

PHILONEWS

April 2007

From the Chair

It is with some sadness that we have had to say farewell to Linda Stadig. Linda made huge contributions to our department over the last two years as departmental secretary, and we wish her all the best in her new position. We owe a big thank-you to Pam Speers for personing the front office while we search for a permanent secretary.

Classes are over, and we are now faced with the daunting prospect of term papers and exams-grading them, writing them or, if you are lucky enough to be a graduate student, both. Best wishes for a successful end of semester. -Andrew Wayne

Books Published

Professor Omid A. Payrow Shabani

In March 2007, Professor Payrow Shabani published an edited volume, entitled *Multiculturalism and Law: A Critical Debate*, with University of Wales press. The book, which is a collection of revised and expanded versions of papers presented during the *International Social and Political Conference* (University of Guelph, 2004), focuses on the theme of "the Practice of Law-making and the Problem of Difference." It includes contributions by such legal, social and political theorists as

Jurgen Habermas, Will Kymlicka, James Tully, Jeremy Waldron, and Thomas MacCarthy.

Here is a link to the book's page on its North American distributor:
<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/00/227633.ctl>

Professor Jay Newman

Pious Pro-Family Rhetoric: Postures and Paradoxes in Philosophical Perspective, published with Peter Lang Publishing, 2007. This book examines the contemporary media debate between traditionalists and progressivists over religion, the family, and culture. Consideration of this persistent and often fierce debate reveals much about the state of religion in Western democracies.

Dr. John Leslie, Professor Emeritus

Immortality Defended, Blackwell Publishing, April 2007. Might we be parts of a divine mind? Could anything like an afterlife make sense? Starting with a Platonic answer to why the world exists, *Immortality Defended* defends a belief in immortality, without the need for a religious affiliation or rejection of modern science. This study draws from the work of a wide-range of philosophers, from ancient Greece to the present day.

Faculty in the News

Professor Karen Houle was the subject of a “Spotlight on Faculty” report in a recent edition of the *Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare (CSAW) News*. The article focuses on Professor Houle’s work on animal rights and welfare, and the rich potential for collaboration on such issues between animal welfare science and philosophy.

Professor Andrew Bailey is featured in the recent issue of *at Guelph*. The article discusses Professor Bailey’s work on phenomenal consciousness, and the question of how a scientific account of phenomenal consciousness can be integrated into neuroscience.

Speaker Series Report

The week spanning the end of February and the beginning of March was an eventful one for the department—the department was visited by two impressive scholars from the U.S. Leonard Lawlor, of the University of Memphis, author of *Thinking Through French Philosophy: the Being of the Question*, delivered a paper on February 26th, and Richard Lee, Chair of Philosophy at DePaul University, author of *Science, the Singular, and the Question of Theology*, delivered a paper on March 2.

Dr. Lawlor’s paper, entitled “‘There Will Never be Enough Done’: An Essay on the Problem of the Worst in Deleuze (and Guattari),” was, as the title declares, largely concerned with the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, but also touched upon the work of Jacques Derrida. In each of these thinkers there is a certain ethical discourse of what is called “the worst.” If there is an ethical imperative to be found in recent French thought it is that, in the absence of any certainties concerning “the best,” we must

nevertheless act to prevent the worst. Ethics is thus not about certainties, rules, knowledge, or calculation. Dr. Lawlor discusses this ethico-political dimension of French thought in connection with the theme of *borders*. What Derrida shares with Deleuze is a conviction that the worst is connected with a rigidity, a hyper-surveillance, enacted at the border. The ‘other’ is expelled in a suicidal attempt to prevent contamination of the ‘same’ (Derrida); or the border is locked down such that no one can escape (Deleuze), resulting in a kind of universal destruction. Dr. Lawlor’s discussion of these themes is clearly a response to the ethical quandaries of our times and points to a deeper, and more disturbing, philosophical meaning in the “war on terror.”

By a strange coincidence, a certain border was closed when Dr. Lee arrived in Guelph from Chicago later in the same week. Severe weather forced the closure of the University and it appeared that Dr. Lee’s talk would have to be canceled. However, Dr. Russon made a few calls and it was decided that the talk would take place at the home of Scott Marratto and Alexandra Morrison to a sizable gathering largely composed of graduate students. There was, of course, wine and cheese and socializing and our only regret about the change of venue is that many were unable to attend. Dr. Lee’s paper, entitled “From Concept to Existence: Duns Scotus’ Proof for the Existence of an Infinite Being,” began with some reflections on Adorno’s concept of metaphysics but centered on the work of Duns Scotus. In opposition to Adorno’s unqualified claim that metaphysics is the confusion of concepts with reality, Dr. Lee presented the emergence of ‘concept’ (*concupi*) in Medieval philosophy through Averroës and Aquinas and into Duns Scotus for whom concepts had a reality of their own. This reality

of concepts in Duns Scotus suggests that the modern opposition between concept and reality is not as obvious as it seems and reflects only one of the possible ways of understanding the relationship between concepts and reality. We are grateful to Dr. Russon and to all who assisted in making Dr. Lee’s visit such a success in spite of the adverse weather conditions.

-Scott Marratto and Matthew Martinuk