opinions on these matters, but others will for the first time be addressing the situation of Hispanics/Latinos in particular. The diverse background of the participants should ensure variety of points of view and lively discussion. Among the background of the participants we cite the following: Anglo American, Argentinian American, Brazilian American, Colombian

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New Graduate Students

Choi, Suck	B.A. Seoul National University (1990); M.A. Seoul National University (1992) Interest: Chinese Philosophy
Fourtner, Tracy	B.A. West Virginia University (1996) Interests: Ethics, Philosophy of Language
Jee, Youngjae	B.A. and M.A. Sung Kyun Kwan University (1994, 1996) Interests: Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Language
Keegan, Christopher	B.A. Union College (1995); M.A.T. Union College (1997) Interests: Continental Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, Literary Criticism, History of Philosophy
Kiem, Youngjin	B.A. and M.A. Dongguk University (1991, 1996) Interests: Wittgenstein, Logic, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind
Kwon, Jung-In	B.A. and M.A. Seoul National University (1993, 1996) Interests: Philosophy of Mind, Cognitive Science
Lughod, Omar	B.A. University of California, San Diego (1990); M.A. University of South Carolina (1997) Interests: German Idealism, Pragmatism, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ethics
Mandrick, William	B.A. SUNY Brockport (1990) Interests: Ethics, Greek Philosophy
Marmysz, John	B.A. and M.A. San Francisco State University (1987, 1994) Interests: History of Philosophy, Social Philosophy, Ethics
McCleary, Paul	B.A. SUNY Buffalo (1997) Interests: Social and Political Philosophy, Habermas, Critical Theory, Ethics, Contemporary European Philosophy
Mussett, Neil	B.A. Franciscan University of Steubenville (1996) Interests: Phenomenology, Existentialism
Sanford, Jonathan	B.A. Xavier University (1997) Interest: History of Philosophy
Swedene, Jason	B.A. LeMoyne College (1997) Interests: Ancient Philosophy, European Philosophy, Aesthetics
Schweichler, David	B.A. LeMoyne College (1993); M.S. (Social Work) Columbia University (1997) Interests: Existentialism, Marxism, Asian Philosophy, Feminist Philosophy
Torcello, Larry	B.S. SUNY Brockport (1994) Interests: Cognitive Science, Philosophy of Science, Ancient Philosophy, Asian Philosophy, Existentialism, Ethics
Truckenbrod, Quinn	B.A. SUNY Buffalo (1997) Interests: Political Philosophy, Social Philosophy, Logic

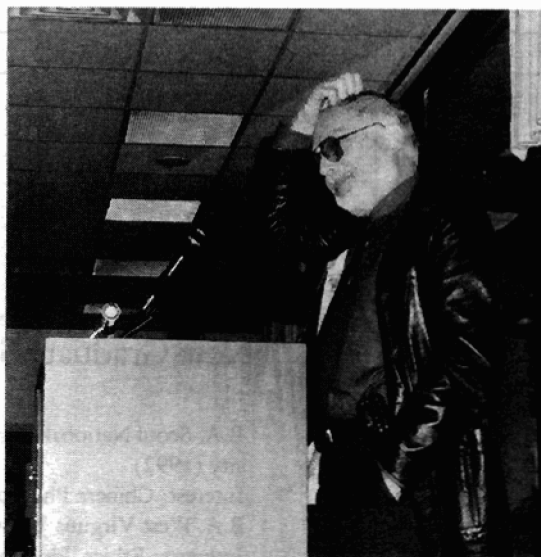
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American, Cuban American, Mexican American, Peruvian American, Puerto Rican American, Spanish American, and Venezuelan American.

The symposia are free and open to the public, but preregistration is required due to limited seating capacity. The sessions will begin at 9:30 am and will go until 6:00 pm. They will take place at the Center for Inquiry, 1310 Sweet Home Rd., Amherst, NY. For further information contact Department of Philosophy, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY 14260, 716-645-2444, Ext. 781, FAX 716-645-6139, evamk@acsu.buffalo.edu, http://wings.buffalo.edu/philosophy/colloquia_and_symposia.

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Dr. David J. Triggie, University Distinguished Professor of Biochemical Pharmacology, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Research, Dean of the Graduate School, former Dean of the School of Pharmacy and—finally—next door neighbor of Elaine and Dick Hull.

Searching for the words to roast Dick properly.

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Please send material you wish to be included in future Noûsletters to: The Philosophy Department, 607 Baldy Hall, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY 14260.

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Graduate students at Dick Hull's retirement party: David Kaspar, Berit Brogaard-Pederson and Mark Bross.