



# AAPT News

*The Newsletter of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers*

**VOLUME 14, Number 1**

**February 1991**

## *AAPT Conference in California*

AAPT will hold its first conference on the West Coast from July 15-17, 1991, at San Jose State University. The conference topic is "Teaching Philosophy in a Multicultural Environment." The event will be jointly sponsored by AAPT and the Department of Philosophy at San Jose State. (This will be an "extra" conference and is not intended to replace the *Ninth International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy* to be held in August 1992.)

The students on our college campuses today constitute a microcosm of the cultural diversity of American society. As educators, we seek to serve our students

in the best possible ways; and as philosophers, we should reflect upon what we choose to teach and how we choose to teach it in order to bring about the best philosophical understanding. Sensitivity to diverse needs and cultures will advance both of these aims. The conference "Teaching Philosophy in a Multicultural Environment" is intended to respond to such concerns; and AAPT members are cordially invited to propose workshops for the conference--and of course to attend it.

In keeping with past AAPT conferences, the atmosphere will be *informal and family oriented*. There will be two plenary sessions and a number of workshops treating various multicultural concerns in teaching philosophy. As in other AAPT conferences, workshops will be friendly discussions and demonstrations, rather than formal paper-reading sessions.

Please submit your workshop proposals to the Chair of the conference, Dr. Cynthia Rostankowski. Proposals should include a title and detailed description (two pages maximum) of the proposed activity, as well as the projected length of the workshop session--e.g. 60 minutes or 90 minutes.

**The deadline for receipt of proposals is March 31st, 1991. Send them to**

Dr. Cynthia Rostankowski  
Department of Philosophy  
San Jose State University  
One Washington Square  
San Jose, CA 95192-0133

Phone: (408) 924-4471, or  
evenings (408) 354-5844

*(Continued on Pg. 3)*

### Table of Contents

AAPT Conference in California	1
Letter from the President	2
Vitek Speaks at Boston	3
AAPT Treasurer's Report	4
<i>Philosophy Teaching Exchange</i> A Taxonomy of Questions by John Immerwahr	5
Quotable Quotes, Mary Ann Carroll	9
Calendar of Events	12

# From the President

by Terrell Ward Bynum  
So. Connecticut State University

## Philosophy and War

As I write this, war is raging in the Persian Gulf. Armies are killing each other, and innocent civilians are victims as well. The worst oil spill in history has been intentionally inflicted upon innumerable animals and plants. More acts of apparent madness and desperation will likely follow!

In terrible times like these, one wonders what we, as *philosophy teachers*, can do. As private citizens, of course, we can write or telephone our political leaders to express our views and feelings, we can participate in public meetings and demonstrations, we can volunteer for military duty or for Red Cross relief efforts, or whatever. But what does *our calling--philosophy teaching--* have to offer in such tragic times? Are we simply helpless witnesses to disaster?

In one sense, we are. For after the madness of war has begun, no philosophy or philosopher can simply rush in and put an end to it. Nevertheless, I do believe that philosophy has some positive things to offer humankind in efforts to avoid war in the first place, as well as efforts to cope with war's awful consequences when peacekeeping fails.

The term "philosophy" means "love of wisdom;" and at its very best philosophy offers insight into "justice," "compassion," "rationality," "love," as well as "greed," "power," "prejudice," and "misunderstanding." If this is so, then teaching philosophy successfully can help our students, our society, and us gain perspective and insight into some of the causes and consequences of war.

On a less abstract or "more nitty-gritty" level, teaching courses in the several branches of applied ethics can provide helpful knowledge and skills for people trying to cope with war. For example, a background in medical ethics can aid a battlefield doctor or army medic in making agonizing decisions of justice and triage--in deciding which soldiers to treat first and how to parcel out dwindling medical supplies. In the heat of battle, such decisions must be made quickly; there is no time to ponder and wonder, to refine one's moral intuitions and judgment. Such pondering should already have been done in a medical ethics program when the doctor was in training.

Computer ethics courses raise a number of practical questions regarding the use of computerized weapons. For example, on the one hand "smart" weapons can make war more deadly by delivering bombs more accurately. On the other hand, if such accuracy is used to minimize civilian deaths, the war could be less disastrous for innocent bystanders. Does this make the war "more just?" Does the danger of computer malfunction, or of enemy-implanted computer viruses, make the use of computerized weaponry irresponsible and reckless?

Environmental ethics certainly raises some important questions about war. The first, and often the most devastated, victims of war are the animals and plants on and near the battlefield. Can there be a "just war" that causes untold suffering and death to billions of animals and plants--that lays waste to an entire ecosystem? (What, for example, is to become of the Persian Gulf, now that *half a billion gallons of oil* have been spilled into it?) Does the development of new weapons systems and the stock-piling of such weapons require or justify irreparable damage to the earth?

Business ethics also raises some relevant questions. Are some wars caused by bad economic policies? Is the Persian Gulf war, for example, really about "blood for oil"? Do self-serving business practices cause wars-

(Continued on Pg. 8)

AAPT News is the Bulletin of The American Association of Philosophy Teachers.

### EDITORS

Daryl Close  
Philosophy Dept.  
Computer Systems  
Department  
Tiffin University  
Tiffin, OH 44883

Mark Linsen  
Dept. of Philosophy  
and Religion  
Ohio Northern Univ.  
Ada, OH 45810

### EDITORIAL ASSISTANT/LAYOUT

Dana Cogburn

AAPT News is published in February, June, and October.  
Deadlines for submissions: January 1, May 1, and September 1.

# Vitek Speaks at Boston AAPT Session

William Vitek of Clarkson University conducted a workshop entitled, "Teaching Environmental Ethics," at the AAPT Workshop session held in conjunction with the December APA convention in Boston. The presentation attracted an audience of about 30 people. In true workshop fashion, more than half of the allotted time was spent in lively discussion and exchange of ideas. Some of the interesting issues that arose include the following:

1. Can and should courses in applied ethics include advocacy? This is related to the question of whether or not philosophy itself can be or should be value-free. Vitek's position is that thinking about ethics should not be divorced from action, and the last assignment in the course he teaches asks the students to carry out a group project which they have come to believe should be undertaken as a result of their thinking about the issues raised in the course.

2. How can a course which includes advocacy be

fair to both sides on controversial issues? Vitek solves this problem by devoting part of his syllabus to a presentation of the historical position, including passages from Descartes and Genesis, which defends the position of humans' rightful dominion over the animals and physical world. He further enlarges students' view of the place of humans in the world by including some Native American myths of creation, thus presenting a contrast to the Biblical view.

3. How can one introduce philosophy to graduate students in interdisciplinary programs, since they lack the elementary tools for doing philosophy, yet are ready to engage in analysis at an advanced level? Various members of the workshop audience reported success in assigning an introductory book in ethics, such as Rachels' *Elements of Moral Philosophy*, which graduate students could read in a night or two, and then using class time to move on to discussion of specific ethical issues in environmental studies.

4. How can environmental issues be connected to other social and political issues? Vitek's examples include linking discussion of the nuclear power industry to the evidence of higher incidence of cancer in nearby populations and including in the discussion of industrial agriculture the various problems about exploitation of migrant workers.

Rosalind Ekman Ladd, AAPT Past President  
Wheaton College, Norton, MA

## Conference in California

(Continued from Pg. 1)

San Jose State University has a number of recreational facilities, including the new Aquatic Center with one of the largest and newest heated outdoor pools in the California State University system. Conference housing is just a short walk from all campus facilities. Meals will be provided on campus, and families will be welcome. There are also many entertainment opportunities in the area. Within walking distance are several theaters and many restaurants. The Great American Theme Park is just a bus ride away. San Jose State University is accessible to four major interstate freeways, Amtrak and Greyhound. The San Jose International Airport is just ten miles from campus.

### San Jose State University Conference Housing Program Projected 1991 Rates

#### Housing--Deluxe rate (including linen):

Double Occupancy per person/night... 16.25

Single Occupancy per person/night... 21.50

#### Food Rates: "All You Can Eat" at The Dining

Commons

Monday through Friday

Breakfast..... 4.93

Lunch..... 6.97

Dinner..... 9.12

Saturday and Sunday

Brunch..... 6.97

Dinner..... 9.12

Registration Fee:..... 50.00

## Sixth CAP and NCCV Conference Back-to-Back

AAPT President Terry Bynum is Co-Chair of the Sixth International Conference on Computers and Philosophy (the Sixth CAP), sponsored by the Computers and Philosophy Committee of the American Philosophical Association. Bynum has arranged for the Sixth CAP (August 10-12, 1991) to be held back-to-back with the National Conference on Computing and Values (the NCCV, August 12-16, 1991) on the campus of Southern Connecticut State University. The NCCV is co-sponsored by AAPT and five other national organizations.

Members of AAPT are cordially invited to attend both conferences. Both will be informal and family-oriented events similar to other AAPT conferences. People who attend the Sixth CAP can remain in the same campus accommodations to participate in the NCCV. (For a description of the NCCV, see AAPT News, October 1990, p. 14.)

For CAP registration information, write to Prof. Steven J. Gold, Co-Chair of the Sixth CAP, Department of Philosophy, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT 06515.

**AAPT TREASURER'S REPORT  
(September 1, 1990 - January 1, 1991)**

September 1, 1990 New Treasurer assumes office. AAPT funds moved from Boone, N. Carolina account to Smithtown, New York. Received as treasurer the following:

	Check from old treasurer acct	\$30,000.00
	U of Oklahoma operating acct (funds remain at OU)	\$1,143.73
Opening Deposits, Citibank NY		
10-1-90	Checking	\$500.00
	Money Market Account	\$19,500.00
	Certificate of Deposit	\$10,000.00
12-3-90	Deposit	\$72.00
12-21-90	Deposit	\$36.00

.....  
**Account Reconciliation**

<b>REVENUE</b>	1-91	Final close-out of North Carolina account	\$2,774.20
	1-91	Matchette Grant for 8th IWCTP (Aug. 1990)	\$2,000.00
	As of Jan. 2, 1991	Reconciled checking account balance (inc. deposits, interest earned, monthly account charges, and 3 1990 conference reimbursement expenses)	\$640.49
	As of Dec. 25, 1990	Money Market Account (inc. interest)	\$19,676.98
	As of Dec. 25, 1990	C.D. (inc. interest)	\$10,038.43
	As of Dec. 21, 1990	U. of Oklahoma operating funds-Executive Director	\$1,143.73
		<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$36,273.83</b>

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	12-14-90	Payment to Indiana U. for 8th IWCTP expenses	\$15,882.34
	1-3-91	8th IWCTP reimbursement of deposit (not charged as yet against checking account)	\$30.00
		<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$15,912.34</b>

**BALANCE** **\$20,361.49**

Richard E. Hart, AAPT Treasurer  
January 10, 1991

# Philosophy Teaching Exchange

A regular feature of AAPT News sharing course materials and classroom experiences. Replies to the editors or the authors are welcome.

## A Taxonomy of Questions

by John Immerwahr, Villanova University

Asking questions has been a central tool of philosophical education at least since Socrates interrogated the slave boy. In college classrooms questions are the royal road to class discussion. When students enter a classroom, their assumption is that the teacher holds the floor and has a right, whether exercised or not, to an uninterrupted monologue. One is by answering a question asked by the teacher; the other is by asking the teacher a question. In many classrooms it is the teacher who does the asking. One study of secondary schools found that teachers asked thirty questions per hour, while students asked only two questions per hour.

Not surprisingly, some questions are more likely to lead to a productive class discussion, while other questions can have the effect of inhibiting class discussion. In this paper I attempt to develop a taxonomy of questions to give teachers a way of categorizing the possible impact of one question versus another. What I say is largely based on my own experience; others must accept, modify, or reject it in applying it to their own situations.

There are at least two variables that are particularly interesting when we analyze classroom questions. They are:

*Address: To Whom is the Question Directed?*

Most questions are directed in some way. Rhetorical questions are directed to no one at all (although students sometimes try to answer them anyway). Other questions are directed to the entire class, with the invitation for one or more students to respond. Questions can also be directed to a specific individual, or even to a subgroup. An example of a subgroup question might be: "Several of you said that you support this position: what are some reasons for doing so?"

*Range: How many possible answers are permitted:*

In most cases a question implies some constraints

on the permitted answer or answers. One of the most interesting variables is the *number* of possible answers to a question. Some questions have only one possible answer: "In which dialogue does Plato interrogate the slave boy?" Other questions have an infinite number of acceptable answers: "How do you feel about this?" This distinction overlaps another interesting distinction, namely whether the teacher knows the answer to the question that he/she has asked. Usually if the range of acceptable answers is low, the teacher usually knows most of them in advance. If the range is high, the teacher may generate responses that he/she has not anticipated.

*Address and Range*

Taking these two factors together gives us a matrix with four different extremes (see chart on Pg. 7). Each of these extremes has its distinctive advantages and disadvantages in the classroom setting.

a. *Toss-up questions.* A regular feature of the old TV show, *College Bowl*, was the "20 point toss-up," where the game show hosts presented a question with a specific answer and threw it out to see who could answer it first. We use toss-up questions, then, when we address a question with a narrow range of answers to the entire class and then wait to see who responds. (For example, a teacher may ask the entire class: "How does the utilitarian define moral rightness?") In many classrooms, this is the most frequently asked kind of question.

I have observed classes where teachers used toss-ups to start excellent class discussions. With inexperienced teachers, however, toss-ups sometimes cause problems. The politics of the toss-up are that the teacher knows the right answer and says to the students, "Who can guess what I am thinking?" Toss-ups also put a lot of pressure on students. The student who tries to answer the toss-up has many chances of losing, and relatively few chances at winning. Some of the more obvious ways to lose:

*The question will be too easy.* Most students dislike answering a question which they perceive as too easy. Some students find easy questions offensive or manipulative, other students are concerned that they may be perceived a "brown-nosers" if they answer easy questions.

*The question may be too hard.* Alternatively, the question may be too difficult. The student may only think that he/she knows the right answer. As we philosophers recognize, there is a big difference between knowing the answer and knowing that we know. If the student gets the wrong answer, the student looks stupid in front of both teacher and, even more disastrously, fellow students.

Sometimes teachers seem to be using toss-up questions as a way of getting students to give the lecture. As teachers we already know what we want to hear, but for some reason we want to hear the students say it for us. Sitting in a classroom where a teacher is using toss-ups can be nerve wracking. The teacher asks the question and there is an embarrassing silence while everyone hopes that someone else will take the risk. Usually a toss-up question will be answered with another question, where the student is implicitly saying "Did I guess right?" A typical exchange.

Teacher: The plague originated in Italian port cities in the 14th century. What else was going on in those cities then?

Student: Trade?

The toss-up is sometimes mistakenly thought of as teaching by the Socratic method. This seems to me incorrect. In Plato's texts, Socrates rarely if ever uses toss-up questions. Invariably Socratic questions are directed at an individual person, so in my terminology they are "hot-seats" (see below). Law schools are probably more accurate in describing their own method as "Socratic," since the classic law school methodology directs a single answer question to a specific individual.

b. *Hot-seat Questions:* With the hot-seat question, a particular student is asked a question with a single answer which the teacher already knows. In effect, a hot-seat question subjects the student to a mini oral-exam in front of the entire class.

Hot-seat questions are aggressive and intrusive, and many philosophy teachers avoid them. But in some situations hot-seat questions are more effective than toss-ups. Toss-ups invite students to skimp on prepara-

tion: if one does not know the answer one can always be a free rider and let some other student take the risks. Hot-seats, by contrast, can serve as a motivator, since if students expect that they may be interrogated in class, they are more likely to prepare the assignment. Unfortunately, hot-seats can also motivate students who have not done the assignment to miss class altogether.

Hot-seats avoid some of the peer-pressure problems associated with toss-ups. Since the student does not volunteer for the hot-seat, there is no shame in correctly answering a question that is too easy. Likewise a student who gives a wrong answer when put on the spot looks much less stupid than one who voluntarily gives a wrong answer. Students are more likely to be sympathetic to someone who does not know an answer when called upon, but more likely to be contemptuous of someone who volunteers to say something stupid instead of keeping quiet. Hot-seats can also build confidence. If the instructor directs questions that are at the right level, the student who answers them correctly looks good. If one is going to ask questions with only one answer, one suggestion would be to favor hot-seat questions over toss-ups.

c. *Free-fires:* In a free-fire zone, anyone can shoot at any target. Some questions embody this principle in a less militaristic way. In free-fire questioning, a question with many possible answers is offered to any one who wants to try. Here are some types of free-fire questions:

- Can anyone give me an example of an action that violates Kant's categorical imperative?
- What are some of the points in this text that you found most convincing, least convincing, or most puzzling?
- In what ways does this text remind you of other texts we have already read this semester?

These questions go a long way toward cutting through some of the fears that students have of looking bad either in front of their teacher or in front of their peers. Since the student has a choice of possible answers, he/she can monitor whether the answer is too obvious or too risky, and stay within the limits of something that is comfortable.

Free-fire questions are often more likely to open up discussions. The dynamic of a hot-seat or toss-up is as follows: teacher question, student answer, teacher judgment. Because free-fires have a large number of answers, the teacher does not need to respond to each

one. A free-fire is often followed by multiple student answers, where the teacher may perhaps write each one on the board. In the series of multiple answers, students may start talking to each other, which leads to a more free-flowing discussion.

The politics of the free-fire question are also more honest than those of the toss-up or the hot seat. Since the number of possible answers is great, the instructor cannot possibly know what the students will say in advance. Hence the instructor is also participating as a learner, and seeking new information. Since the teacher does not know in advance what students should say, the instructor may also end up listening more attentively to the answers, which in itself will help to reinforce further student discussion.

d. *Inviters*. Asking someone to dance solicits a response from a specific individual. But many possibilities are open to the person who is asked. He/she can politely refuse to dance at all or can exercise considerable creativity in accepting. "Inviter" questions have a similar feel in that they direct an open-ended question at a specific individual, for example: "Mary, what was your reaction to the text?" An even softer version is, "Mary, did you have any reactions to the text that you would like to mention right now?"

The inviter falls somewhere between the free-fire and the hot seat. Like the free-fire, it allows for many possible answers, but like the hot-seat it puts the pressure on one individual. Inviters can be used to include some of the shier students. Some student are too shy to volunteer, but will join in if they are given an invitation where there is a low probability of failure. Inviters are often a useful way, then, to include students who look like they might have something to say but have not volunteered. Inviters work particularly well if one gives student some time before being asked. One technique is to say, "Take two minutes to write down a few ideas on this subject, then I'll go around the room and ask some of you what you came up with." Even a shy person who is unlikely to respond well to the question "What do you think?" may be comfortable responding to the question "What did you write?"

*Response*

Of course the most important determinant of how students will answer the next question is how the instructor responded to the answer given to the previous question. If the comment is heard, repeated, used, and valued, an example is set for the next student who wants to comment. If the answer is rejected, or otherwise devalued, students may be less likely to participate in the future. This reveals another problem with toss-ups. In questions where only one answer is permitted, many responses may be rejected until a student guesses the one the teacher is looking for ("yes, but that isn't what I was looking for"). This discourages future participation. In free-fire questioning, however, the instructor literally does not know the answer to the question. Answers to questions such as "How did you react to this text?" are much more likely to be valued by the instructor since the instructor really gains new information from the answer.

Often the response to an answer is another question. This can be useful in that it encourages students to develop the ideas presented. But responding to an answer with a question can also act as a punishment, particularly if the new question is directed to the person who answered the last one. Some teachers use a technique something like this: They first ask a toss-up. Then, when a student correctly answers it, they follow up with additional hot-seats directed to the student who volunteered the answer to the toss-up. In the following dialogue I have tried to capture how this may look to other students.

*Spoken dialogue of non-participant*

*Unspoken thoughts*

*Instructor:* Class, who was Aristotle's teacher and main philosophical influence?

*Obviously she wants us to say Plato, but only a geek would answer a dumb question like that.*

*David:* Plato

*What a geek.*

**Address and Range: The Four Possibilities**

Range of permitted answers

Few acceptable answers  
 Many acceptable answers

Address	
individual	group
"hot seat"	"toss up"
"inviter"	"free-fire"

*Instructor:* Right. Now David, tell me how Plato influenced Aristotle?

*I've got it. If you volunteer for an easy question the teacher picks on you for a hard one. I guess the best idea is to keep your mouth shut.*

*David:* Um, I'm not sure. Maybe got him interested in philosophy in the first place?

*That's dumb.*

*Instructor:* We don't really know that. What about.....etc.

*Serves him right.*

In this scenario the hot-seat is used as a punishment for correctly responding to the toss-up. From the teacher's point of view this combination might seem to make sense. David is the only student in the class who has shown any liveliness, and is most likely to be able to be successful in saying what the teacher wants to have said. The teacher, following the Western proverb, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease," may see David as being rewarded with extra attention. But many students will analyze this situation using the Japanese proverb with a rather different message: "The nail that sticks out is the one that gets hammered down."

*Conclusion:*

A set of provisional suggestions emerges from what I have said. For closed ended questions, try hot-seats instead of toss-ups. To encourage broad discussion use free-fires, but use inviters (especially with extra time allowed) to rope in the shy ones. Having stated the rules, I now urge throwing them away. My feeling is that we should read rules for how to teach the way a good cook follows a cook book. The rules gives us ideas, but then we improvise from there. In the rough-and-tumble of the classroom, all of the rules fly out the window.

*NOTES*

This paper is based on a workshop presented at the August 1990 8th International Workshop Conference on Teaching Philosophy sponsored by the American Association of Philosophy Teachers. An earlier version of this material was presented at a workshop sponsored by the Villanova University Humanities Seminar program. I am grateful for the insights provided by many of the participants, as well as for the comments provided by

Teresa Nance and Janice Kamrin. Two books that have been extremely helpful are: Wilbert J. McKeachie, *Teaching Tips* (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1986), and J.T. Dillon, *Questioning and Teaching: A Manual of Practice* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1988).

---

*From the President*

*(Continued from Pg. 2)*

-or make them more likely? Would you sell a powerful computer or poison gas chemicals to Saddam Hussein?

As the above examples illustrate, I believe (naïvely?) that it is possible for philosophy--and therefore the teaching of philosophy--to be a positive force for peace in the world and a practical tool for coping with the terrible consequences world leaders would be less likely to go to war and more likely to limit wars when they do occur. All of this presupposes, of course, a conception of philosophy as an *open-minded and rational search for truth and the good life*. If, instead, one means by "philosophy" some closed-minded dogma or theology, then that so-called "philosophy" is more likely to cause war than prevent it!

---

**Environment Case Studies Needed**

Do you have an environmental ethics case to share? *AAPT News* is issuing a call for case studies suitable for use in courses in environmental ethics at either the introductory undergraduate or advanced undergraduate/graduate level.

The need for such teaching material emerged from the discussion at William Vitek's AAPT Workshop in December. [See this issue of *AAPT News*. Eds.] Original case studies will be printed in forthcoming issues of *AAPT News*. Reference lists (long or short) of environmental ethics case materials already in print are also encouraged.

Plan your submission now for the June, 1991 issue of *AAPT News*. The submission deadline is May 1, 1991.

---

*Calendar of Events*

*(Continued from Pg. 12)*

**December 27-30, 1991** - American Association of Philosophy Teachers (with APA). Contact Terrell Ward Bynum, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT 06515.

These listings are drawn in part from Nancy Simco (ed.), *The Philosophical Calendar*, published by The Conference of Philosophical Societies.

---



# "Out of the Mouths of Babes"

or

## "Quotable Quotes"

This column is under the supervision of Mary Ann Carroll, Appalachian State University. Readers are urged to share their own Q.Q.s with or without commentary. Responses to commentaries and Q.Q.s are invited.

For those of you out there who teach ethics and are pretty darned confident that you provide clear, unambiguous, AND interesting explanations of the Great Ethical Theories, it may be time for you to eat a piece of humble pie. What we will do in this column is to show that no matter how terrific a job you may *think* you're doing, there are always alternative ways to present aspects of the theories of Bentham, Mill, and Kant which are even *more* clear, *less* ambiguous and *infinitely* more interesting than your own. At the outset we advise that you do not use the Bible in an ethics class because

"The Bible is a book about sex"

and if that's all you want to talk about, you should be teaching a class about sex, not ethics.

You probably have a succinct presentation in giving an overview of utilitarianism. Well, we suggest you toss it and replace it with this one:

"The theory of utilitarianisms is analytical. That is to say that it evaluates the pros and cons of a situation to arrive at a solution that is most beneficial to all the factors involved. It does not place as much importance on the method or means for reaching a solution as it does for the outcome. Mill, more so than Bentham, is concerned with the quality of satisfaction the various factors enjoy. This lends itself to more subjectivity."

This brief but insightful explanation is jammed full of potential questions for further discussion; so instead of having to prepare lectures on specific philosophers, there is enough content in this QQ to last you the rest of the semester. We will list just a few of the questions you will no doubt want to raise with your students, who will then think you are not only an extremely interesting teacher but the most brilliant person they ever hope to meet.

**Question 1.** If utilitarianism evaluates the prose, shouldn't it also evaluate the poetry?

**Question 2.** How well must the various factors get along in order to enjoy the quality of satisfaction they do?

**Question 3.** Is the quality of satisfaction guaranteed? If any of the various don't enjoy it can it be returned?

**Question 4.** If Mill was more concerned than Bentham with the quality of satisfaction, did he lose more sleep over it than Bentham did?

If you choose not to spend the rest of the semester on such thought-provoking questions as these but would prefer to go on to more specific details, we suggest you begin with a brief discussion of the difference between Bentham and Mill. Now did you know that the best way to illustrate this difference is to use items you purchase in the produce department of the supermarket? A-HA! We thought so! Well, it most certainly IS the best way, as you can readily see from the following:

"Bentham's is a quantitative theory that emphasizes different degrees. An example is purchasing two different types of lettuce in the supermarket. Mill's is a qualitative theory that emphasizes different kinds. An example is purchasing bananas and oranges when you went to the supermarket"

If *that* doesn't clearly show the difference between Bentham and Mill, we don't know what does.

Of course the bottom line on Mill is:

"Mill felt that pleasure is a better thing than pain."

When you mention this to your students, they will get a real sense of just how sharp Mill was. Of course some of your quicker students may have already arrived at that conclusion on their own and won't be very

impressed. They will probably say something like,

"You don't have to be a Five Beta Kappa to figure that out."

In which case you simply go on and mention that Mill placed value on intelligence:

"Mill feels it is better to be smart rather than an idiot even if sometimes you do not get what you want."

You may want to use this aspect of Mill's thinking at the end of the semester when students gripe about the D- they get when they wanted an A -- just remind them it is better to be smart than an idiot.

This points to the fact that references to Mill have many uses. For example, you can make those students who have the personality of an amoeba in a coma feel less frustrated about not getting invited to any parties by throwing out another Mill-y idea:

"It is better to be a knowledgeable person in a frustrated state than a jackass telling stupid jokes at a party."

However, when *you* are a jackass telling stupid jokes at parties you must be careful that you are *in cognito* in order to avoid being an example of a

"fragrant contradiction;"

but at least that beats being one that stinks.

Before you go on to discussing another ethical theory, you should mention that Mill has been criticized in his argument for utilitarianism on the basis of committing

"The phallacy of composition"

Which, if true, is unpardonable because composition shouldn't be singled out as having a phallacy attached to it.

You should also point out that utilitarians take into account the sufferings of animals and then show why it is immoral when

"The cow is pinned down and her scrotum is cut."

And one more thing: though students may find it difficult to grasp, you must take time to argue that

"Life is necessary for happiness."

The next part of your ethics course might be devoted to Kant and a discussion of

"Canadian ethics."

But you need to be aware that this may cause some confusion among students who wonder why you chose Canadian ethics and not Kuwaiti ethics.

We suggest you begin your presentation of Kant with an idea from the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

"Kant distinguishes between the phenomenal world and the monumental world."

Then explain that, while the phenomenal world is pretty phenomenal, the monumental world is actually *monumental*, thus making it a whole lot bigger than the phenomenal world.

Now you are ready to plunge right into Kant's ethical theory. The first statement you should make is:

"Kant says 'ought is equal to can'."

You may have some math majors in your class who might object to this on the basis that they can't *possibly* be equal because "ought" has five letters and "can" only has three; or they might question the necessity of that for it might be the case that if you take away one "ought" from two "oughts" you end up with two "cans" anyway (of beer, we hope) which would then prove Kant wrong. To avoid having to deal with such problems, simply point out that

"X is good does not equal X is good"

and give them math problems to solve with that as an axiom. This is a good tactic if you didn't want to teach ethics in the first place.

You can make Kant's theory more interesting to students if you show how it is *relevant*. We are pleased to give you an example:

"Kant asks 3 questions that homosexuals need to answer. (1) *What can I know?* A homosexual should know everything about themselves so that they are not committing immoral acts. (2) *What should I do?* This is the most important decision meaning that they must decide to live as a homosexual and be happy but accept

the most definite consequences of not being accepted by most of society or force themselves to go against their true feelings and live miserably. (3) *What may I hope for?* The homosexual can only hope for acceptance."

Though it isn't clear why *homosexuals* need to answer these questions, do right wing Republicans need to answer them as well? Nevertheless, in light of the answers to those questions it follows that homosexuals should ignore

"pier pressure"

unless of course they are building a pier and want to know how much pressure the pier can withstand.

In ethics classes some students expect you to tell them what they can get away with and still be moral. It's a good idea to keep your remarks about this to a minimum. Telling them that

"A vice is a moral issue, usually not violent"

should suffice because it is sufficiently empty of content yet implies that you are making a value judgment about violence. (We find that remark very comforting because we personally really hate violence but we sure have a good time with our vices.)

One last suggestion: periodically throughout the semester you should remind students of the importance of ethics because, as Hobbes said,

"It's a doggy-dog world;"

so we need ethics if we want to have something for treats other than milkbones.

[The QQs in this column were provided by our comrades Joram Graf Haber (Bergen Community College), Nick Zangwill (East Carolina University), Samuel Gorovitz (Syracuse University), Mark Debellis (Princeton University), and Nakita Newton (C.W. Post College). More of their collected QQs will appear in future columns.]

Mary Ann Carroll  
Appalachian State University  
Boone, NC 28608



## New Teaching Journal Out

Volume 1 (1990) of the *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching* has been published. Topics in the issue include learning style assessment, gender issues, collaborative learning, and critical thinking. The papers appear to bear out the journal's commitment to address a wide audience.

The *Journal* is "published by and for faculty at universities and two- and four-year colleges" once a year at a subscription rate of \$9 per year. Part of the paper review process includes presentation at a Lilly Conference on College Teaching.

The *Journal* is edited by Milton D. Cox, Miami University, and Laurie Richlin, Brescia College. It is published by Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056.

## In Chicago

### AAPT Meeting on Relativism

AAPT will conduct a panel session entitled "Approaches to Student Relativism" at the annual meeting of the Central Division of the APA. The session is scheduled for April 27th from 12:15 - 1:30 pm. The topic draws on an extended debate on relativism that surfaced several times during last summer's 8th International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy. The panel consists of graduate students Nancy Slonneger, University of Nebraska, Rebecca Pagan, Michigan State University, and James Smalley, Michigan State University, Dale Schnetzer, Bowling Green State University-Firelands will chair the meeting.

## Submissions to AAPT News

Submissions on disk (or E-mail) are much appreciated. Editing is done in WordStar 6.0, and WordStar's file conversion utility can import virtually any MS-DOS word processor file format. So, files from PFS Write, Word, WordPerfect, and others are fine. Please include a hard copy.

Diskette formats other than MS-DOS (Apple, Atari, Amiga, MacIntosh, etc.) cannot be read. Files may also be sent as E-mail to Daryl Close, CompuServe 76547,3311, or by FAX to 419-447-9605. If you need help, call us at 419-447-6442 (Tiffin University) or 419-772-2197 (Ohio Northern University). --The editors

## *Calendar of Events*

**March 27-30, 1991** - American Philosophical Assoc. (APA), Pacific Div., San Francisco. Contact Anita Silvers, Philosophy, San Francisco State Univ., San Francisco, CA 94132.

**April 17-20, 1991** - Conference: Environmental Rights in Conflict: In Search for the Foundation of a Land Ethic. Univ. of Arkansas at Little Rock. Contact Philosophy and Religious Studies, U. of Ark. at Little Rock, Little Rock, AR 72204.

**April 24-27, 1991** - American Philosophical Assoc. (APA), Central Div., Chicago. Contact Karen Hanson, Philosophy, Indiana Univ., Bloomington, IN 47405.

**April 24-27, 1991** - American Association of Philosophy Teachers (with APA). Contact Terrell Ward Bynum, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT 06515.

**July 15-17, 1991** - AAPT Special Conference: Teaching Philosophy in a Multicultural Environment, San Jose State Univ. Deadline for workshop proposals: March 31, 1991. Contact Dr. Cynthia Rostankowski, Philosophy, San Jose State Univ., San Jose, CA 95192-0133. [Details in this issue of AAPT News]

**July 29-August 1, 1991** - Conference: Process Philosophy of Education, Confluence and Construction. Cornell Univ. Contact Malcolm Evans, 85 DeHart Dr., Belle Mead, NJ 08502.

**August 10-12, 1991** - 6th International Conference on Computing and Philosophy, Southern Connecticut State Univ. Abstracts due March 31, 1991. Contact Terrell Ward Bynum, Research Center on Computing and Society, Southern Conn. State Univ., New Haven, CT 06515

<bynum@ctstateu.bitnet>. For registration information, contact Prof. Steven J. Gold, Philosophy, Southern Connecticut State U., New Haven, CT 06515. [Details in this issue of AAPT News]

**August 12-16, 1991** - National Conference on Computing and Values, Southern Connecticut State Univ. Abstracts due March 31, 1991. Contact Terrell Ward Bynum, Research Center on Computing and Society, Southern Conn. State Univ., New Haven, CT 06515 <bynum@ctstateu.bitnet>

**December 27-30, 1991** - American Philosophical Assoc. (APA), Eastern Div., New York. Papers due March 15, 1991. Contact Eugene Long, Philosophy, Univ. of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

*(Continued on Pg. 8)*

### **AAPT OFFICERS**

**Terrell Ward Bynum**  
South Connecticut State University  
*President*

**H. Phillips Hamlin**  
University of Tennessee  
*Vice President*

**Richard E. Hart**  
Bloomfield College of New Jersey  
*Treasurer*

**Richard A. Wright**  
University of Oklahoma HSC  
*Executive Director*

**Grant Cornwell**  
Saint Lawrence University  
*At Large Board Member*

**Paul Eisenberg**  
Indiana University  
*At Large Board Member*



**AAPT News**

University of Oklahoma HSC  
Library 418, P.O. Box 26901  
Oklahoma City, OK 73190

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Oklahoma City, Okla.  
Permit No. 220