AAPT TO MEET AT APA CENTRAL

AAPT will hold a formal session at the Central Division meetings of the American Philosophical Association, April 27-29, 1989, at the Palmer House in Chicago. For more information, contact Professor O. Dale Schnetzer, Bowling Green State University at Firelands, Huron, OH.

AAPT AT PACIFIC DIVISION

Although no formal meeting of AAPT has been scheduled for the meetings of the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association, Cynthia Rostankowski reports that she will schedule a room and time for an informal AAPT brain-storming session. Information will be posted on the bulletin board.

The APA Pacific Division will meet March 23-25, 1989, at the Claremont Resort and Conference Center in Oakland, California.
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

One nice thing about teaching is that you get to have two chances to make New Year’s resolutions, one in September and another in January. At each point of a new beginning, I like to reevaluate my teaching, to remind myself of things I know about good teaching but which get lost in the full swing of the semester.

This year I had the opportunity to consult some experts: three current college students, not attending my own college. I asked them what resolutions they would like their teachers to make. I also asked six former college students, their parents, to reflect on their experiences.

One theme that emerged loud and clear was that teachers need to know their students: they should be aware of what their backgrounds are, what they do not already know, and what their needs are. Teachers who lecture straight from the book underestimate their students, and those who never say anything in class related to the readings may be overestimating them.

I was struck by the emphasis on lecturing. Class discussions are usually recommended as a way of making class interesting and helping students to learn in an active and interactive way. I began to see that holding discussions in class is a way for the teacher to learn, as well: what the students are thinking and what they do or do not understand will be reflected in their comments and questions.

The theme that emerged from the older generation is that there is a great deal of tolerance for all different kinds of professorial personalities. One professor may be quiet and slow, but pose such interesting questions about the material. Another may be quite disorganized, but stimulate new ideas. There is no single "right" way of teaching, fortunately for all of us who come in such a variety of styles.

So, with thanks to Deborah, Lisa, and Kathryn, and to their parents, I wish us all a good new beginning, with the renewed energy for the best teaching and learning semester ever.

Rosalind Ekman Ladd
Wheaton College

MATTHEWS SPEAKS AT AAPT SESSION

Philosophy, Children
and Teaching Philosophy

Richard E. Hart
Bloomfield College

In a much-discussed line from one of his fragments, the pre-Socratic philosopher, Parmenides, illustrates his reasoning by saying, tauton d'esti noijn te kai houncken esti noema, sometimes taken to mean, "for the same thing can be thought as can be," or by further implication, "only what can be thought can be." Twenty three or so centuries later, Bishop Berkeley articulated his now-famous esse est percipi—"to be is to be perceived." What possible connection, one asks, could such formidable hypotheses, uttered by mature and celebrated philosophers, have with the musings of a five-year-old named Kristin who, while learning to read, commented to her surprised father that she is glad we have letters? When asked why by her father, she responded:

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"Cause if there was no letters, there would be no sounds... If there were no sounds, there would be no words... If there was no words, we couldn't think... and if we couldn't think, there would be no world."

There are plenty of connections, argues philosopher Gareth Matthews of the University of Massachusetts. There are plenty of things to see (as the mind's eye sees) if only we "professional philosophers" open our minds and truly hear what children say to us as they naturally, intuitively ponder the mysterious and perplexing questions of the universe, questions that have never, and will never, go away. Indeed, the connections are sufficient, prompted as they were from the reasoning of a five-year-old, to, in Matthews's words, "take my breath away."

Matthews, the featured speaker at the December 1988 AAPT meeting, held in conjunction with the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, delivered a wonderfully provocative paper titled "Teaching Philosophy as Reconstructing Childhood." An equally stimulating response was provided by Karen J. Warren of Macalester College.

Early in the paper Matthews pointed out that "... it is common for young children to puzzle over what the universe is, and whether it had a beginning." Of course, there are numerous other puzzles that children experience, and, interestingly, they don't really differ in kind from the things adolescents and adults wonder about.

Consider a discussion of cosmogony as it unfolded with a dozen third and fourth graders in Matthews' philosophy discussion group in Newton, Massachusetts some five years ago. One of the youngsters, nine-year-old Nick, was genuinely hung up on the question of how the universe could have begun. His metaphysical principle was that everything had to have a beginning, including the universe. He questioned, "How did the universe start?" and further questioned, "But then if there was a big bang or something, what was the big bang in?" Classmate Sam was more preoccupied with "on" rather than "in." Indeed, how different was Sam's conception of the universe, namely, what everything else appears "on," from Plato's notion of the "receptacle" in the Timaeus, wherein he contends "... the mother and receptacle of all created and visible and in any way sensible things is... an invisible and formless being which receives all things..." (Timaeus, 51a)?

Switching from cosmogony to the mind/body problem, consider three-year-old Ursula's report to her mother that she has a pain in her tummy. Mommy suggests that if she lies down the pain will go away, but Ursula wishes to know "where will it go?" If Ursula were Gilbert Ryle's daughter, he might well have tried to convince her, as he argued in The Concept of Mind, that no pain is ever really located in anyone's body, a contention that both Ursula and Matthews find less than useful.

Ursula, Matthews tells us, was puzzled and "Puzzlement incites philosophy," just as a child's frequent need to make sense of everything all at once, in a simple and direct manner, stimulates philosophic reflection. It is this very questioning child that Matthews struggles to recover and locate in himself and his university students. The import is significant for, unless he succeeds in this search, "the philosophy we do together will lose much of its urgency and much of its point."

The principal thrust of Matthew's paper, thus, was to convey a view of philosophy as the "systematic and disciplined attempt to deal with a range of questions that can and do occur to young children." Moreover, he is convinced that it is helpful to think of teaching philosophy as a form of reconstructing childhood—to try to make ourselves like children once again. As we do so, we experience "afresh the magnetic pull of genuine philosophic inquiry" and continue to question assumptions we have been socialized to accept. These sorts of child-like responses in the classroom, therefore, constitute a wonderful invitation to do philosophy.

If Matthews is correct in his concept of philosophy, and its relation to the natural questioning of children, then he has a practical suggestion for college teachers: that such teachers "might use a child's
question or comment, the transcription of a children's discussion, or a children's story to introduce a lecture or class discussion." On Matthews' account, while intellectual or emotional maturity or even non-philosophical knowledge may be useful in teaching philosophy, they are surely not required and sometimes actually get in the way. Conceiving of the teaching of philosophy as a way of connecting us with our own childhood is not, according to Matthews, the only way to think of teaching, but, based on his experience, it stands as a pretty good one.

In her commentary, Karen Warren expressed considerable admiration and enthusiasm for Matthews' paper and his work with philosophy and children more generally. After clarifying the basic claims offered in his paper, she suggested some things, equally as significant, that he did not explicitly argue for. These are matters implicit in his very way of approaching and doing philosophy. Foremost among these are Matthews' ability to "model respect for the philosophical abilities of children, and illustrate, through his examples and commentaries, a liberating conception of philosophy, children, and a philosophical classroom."

In this vein, Warren spoke eloquently of this philosopher's ability to "hear philosophy going on and delight in it," of Matthews' respectfulness and sincerity in working with children. She concluded by discussing the import of liberating the philosophy classroom, of creating a safe environment for questioning, of Matthews' challenges to widely accepted theories of developmental psychology, and of the very real impact that Matthews' ideas and model as a teacher have had on younger teachers of philosophy, indeed, including herself. In Warren's succinct and provocative summarization, envisioning philosophy teaching as reconstructing childhood entails "substantial revision in current conceptualizations of both childhood and philosophy."

I would like to conclude with a brief personal anecdote. Some five or so years ago, when AAPT sought to convene one of its very first sessions at an APA meeting, I was invited to give a talk at the Western meeting in Chicago. My topic was "Research and Teaching in Philosophy," a theme I thought to be reasonably compelling. As I best recall, even though the congregates were enthusiastic, we barely had a handful in the room.

By contrast, at the 1987 APA meeting in New York, Alasdair MacIntyre was the featured AAPT speaker, and it was standing room only. Similarly, in 1988, Gareth Matthews filled the large AAPT room almost to capacity. Furthermore, extensive spirited and enjoyable discussion followed his paper and the commentary. These latest attendance figures, and the quality of the discourse, certainly attest, in part, to the reputations of the two fine speakers. But I think more is involved. Having been involved in AAPT conferences and related activities for the past twelve years, to me this trend clearly reflects growing excitement among professional philosophers about the challenges and joys of teaching philosophy, about the importance of sharing experiences, about the need for new understandings of just what philosophy is, and about the search for new levels of passion and commitment to our discipline and our students. Without question the challenges Matthews posed for philosophy and teaching are well underway.

Richard E. Hart
Bloomfield College

SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

The editors of AAPT News invite you to send in materials for publication. Share your ideas about teaching in Philosophy Teaching Exchange, a featured section of each issue. Write a report of a paper you have presented. Report on sessions you have attended at recent conferences. Send us your thoughts about what you have read in AAPT News. We want to hear from you! Guidelines for submissions appear on page 15.
Whatever may be true of them in other aspects of their lives, academics in their professional work and lives face some particularly knotty problems about truth-telling. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that such problems occur in so many different areas of teaching and research, and even in service work. In this paper, I shall concentrate on some of the problems that arise in the areas of teaching and service; or, rather, since the kinds of service work I have in mind may well be regarded as adjuncts to one's classroom teaching, I shall consider the latter two areas together. Before turning my attention to them—that is, to those areas of one's academic life where, it seems to me, problems about truth-telling arise both more frequently and in a more troublesome form than is the case with research—I should like to say a few words, for comparison's sake, about truth-telling in the latter area.

There, one encounters, for example, the kind of case, already much publicized, involving a researcher—usually young or untenured—who deliberately falsifies his data in order to obtain impressively new and interesting results, and thereby to gain tenure or to become a much stronger candidate for a major research grant. Perhaps we academics tend to think of this kind of falsification as quite new, and certainly in this "high-tech" age there are ways of falsifying data that are new. The basic problem is no doubt much older, however. Thus in Gaudy Night, first published in 1936, Dorothy Sayers makes much of the (fictional) case of a brilliant historian who deliberately suppressed evidence in order to make his own novel argument persuasive. Although that incident is fictional, its plausibility presupposes that Sayers and others in the academic world of her time knew of real incidents of that kind. And on the Continent in that same year, some German scholars were, presumably, quite deliberately suppressing information or otherwise falsifying their accounts in order to make themselves and their works attractive to, if not indeed usable by, the Nazis. (Cf., for example, Walter Kaufmann's discussion of this matter in his chapter "The Master Race" in his by now classic study Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist—4th ed., Princeton, 1974). In this paper, however, I shall deal only with the present-day situation and, yet more particularly, with the situation now in non-sectarian American colleges and universities. Accordingly, there is, I like to think, no need to mention here the obverse case of someone who, like Descartes with his Le Monde, has come upon an important scientific truth or who, at any rate, has written a work in all sincerity which, nonetheless, he dares not publish because of the fear of reprisals from the scholar's church or from his university itself. In small church-affiliated schools that problem may persist, however, (just as it is not unlikely that
even today a less daring counterpart to J. T. Scopes may be unwilling to advocate in the classroom or, perhaps, even to introduce into it a highly unpopular view which he accepts.)

In the major colleges and universities, however, subtler pressures may—indeed do—exist that lead to suppressions of the truth, suppressions which, if not so blatant as those to which I have just referred, are nonetheless real. Sometimes, for example, a junior colleague may be unwilling to confess her interest in such—and such a field or line of research—let us say, applied ethics or women's studies—because, she knows, her senior colleagues look with disfavor upon it. Or such a person fears to make, much less to publish, a rebuttal of a senior colleague's view lest her attempted cleverness cost her job or, at least, lest it bring an end to the good will and support of the colleagues in question. Senior scholars, however, sometimes face quite similar problems. I have heard of one distinguished researcher who, although he was prepared to acknowledge in private the force of a less well-known scholar's objection to an aspect of his view, was unwilling to make the same acknowledgment in print, or publicly to abandon the view which had made him famous.

Although such contemporary situations as I have just described do present the persons involved in them with difficult choices, it seems to me that "we" (i.e., fellow academics) already know how at least most such cases should be resolved. From our (external) point of view, the ethical problems which such cases raise do not seem to be particularly difficult. Do we not think that in such cases the truth, the whole truth, should be told, and indeed nothing but the truth? For if one is "really" an intelligent person, one will (eventually) make one's way in the academic world even if one fails to get this or that important grant (there are always others), even if one loses (temporarily) the favor of this or that colleague (one has other colleagues; there are, or there will be, other jobs), etc. At any rate, however sticky such problems may sometimes be in practice, they have typically one feature in common—one which, I think, tends to make them, as a class, less difficult cases for ethical theory than are those which I am about to describe, in the areas of teaching and service. That is, at least most of the problems previously mentioned confront "isolated" individuals who are tempted to do what (they themselves know) most of their colleagues in the academic world do not or would not do. It is because most of us do not deliberately falsify data, do not fail to make public acknowledgment of powerful objections to our (former) views, etc. that the behavior of those who do such things on occasion strikes us so clearly as reprehensible. In other areas of academic life, things are not so cut and dried. Again, let me consider several examples.

Case 1

You are teaching an introductory course in, e.g., philosophy. You very much want to tell your students the truth about the topic you are discussing, but how much of the truth should be told? The whole story, one knows, is very complicated; and telling it would both confuse most of your students and leave you with too little time for presentation and discussion of other topics which you had announced that you would include (which would give the course a whole proper balance, which you knew the students were more likely to be interested in, etc.). Incidentally, one may be concerned not to please one's students for the further reason that their evaluations of the course will subsequently be considered in recommendations concerning one's annual salary increase or one's tenure or one's promotion, etc.; but here I wish to consider such a case in, so to speak, its pedagogical purity, as I shall treat also the subsequent cases.

Accordingly, then, how should we decide which portion of the truth to tell and which to leave untold? And should we tell our students that we are simplifying (at the risk of appearing to condescend to them), or should we act as if there
were no more to be said (at the risk of leading some of the students to think that indeed there is no more to be said)?

Case 2

A particular undergraduate student, although apparently conscientious, has written a very poor paper or exam. In your written comments on the assignment or in your subsequent remarks to the student, should you tell him more-or-less bluntly what you think of the work? If you do not, the student may well think that his work is, after all, pretty good—and, hence, that the very low grade which he has received on it is unwarranted. On the other hand, being candid with the student may hurt his feelings and, yet worse from a purely pedagogical point of view, one may thereby discourage the student and, hence, weaken his motivation to try harder in the future.

Indeed, will one dare to give such work the low grade which one thinks it deserves? (Grading should here be thought of as "standing in" for a verbal assessment; so that, although the number or letter assigned cannot itself be deceitful, what it implies about the instructor's assessment of the work can be.)

Case 3

In addition to the considerations just mentioned under (2), suppose you know also that other instructors—your departmental colleagues among them—would not grade the work in question very low. Setting aside (if indeed one is able to do so) your concern not to be regarded as a crank even by your colleagues or to be unpopular with the students, you are still left to wonder whether you can justify, even to yourself, giving a very low grade to a student who chanced to take your course but who might equally well have enrolled in another section of the course and received from the instructor in it a much higher grade.

Is it not unfair to the student to penalize him, in effect, for taking one's own rather than some apparently quite similar course? Or perhaps your departmental colleagues share your standards but instructors in other departments do not. Should students be penalized for enrolling in elective courses in your own department when they might equally well have taken something in another department?

Case 4

A student relatively unfamiliar with the faculty of your department asks your advice about taking such-and-such a course with one of your departmental colleagues. You generally admire your other colleagues' research and teaching. But, you have good reason to believe that this particular colleague has very little knowledge, and, worse yet, is quite confused about the subject in question, which he or she nonetheless confidently teaches to undergraduates. Or, suppose that instead of being genuinely incompetent, your colleague is simply teaching, more-or-less mechanically, and for the nth time, a course the lectures for which she carefully prepared a decade ago but about which she has thought very little in the interim, etc. Should you tell the student what you really think? Or, in a spirit of loyalty to your friends and colleagues, should you enthusiastically recommend their courses (even as, one hopes, they will recommend your courses to their present or past students). Or, at least, should you describe the courses in question somewhat more favorably than you think they deserve? Or, should you pretend to know nothing about those particular courses? Should you deviously seek out reasons other than your real ones for not recommending those particular courses—say, that the subject matter in such-and-such another course is more likely to interest the student, or that the student will be able to take those courses (or ones very much like them) some other time but has meanwhile the special opportunity to study with such-and-such an illustrious visiting professor in the department or with such-and-such a distinguished pedagogue in this, the last year before her retirement?
Case 5

The present case is, admittedly, a variant of (2); but, nonetheless, it may be thought worthy of mention in its own right. A senior who has majored in your department but, so far, has not shown much talent or originality asks your advice about whether she should think seriously about pursuing graduate studies in your discipline. Should you tell the student exactly what you think? Or should you fall back on other reasons for being discouraging—e.g., that jobs in that discipline are still very hard to get? Or should we assume that a person ought not to be discouraged from at least trying to do what she most wants or what most interests her. After all, other departments are not so demanding as one’s own, sometimes students bloom late, etc. With such considerations in mind, should you proceed to recommend to the student various departments where you think she has a decent chance of being admitted and even of performing, if not at a distinguished, at least at a passable level?

Case 6

A graduate student who has worked closely with you is now ready to look for an academic position elsewhere and has asked you to write a letter of reference for her. She is very good but not indeed wonderfully talented, and she still has a long way to go on her dissertation. She is really quite worthy of getting a good academic position, however. You know that people from other schools and many in your own department are prepared to write greatly inflated letters about their students. Should you, then, exaggerate somewhat about her ability, too, and, moreover, straightforwardly aver that she will have completed all work on her dissertation by the start of the next academic year (and thereby make her seem to be a no less attractive candidate than many others with whom she will be competing and who, you suspect, are no more talented or further along in their dissertations than is one’s own student)? Or should you describe her and her situa-

tion exactly as you perceive them, and thereby run the risk of making her appear a far less attractive candidate than she actually is?

It should be noted that in none of the six cases just described is one contemplating a choice between a clearly moral alternative and one that is merely self-seeking. In that respect also these cases differ from the ones I described previously. (Granted, one might be able to redescribe at least some of those earlier cases so that they were seen to involve a conflict between competing moral concerns.) Perhaps it is precisely the fact that in these latter cases we are forced to choose between competing goods neither of which is merely prudential or self-aggrandizing in character which makes them as problematic as they are.

They are not, however, equally problematic. Thus, a really conscientious pedagogue may always feel a bit bad about presenting a deliberately simplified account, but he is likely to be able to find, or has already found, a way of doing so which is more—or—less satisfactory to him; and similarly with several of the other cases presented. I do not mean to say, however, that in these cases there is a single approach which is the right one or which will work equally well for all concerned teachers. In fact, it seems to me that these matters have to be decided by the individual instructor, and on a case—by—case basis. Thus, clearly, the extent of simplification required in an introductory account of Descartes’ philosophy may well be less than that deemed appropriate in an account of Spinoza’s philosophy, given that the former philosophy is, in some more—or—less obvious sense, easier to understand than is the latter.

(The question of why one philosophy is easier to grasp than another is an interesting one to consider in detail: is it a matter of the philosopher’s vocabulary and typical sentence structures, the extent of his agreement with various pre-philosophical intuitions, the extent of the antecedent absorption of his philosophy in the general culture, or some combination
of these and yet other factors? This, however, is not the place to engage in detailed investigation of that question; our business lies elsewhere.)

Whether one should decide to devote equal time to presentation of the two philosophies, or more to Spinoza's because it is indeed the more difficult, or less to it for that very reason—all this depends on the teaching style of the individual instructor and his purposes in a given course, in a given quarter or semester. I say the latter—"a given quarter or semester"—to indicate that even the individual instructor may want or need to rethink these matters and, hence, to structure the contents of a given course differently at different times in his teaching career, in response to a variety of factors: changes in one's own interests, perceived changes in students' interests, the availability of attractive new versions of certain texts, etc.

In the matter of deciding how much to say about a given topic in one's classroom or what to say in one's comments on a student's paper or in advice that one gives a student about other courses or about pursuing a graduate degree in one's own field (etc.), we very likely have at least the relative advantage of not needing to consider what others are already doing. I mean to say that in these matters there is no already prevailing practice which we take to be reprehensible or unsatisfactory, but which cannot immediately be changed and which we must somehow take into account if we are to reach a morally acceptable conclusion about what is to be done. In contrast, what grade to give a student or how to describe her in a letter of reference are examples of matters where one's conscientious decision must take into account prevailing practice—in other words, the facts of widespread grade inflation and inflation/exaggeration in claims made about prospective young academics.

Traditional ethical theories have nothing helpful to say about the former sorts of case. What is called for is casuistry (in the best sense of that term) and individual judgment. Traditional ethical theories do have something to say about cases of the latter kind; but such theories do not speak to us with one voice. On the one hand, Kant tells us that the knowledge of what other people generally do in fact, if it is not morally acceptable, should carry no weight whatsoever with the individual moral agent as she sets about deciding how to behave.

In contrast, classical utilitarianism invites or even requires us to consider what others are already doing as we set about our own ethical decision-making. For, a situation of a type in which most other people are already behaving in a certain way (albeit a way which is ethically shabby or reprehensible) is one in which one's own decision/action will very probably have consequences significantly different from the consequences of one's decision/action taken when either there is no relevant prevailing practice or the prevailing practice is one that is not ethically reprehensible. Thus, a Kantian in Nazi Germany, e.g., would tell the truth, whatever doing so might cost him and his family; an (act-) utilitarian in the same situation might very well reach an opposite decision since the contribution which the consequences of one's truth-telling would make to the well-being of those concerned might well be less than the cost of a lie which helped to preserve the lives and the liberty of oneself and one's family.

Our present concerns relate to situations which are "merely academic" and, hence, ones which are likely to be much less dire than those to which I have just alluded. Granted, one could, easily enough, increase somewhat the moral intensity of the cases with which I am concerned. For example, it might be true that, if I give such-and-such a student a low grade in my course, he will not get into medical school whereas a student who in other relevant respects is his equal and who indeed has performed in approximately the same way but in another section of the course where the grader is quite generous stands a much better
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chance of being admitted. Or, because I write a wholly truthful account of my student, she fails to get a job in academe whereas another student whose career I have followed and whom I know to be on the whole less able than my protégé gets various people to write quite glowing letters about him and, on their basis, is offered a good position.

But whenever one gives a low final grade to a student or writes a candid assessment of him in a situation where others are not proceeding similarly, something is likely to be hanging in the balance. At the very least, it seems that an injustice of some sort has been done the student who gets only the grade or the assessment that he "deserves" when others who have performed no better and, perhaps, have performed even less well get a higher grade or a much stronger recommendation. Is it proper, then, for me, the instructor, to consider only the matter of fidelity to my own standards (which I have examined and re-examined and which I find to be quite acceptable) and thereby to be true to myself; or should I not, rather, have an even greater concern for my students, a concern which will lead me sometimes to put my devotion to justice and well-being for them before my devotion to the truth itself and truth to myself?

It is clear that different but equally conscientious instructors have answered and continue to answer that question differently. As I come to reflect upon it once again, I find myself reaching the same conclusion as I have done previously; now I should like to share it with you, though (I can imagine) you may well disagree with it. I am inclined to think that one should regularly re-examine the acceptability of one's standards (which I have examined and re-examined and which I find to be quite acceptable) and thereby to be true to myself; or should I not, rather, have an even greater concern for my students, a concern which will lead me sometimes to put my devotion to justice and well-being for them before my devotion to the truth itself and truth to myself?

First, one usually cannot be sure that anything else affecting the student's long-term well-being really does hang on this grade or that letter, whereas one can be sure when one gives the student an inflated grade or recommendation that the truth (as one sees it) has not been respected and that one has therefore been untrue to oneself.

Secondly, it is not clear, on balance, that one's student, if graded/assessed honestly, is then being treated unjustly (vis-à-vis comparable students who have happened upon more "generous" instructors). I mean to be speaking here, not of instructors who in all honesty have adopted standards less demanding than one's own (we shall never reach consensus in such matters, and that is a fact of the world which all of us must recognize); I am referring to those others who one knows or has good reason to believe have standards very much like one's own but who have "given in" to the pressure of widespread academic inflation.

The matter of (in)justice here is itself very complicated. Granted, there is something amiss when my student gets, let us say, 'B-' for the same level of work which you give an 'A' but which, you admit to me privately, is "really" worth only the lower grade. My student is at a disadvantage, in an obvious respect. In a less obvious respect, however, so, too, is yours. For your student is not getting from you one thing that he deserves, namely, your honest evaluation of his work. But not to give him what he deserves is to do him an injustice!

Moreover, it seems to me that in our role as academics—more particularly, as teachers—we serve our students as role-models, whether or not we wish to be that. We in academe have the opportunity—or is it not indeed the duty?—to be, and to present ourselves as being, disinterested servants of truth (as we see it). Or rather, since like Nietzsche I think that, strictly speaking, there are and can be no disinterested human actions, let me say, instead, that we have the opportunity, if not the duty, to be and to present ourselves as being interested in discovering and conveying the truth. Why set
such a high value on truth and truth-telling? The question is age-old and very important. There is a sense, however, in which no (serious) academic should be asking that question; for if the academic life is or ought to be concerned with any one thing pre-eminently, surely that thing is truth (in its many manifestations and guises).

Finally, just as one is, willy-nilly, a model for one's students, so is one also for one's fellow academics. Thus, for example, if some of them see me writing in a manifestly honest way about my student, they may not only be appreciative of my honesty with them but may come to think that they ought to write no less honestly themselves. If, however, I am afraid that my merely truthful letter will be taken to be a weak recommendation (either because the exaggerations or partial truths in others' letters have not been recognized for what they are, or because it has been presumed, in view of the widespread practice, that my statement, for all of its qualifications (etc.) is itself inflated), I can take the trouble to comment in the letter, or in a covering letter (a sort of "meta-letter!") on the significance of my letter-writing style. I can also join with other, like-minded academics in urging our various professional organizations to produce official statements condemning various types of academic dishonesty.

There may be other measures which I can adopt as well. What I must recognize, however, is that such problems as I have raised in this paper do not have easy answers; that despite my academic's desire to reach a decision quickly about these matters so that I can get on with other aspects of my academic life (in particular, my research), they deserve careful attention; and—by no means least of all—that I do not need to meditate on these questions in solipsistic splendor but can and should discuss them with interested colleagues, of whom there will always be many.

Paul D. Eisenberg
Indiana University

"Out of the Mouths of Babes ..."
or "Quotable Quotes (QQ's)"

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

Are you suffering from existential angst, trying to figure out your purpose in life and what you are doing because you have just read some exams or papers? If so, here's a QQ that might be a cure for your conditions:

"If we didn't have philosophy I wouldn't be here."

There you have it; philosophy—and ipso facto, you, as a philosophy teacher—can cause a student to exist or at least to be somewhere. We philosophy teachers have a purpose in life—we can make students EXIST or BE SOMEWHERE.

However, don't let this QQ go to your head; you must be able to touch base with Reality every now and then. But leave that problem to us here at The Qs Center; we have a responsibility to keep your optimism in check. Unfortunately, that is not difficult. For example, you probably think that male students of today are not Neanderthals when it comes to women's rights. If so, you are in dire need of a Reality Check. Since part of our job is to provide one when indicated, here you are:

"If you think about it women really keep men on their feet. If it wasn't for them who would cook dinner, clean house, and the main thing love them and care for them."

This made us wonder whether students realize they have the power to cause their philosophy teachers to have a stroke. We don't advise reading the next QQ unless you're sure you have recovered from this one. Who said Reality Checks were a bed of roses? At the risk of
being sadistic, we offer you one more:

"I think that when a woman can speak about nothing but sexual equality, they are putting themselves down. I feel that they should be proud of what they are. I personally am sick of this Woman's Lib because all it is is a bunch of women with nothing better to do than find something to gripe about....I believe that women should have the right to get a job and vote and get help around the house, but I don't like all this woman's lib stuff."

Just how radical can some students be anyway, thinking that women should have so many rights for gosh'sakes? Then there are those students who probably don't see a need to raise the issue because they believe that

"Men and women have somehow merged into one separate human being."

Should this be the case, there would be no need to raise the problem of the knowledge of other minds either. However, our philosophical intuition causes us to be slightly suspicious of the truth of that and so we can still fill in our Intro syllabus with a section on the other minds problem. (But what we'd like to know is how one human being can be separate.)

If you do present that problem to your Intro students, you probably discuss Mill's analogical argument and point out its weaknesses. But did you ever consider how it could be strengthened? We are pleased to offer the following suggestion:

"I am going to try to strengthen Mill's argument a little by saying other human beings have feelings because of marriage. Love is a feeling and without love where would marriage be? The population would not increase if it were not for feelings like love, passion, lust, etc. We were all born into this world and feeling had to come into play somewhere. All I can give are results. Philosophically this may not be correct but it's the only logical thing I can say."

Who cares about philosophical correctness when logic is at issue, right? (Not to mention love, passion, and lust.)

We bet you didn't know that the Turing Test could determine sincerity of intelligence; yes indeedy it can:

"Through intellectual questioning, one can almost always determine if the subject's intelligence is artificial or sincere."

With this we will leave you some questions for your thinking enjoyment: Can stupidity be artificial or sincere? Can one be artificially or sincerely stupid?

Mary Ann Carroll
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC 28609

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 1989

17-19 South Carolina Society for Philosophy, Clemson Univ. Contact Michael Costa, Philosophy, Univ. of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

March 1989


23-25 American Assoc. of Philosophy Teachers, with APA. Contact Rosalind Ekman Ladd, Philosophy, Wheaton College, Norton, MA 02766.
DO YOU TEACH PHILOSOPHY OF TECHNOLOGY OR ENGINEERING ETHICS?

The Eisenhower Symposium on Science, Technology and Policy will take place April 9-12th, 1990 at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. This event will celebrate the centennial of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a Kansan who is known for his coinage of the phrase "military-industrial complex," and his Atoms for Peace speech. The Symposium will feature thirty leaders in the sciences and engineering, speaking about ethical and policy matters shaping their research projects and professional lives. The case histories and projects of the speakers will be researched by faculty-student teams and will form part of a planned videodisc which will include as well the panels, papers, and discussions at the Symposium. This disc will then be used in several computer applications to enrich the teaching of Engineering Ethics, and a Philosophy of Technology course.

While philosophers and social scientists will be involved in discussing the presentations at the Symposium, and will make some presentations of their own, the primary focus of this event will be the first-hand discussions and narratives of the scientists, engineers, and policymakers in those areas. The discussions will follow up on two major ethical and policy questions: whether there is, and can be in our era, a free exchange of ideas in science and engineering, and secondly, how funding and research coordination policies influence topic choice and the direction of research in these fields.

AAPT members are invited to attend, and to enjoy the numerous events on the sidelines here on the tall grass prairie. Tours of the Eisenhower Center, Museum and Library, including political cartoon exhibit, as well as the world's largest tall grass prairie preserve, will be conducted. AAPT members, --or their colleagues,-- teaching Philosophy of Technology and Engineering Ethics are urged to send a) suggestions for speakers in sciences and engineering, and b) commitments to come and participate in discussions, to Sarah A. Merrill, Ph.D., Applied Ethics Program, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506. If enough philosophers come, we can have a special session of our own following and analyzing the previous talks, --and even an edited collection. You will have to find your own funding to come, unless a critical mass assembles to write our own grant. (NEH deadline is October.)

SUBMISSIONS TO AAPT News

Submissions on diskette, when possible, are much appreciated. Page composition is done in WordStar 5.0, but any WordStar 3.xx or 4.xx document files are fine. WordPerfect 4.x files are acceptable. WordPerfect users should include a Text Out (ASCII) file in addition to a document file. Users of other word processors should provide a straight ASCII file. Disk format is currently limited to 5 ¼" MS-DOS/PC-DOS. (For any old-timers still using CP/M, virtually any CP/M 5 ¼" format is acceptable!) Other diskette formats (Apple, Atari, Amiga, MacIntosh, etc.) cannot be read. Be sure to include a paper copy.

THINKING: THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN

some articles in recent issues:

Vol. VI, No. 4 Jean Pascal Souquet, "Gaston Bachelard and Science Education" Rosalyn Sherman, "Is It Possible to Teach Socratically?"

INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN
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--- LOOK FOR THE INSERT IN THIS ISSUE ---
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I would like to help on the following AAPT committees or projects. (Circle)

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- any way I can
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