

PHILONEWS

January 2005

From the chair

Welcome back to what is shaping up to be a busy semester. Much of January will be taken up with our search for a new tenure-track faculty member in philosophy of the environment. Students and faculty are looking forward to meeting the candidates and attending their talks. The Hiring Committee welcomes your input. Comments about the candidates should be in written form and sent to me by January 31.

John Russon, Andrew Bailey and Mark McCullagh were recently granted tenure, and David Castle will be promoted to Associate Professor in the spring. I am delighted that these four outstanding faculty members in our department have been recognized in these ways. Congratulations to you all!

If you have not done so already, please introduce yourself to Linda Stadig, our new philosophy office staff member.

The Canadian Philosophical Association has begun its annual membership drive. They sent me a list of faculty and students in our department who *are* members of the CPA, and many of your names are not on it. The CPA gives eight reasons to join (interestingly, there are only seven reasons in French). I leave it to you to weigh these considerations against the reasons not to

join (not provided by the CPA) and reach your own conclusion. - *Andrew Wayne*

Byron Williston on moral dilemmas

Wilfred Laurier philosophy professor Byron Williston remains unconvinced that too much has been written about moral dilemmas, as he explained to us on November 19.

Williston took particular issue with claims by Bernard Williams, Ruth Barcan Marcus, and Martha Nussbaum that a moral agent confronted by two indictable actions must refuse to do either or face moral culpability for making a choice. He argued that a person cannot be held accountable for making a forced choice when confronted by a true dilemma. However, she might be found to be blameworthy the way she came to makes her choice.

Williston argued that, while personal integrity plays a significant role in establishing accountability, moral integrity might trump personal integrity when an agent was confronted by a dilemma. Philosophers claiming that agents forced to choose were blameworthy presupposed certain conceptual connections between the agent's actions and their self blame. He argued that although agents invariably hold themselves responsible regardless of their choice, they are wrong to do so. While an agent should

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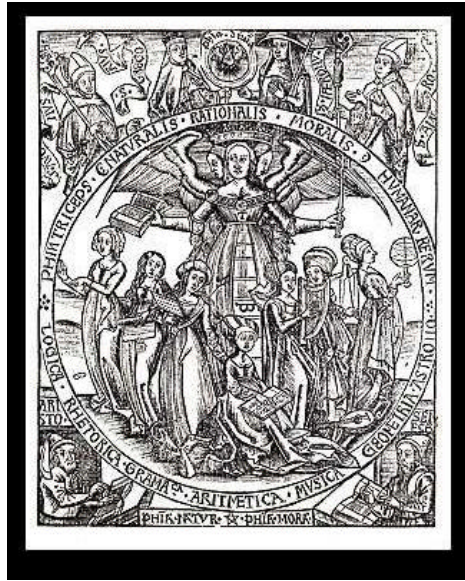
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not be blamed for making a forced choice, she can be held accountable provided the decision is arrived at without adequate consideration as to which choice might prove most deleterious.

Williston drew a sharp distinction between choices caused by true dilemmas and problematic choices prompted by individual misadventure. He had little sympathy for those who find themselves choosing the lesser of two evils of their

Association canadienne de philosophie Canadian Philosophical Association

Campagne de recrutement / Annual Membership Drive



Dame Philosophie tricéphale (Naturelle, Rationnelle, Morale) entourée de ses filles les Arts Libéraux
Three-headed Lady Philosophy (Natural, Rational, Moral) surrounded by her daughters the Liberal Arts

Pourquoi y adhérer?

- L'adhésion à l'ACP permet une pleine participation à la discussion philosophique telle qu'elle se vit au Canada ;
- L'ACP organise un congrès annuel de 4 jours avec des participants venant des quatre points du pays et de l'étranger ;
- Seuls les membres en règle peuvent soumettre une communication au congrès annuel ;
- L'ACP gère la distribution des fonds du CRSH couvrant les frais de déplacement au congrès, avantageant les participants qui sont étudiants ou professeurs en début de carrière ;
- La structure des frais d'adhésion à l'ACP est particulièrement avantageuse pour les étudiants et les professeurs en début de carrière ;
- L'adhésion à l'ACP inclut aussi un abonnement à *Dialogue*, la revue de l'Association, au rayonnement international ;
- L'ACP, qui publie aussi un *Bulletin* semestriel, est la seule association pan-canadienne à représenter notre discipline.

Le formulaire d'adhésion se trouve sur le site web de l'Association au : www.acpcpa.ca ou contactez-nous à : acpa@uottawa.ca

Why become a member?

- CPA membership represents participation in the ongoing life of professional philosophy in Canada;
- The CPA organizes an annual 4day congress with participants coming from all corners of the country and abroad;
- Only members in good standing may submit papers to adjudication for the annual congress;
- The CPA administers the SSHRC funds covering travel expenses to the congress; this is of particular value to students and new members of faculty;
- The CPA membership fee schedule favours students and new members of faculty;
- CPA members receive a subscription to *Dialogue*, the Association's journal with an international readership.
- The CPA's twice-yearly *Bulletin* keeps members informed of main developments in the structural life of the discipline in Canada;
- The CPA is the only pan-Canadian association representing philosophy.

The membership forms are available on the CPA's web site: www.acpcpa.ca or contact us at: acpa@uottawa.ca

Philosophy calendar

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

- Jan. 13, 3:00 p.m.** Darren Domsy (Auburn), title TBA, MacKinnon 227.
- Jan. 21, 2:30 p.m.** Kevin de Laplante (Iowa State), "Hangups about Holism: A Reply to Some Recent Criticisms of Ecosystem Ecology and its Application to Environmental Policy", room TBA.
- Jan. 21, 4:30 p.m.** Paul Thompson (Michigan State), title TBA, room TBA.
- Jan. 28, 4:30 p.m.** Karen Houle (Alberta), title TBA, room TBA.
- Feb. 4, 3:30 p.m.** Elaine Chang (SETS, Guelph), title TBA, room TBA.
- Feb. 14, 2:30-4:00 p.m.** Departmental meeting, room TBA.
- Feb. 18, 3:30 p.m.** Jill Rusin (Laurier), title TBA, room TBA.
- Mar. 4, 3:30 p.m.** Dan Garber (Princeton), title TBA, room TBA.
- Mar. 18, 3:30 p.m.** Lorraine Code (York), title TBA, room TBA.
- Apr. 4, 2:30-4:00 p.m.** Departmental meeting, room TBA.

own making. The blameworthiness of protagonist's choice in the song *The Long Black Veil* (where a man goes to the gallows rather than betray his best friend's wife) is decidedly different from the case of Agamemnon. The latter involves a moral agent who is held accountable not so much for choosing to sacrifice his daughter rather than his army as he is for the cavalier manner in which the decision was made.

He concluded that had we a better understanding of how personally destructive forced dilemma choices are to the moral agent we might not be so quick to judge their failings for choosing with which horn of the dilemma they preferred to be gored. - *Ray Panavas*