

PHILONEWS

October 2004

From the Chair

We're hiring! The department is advertising a tenure-track position in philosophy of the environment to start July, 2005 (see page 2). A hire in this area will benefit the department in a number of ways: helping us teach the large number of students interested in environmental philosophy, enabling us to expand our course offerings in the area to the upper undergraduate and graduate levels, building interdisciplinary links with other departments and with the faculty of environmental science, and complementing our existing strengths in several related areas. The hiring committee consists of David Castle, Karyn Freedman, Jeff Mitscherling, me, Josef Ackerman (Associate Dean, Faculty of Environmental Science) and Gabriel Mellor (student representative).

Our speaker series got off to an excellent start last Friday with a stimulating talk by John Russon, followed by a spirited discussion, followed by an even more spirited discussion at the University Club.

I am pleased to welcome Antonio Calcagno (back) to the department as an SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow.

It is not clear to me how the department will continue to function after Judy Mar-

tin's retirement, but I know it will be a challenge. - *Andrew Wayne*

Judy Martin will retire

Please join me in wishing Judy Martin, Secretary of the philosophy department, a fond farewell. After over 30 years of dedicated service, Judy will be leaving the Philosophy department at the end of December to enjoy a well earned retirement. Judy has been an integral part of this department through its many changes and substantial growth spurts, and she continues to be the department historian, fielding all queries on how things used to be and how to accomplish the seemingly impossible now. She has welcomed new students, faculty and staff with the same warmth with which she bid farewell to their predecessors. It continues to be a testament to Judy's genuine kindness and caring that she is in contact with the many different people who have passed through this department. Although the university, college and this department have undergone many and various changes, Judy has remained a constant and pleasant ambassador for the Philosophy Department. We all wish the best for Judy now and upon her retirement. As an important postscript, and on a personal note, I wish to inform you that I have requested that Judy's candy dish retire with her! Please continue to mind

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PhiloNews for details on Judy's farewell.
- *Stephanie Michelle*

Antonio Calcagno our new SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow

This Fall I began a two-year SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship in this department. I completed my doctorate in November 2003 under the supervision of Jay Lampert. My doctoral work focused on the relationship between politics and time in recent French thought. My post-doctoral research will focus on Göttingen phenomenology, especially the works of Edith Stein, Gerda Walther and Hedwig Conrad-Martius. Under the supervision of Jeff Mitscherling, I will examine social and political structures and relations, and how they come to be represented in consciousness. I am happy to be back and look forward to working with all the members of the Department. - *Antonio Calcagno*

From the Undergraduate Co-ordinator

As the incoming Undergraduate Co-ordinator, one of my goals will be to boost enrolment in our Majors Program. Although there are more students major-

ing in philosophy than is sometimes thought (approximately 105) there is always room for enhancing the attraction of philosophy to the undergraduate population at large. To this end I have organized, in collaboration with the Philosophy Club, a series of social events called 'Philosophical Cafés'. My goal is to sponsor two of these events every semester and they will consist of a screening of a documentary video to be followed by a discussion led by a faculty member.

The first film we showed was an NFB documentary entitled *Game Over: Kasparov vs. the Machine*, and the session was led by Don Dedrick. This documentary appealed to those interested in Artificial Intelligence and Philosophy of Mind, and was screened on the evening of October 7th. Four faculty and about 30 students engaged in a lively discussion following the screening.

The second video, to be screened in November, is another NFB documentary entitled *Discordia: When Netanyahu Came to Town*. It follows the campus politics and disruptive events surrounding Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Concordia University in 2002. The meeting

Tenure-track position in Philosophy of the Environment

The Department of Philosophy at the University of Guelph invites applications for a full-time tenure-track position to start 1 July 2005 at the rank of Assistant Professor. Area of specialization: Philosophy of the Environment; area of competency: open. Minimum qualifications are a Ph.D. in Philosophy and evidence of excellence in research and teaching. Teaching duties will include undergraduate and graduate instruction as well as graduate supervision. Deadline for receipt of applications is December 6, 2004. Applications should include a curriculum vitae, a writing sample, a teaching dossier and three letters of reference. Applications should be sent to: Andrew Wayne, Chair, Department of Philosophy, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1, Fax (519) 837-8634, email: phil-chr@uoguelph.ca, web site: www.uoguelph.ca/philosophy. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. The University of Guelph is committed to an employment equity program that includes special measures to achieve diversity among its faculty and staff. We therefore particularly encourage applications from qualified aboriginal Canadians, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities and women.

Philosophy calendar

Contact the Philosophy office at 824-4120, ext. 53272 for more information.

Oct. 22, 3:00-5:00 p.m. Tim Kenyon (Waterloo), "Too many Daves", MacKinnon 308.

Oct. 25, 2:30-4:00 p.m. Departmental meeting, MacKinnon 305.

Nov. 13-14. International Conference in Social and Political Philosophy. Jeremy Waldron, Will Kymlicka, James Tully, Jeremy Webber, Charles Taylor, Thomas McCarthy, Douglas Moggach, Michel Rosenfeld, Courtney Jung, Simone Chambers and Kenneth Baynes.

Nov. 19, 3:00-5:00 p.m. Byron Williston (Wilfred Laurier), "Blaming Agents in Moral Dilemmas", MacKinnon 308.

Nov. 29, 2:30-4:00 p.m. Departmental meeting, MacKinnon 305.

will be led by Omid Payrow Shabani, and should appeal to those interested in Political Theory and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. This event promises to be a lively one. Because part of the reason for these meetings is to provide an opportunity for undergraduate students to meet faculty in an informal context, all members of the department are invited to attend them. - *Peter Eardley*

International conference in social and political philosophy

The conference is an international and interdisciplinary gathering of some of the most learned scholars in philosophy, law, sociology and political science, whose works have explored the pacifying power of law in governing diverse societies. The presentations and discussions will be focused on the two themes of "The Practice of Law-making and the Problem of Difference" and "The Rela-

tion of Law and Morality: Revisiting Hart-Devlin Debate”.

The increasing diversity of liberal-democratic states and corresponding demands of recognition have forced political theorists of various camps to reformulate their account of how to approach the goal of solidarity. Despite variation in their accounts, the majority of these theorists hold that modern constitutions can recognize and accommodate cultural diversity. For example, liberal culturalists speak about common history and language and shared practice of law-making as the ties that bind us in multicultural societies; critical theorists speak about the principle of universalization in constitutional norms that are sensitive to difference by virtue of procedures of law-making; and minority rights theorists invoke constitutional conventions of mutual recognition, continuity, and consent in order to accommodate cultural diversity in contemporary societies. Hence, one can speak of a convergence of political ideas around the practice of constitution-making in diverse societies as capable of fostering solidarity.

The goal of the conference is to facilitate a critical exchange among the participants that would lend its insight to the formulation of concrete law and policy making. Our aim in this conference is to further explore different perspectives of the participants, and to consider their areas of agreement and disagreement. Participants include James Tully, Will Kymlicka, Jeremy Waldron, Charles Taylor, Michel Rosenfeld, Douglas Moggach, Thomas McCarthy, Courtney Jung, Melissa Williams, Kenneth Baynes, Simone Chambers, Rod Macdonald and Jeremy Webber. Jürgen Habermas, who had agreed to attend as one of the keynote speakers, has been

awarded the Kyoto Prize in Philosophy. To receive this prize he will be in Japan from 10 to 20 of November and as the result could not take part in our conference. However, he still will send his paper, which will be included in the conference package.

The second theme of the conference was added at the request of The Law Commission of Canada in order to revisit a classic debate in legal philosophy between H.L.A. Hart and Lord Devlin on the relation of morality and law with respect to the rights of homosexual minority. Professor Rod Macdonald of McGill University will moderate the debate between Professor Jeremy Waldron of Columbia University and Jeremy Webber (CRC) of University of Victoria. For more information visit the conference's web site at: www.uoguelph.ca/philosophy/spp or contact the organizer Prof. Omid Payrow Shabani (oshabani@uoguelph.ca). - *Omid Payrow Shabani*

John Russon speaks on knowledge and virtue

On October 8, 2004, John Russon gave a talk entitled “Recollection in the MENO: Knowledge is Virtue” as part of our department's visiting speaker series. Fortunately, the fact that John is not a visitor to the department did not prevent him from speaking to a lively audience of over thirty people, both students and faculty alike, about an issue that is still current. Taking his cue from Meno, who asks Socrates how learning is possible in a state of complete ignorance about the knowledge that is sought, John argued that learning cannot take place if knower and known do not in some sense share an identity. In other words, learning is not

possible if subject and object are completely opposed to each other in the way dualistic theories tend to conceive them. The doctrine of recollection that Socrates puts forward to solve the paradox of knowledge that Meno's question raises does not explain the possibility of learning, but only shifts the problem to the level of the soul.

John's own solution begins with Aristotle's recognition that human beings have a natural desire to know. The power to know is intrinsic to our nature, and is realized in the form of habits. Habituation allows us to overcome the alienation of subject from object, thereby making it possible to learn. Learning is thus the fulfillment, by means of habit, of our natural potential and desire to know. If we take, as John does, language learning as our paradigm, we can see how learning is possible. We are all born with the potential to use language, but we have to learn a language before we become actual language users. It is through the development of linguistic habits that we learn to use language and thereby fulfill our intrinsic power to speak.

One upshot of John's argument is the identification of knowledge and virtue. According to John, knowledge is realized as virtue and virtue is the habit of living in line with logos. This is particularly interesting because of the identity that, on this view, is shared by the theoretical (knowledge) and the practical (living). John also drew an interesting analogy between the portraits of the human being that are presupposed in the *Meno* and the *Symposium*. Unfortunately, lack of space prevents me from elaborating on some fascinating and fruitful notions at the centre of this analogy -- eros, erotic compulsion, and the erotic body. - *Cherilyn Keall*