

PHILONEWS

November 2004

From the Chair

Congratulations to John Russon and Jeff Mitscherling on the publication of their books.

We are in the midst of a tenure-track search in philosophy of the environment. The applicant pool looks excellent, and we are looking forward to bringing short-listed candidates to our department for colloquia and interviews in January. I hope that as many faculty and students as possible will meet the candidates and attend their talks.

It wouldn't be quite right to say that the semester is winding down, but it will soon be coming to a close. Good luck writing papers and exams, grading papers and exams, or both as the case may be.

I am looking forward to the reception in honour of Judy Martin (see over), and I hope to see all of you there. - *Andrew Wayne*

John Russon publishes *Reading Hegel's Phenomenology*

Reading Hegel's Phenomenology takes each major section of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a separate topic of study, and develops an argument to show both how the section is a compelling interpretation of some aspect of human experience, and how it fits into (supports) Hegel's over-

all philosophical position. The goal is to show that Hegel's interpretations of the various aspects of experience are more independent and more compelling than they are often taken to be and to show that his overall position is much harder to refute than is typically believed. In my analysis, I show Hegel's arguments to be rooted in dialogue with the history of philosophy, not by looking to Hegel's comments on other philosophers, but by focusing on the arguments and the phenomena themselves, and showing how Hegel's lines of investigation cross paths with the lines of investigation undertaken by other philosophers before and since. One result of this is that Hegel's relationship to the history of philosophy appears somewhat differently than it is often portrayed by contemporary figures. In particular, I argue that Hegel's philosophy already contains many of the central insights of 20th Century Continental Philosophy. Throughout the book I have returned to the phenomenon of reading as exemplary of the logical relations with which Hegel is specially concerned: indeed, as exemplary of the defining practices of human experience. The result is that, as the reader progresses through the chapters, she accumulates a growing set of insights into the logical, epistemic, practical, social and moral parameters of reading. Hence the title, "Reading Hegel's Phenomenology": the title refers both to my (and the readers') practice of reading Hegel and to the phenomenon of reading

MacKinnon 348
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itself that is at the core of Hegel's volume. - *John Russon*

Jeff Mitscherling publishes *The Author's Intention*

At the end of the twentieth century, literary theorists find themselves reflecting on their discipline. Since at least 1969, the humanities and social sciences have seen the rise of Marxist critical theory, Foucault (or discourse and the new historicism), various schools of American and European cultural studies, deconstruction, and poststructuralism. One of the major coups of the last 30 years, from which all of the previously mentioned theoretical camps benefited, was the attack on and subsequent death of authorial intentionality. In *The Author's Intention*, co-authors DiTommaso, Mitscherling, and Nayed divert the current philosophical misrepresentation of authorial intention. Implicitly challenging a second-generation theoretical approach to literature that dismisses the possibility of truth, coherent narratives, and, of course, intentionality the authors breathe new life back into "the author" and, also, literary theory.

Tim Kenyon speaks about Daves

On Friday, October 22nd, Tim Kenyon, a professor at the University of Waterloo, presented a paper titled 'Too Many Daves.' Undeterred by the lack of anyone named 'Dave' in his audience, Professor Kenyon proceeded to examine certain problems concerning the content and reference of belief. The focus of much of his discussion was Saul Kripke's paper 'A Puzzle About Belief' (1979). In that paper Kripke described two scenarios in which it is not entirely clear what the subject believes. One of these scenarios is that of Pierre, a unilingual French speaker living in France. Pierre hears various positive accounts of the city of London and utters the French sentence "Londres est jolie." Given that Pierre's expression is sincere and not marred by linguistic incompetence we are entitled to infer the following proposition: *Pierre believes that London is beautiful*. But then Pierre moves to London, albeit a part of London that is physically unattractive and the population of which is uneducated. Pierre learns English in such a way that he knows that 'London' is the English name of the city in which he lives but not that 'Londres' is the French name for the very same city. Pierre

Philosophy calendar

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

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.

Dec. 9, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Reception in honour of Judy Martin, MacKinnon 132.

assents to the English statement "London is not pretty," and so we have license to infer this proposition: *Pierre believes that London is not pretty*. But Pierre would still assent to the French statement "Londres est jolie." Does Pierre believe that London is pretty or does he not? Kripke declared that he saw no clear way in which to answer this question. Moreover, he cast aspersions on any purported solution that involved stating 'all the relevant facts' in a different terminology.

Professor Kenyon took issue with Kripke on this point. Consider these questions: (1) "Have you, or have you not, renounced your criminal past?" (2) "Have you, or have you not, worked as a stripper?" In (1) there is a hidden presupposition that should be made explicit. In (2) the meaning of the word 'stripper' requires disambiguation. Professor Kenyon argued that Kripke's question is relevantly analogous to these ones and should be dealt with accordingly: that is, by using a different terminology to state the facts. He diagnosed Kripke's problem as arising from the latter taking certain concepts appropriate to formal semantics and misapplying them to an explanation of the "psycho-linguistics of particular speakers." In other words, Kripke demanded a semantic solution when a psychological one would have been more appropriate. - *Allen Plant*

The Department of Philosophy
cordially invites you to a

Reception in honour of Judy Martin

Thursday, December 9
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Mackinnon 132

RSVP to Stephanie Michelle (smichell@uoguelph.ca)

HAPPY RETIREMENT

All are
welcome!