Call for Presentation Proposals for the 9th IWCTP

The 9th International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy will be held August 7-10, 1992 at the University of Vermont in Burlington, VT.

Presentations on any area, problem or aspect of teaching philosophy are welcome. We would like to have you share your experiences and strategies in teaching philosophy. A variety of interactive styles are possible: workshops, posters, panels, conversations, demonstrations, activities, etc. You may submit more than one proposal. If you have questions about the suitability of a proposal, the program chair invites you to consult with her. Please call (213) 559-6080, evenings are best. Presentation proposals must be sent in triplicate and organized as follows:

In 1-2 cover pages, separate from the proposal:

1. Your name, school affiliation (if any), address and phone number
2. Title of proposed presentation
3. Anticipated length of presentation (60, 90, 120 minutes are most easily scheduled)
4. Style of presentation
5. List of any special equipment you will need
6. A one paragraph abstract (100-300 words) to be used to describe your presentation, if accepted, in the conference program.

A separate 3-5 page proposal which includes:

1. The title of your presentation, but without your name (for blind reviewing purposes)
2. A summary of your presentation: what it covers and seeks to achieve; its methods and techniques; what participants will do and experience.
3. Description of the role and place of this presentation in the overall theme of teaching philosophy.
4. A list of hand-outs and materials you plan to provide.
5. Anything else which the program committee might need to know.

Presentation proposals should be sent to:

Betsy Newell Decyk, Program Chair
Department of Philosophy
California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90840

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Computing and Values Conference in Connecticut Very Successful

The National Conference on Computing & Values, which was planned in cooperation with AAPT and co-chaired by AAPT President Terry Bynum, occurred in August on the campus of Southern Connecticut State University. The conference was very successful. It included 65 speakers—the nation’s leading thinkers in computer ethics. Over 400 people attended, including more than 200 from 32 states and five other countries. The other attendees were local Connecticut citizens.


The Conference generated 40 professional manuscripts and 30 hours of broadcast-quality video. The proceedings (currently being edited) are to be published as six monographs and six video tapes by the Research Center on Computing & Society at Southern Connecticut State University. AAPT members will be notified when the proceedings are available.

Terry Bynum
AAPT President
So. Connecticut State University
New Haven, CT

AAPT Session at APA in December to Focus on Applied Ethics

On Saturday morning, December 28th, 1992, AAPT will hold a session at the Eastern Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association. The meeting is scheduled for 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. in the Broadhurst/Belasco meeting room at the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel (arranged too late for publication in the program).

9th Workshop-Conference to be in Vermont

The 9th International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy, which is AAPT’s biennial “main event”, will be held in early August 1992 on the campus of the University of Vermont at Burlington.

This 9th IWCTP will be similar to previous ones, offering a variety of workshops on many aspects of teaching philosophy. Workshops will focus upon subjects like ethics, logic, intro to philosophy, and other basic courses; plus consideration of teaching methods, styles and materials; and also teaching philosophy to differing students and “audiences”.

Many AAPT members have special knowledge and skills in the teaching of philosophy. We encourage you to consider offering a workshop for your colleagues at the 9th IWCTP next August.
Exploring Multiculturalism and Philosophy: The San Jose Initiative

Passing through the main gateway into the Bodleian Library quadrangle at Oxford University, one immediately encounters a number of prominent, carved wooden doors providing access to distinct parts of the building. The inscriptions over the doors reflect the original use of the space as lecture-rooms and schools of the University. They also remind us of the range of basic studies required in the early 1600's for the Arts degree at Oxford. "To right and left of the main gateway were the schools of the Seven Liberal Arts (the Trivium, the three elementary subjects of Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic; and the Quadrivium, the more advanced course of Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy); the two tongues (Greek and Hebrew); and the three Philosophies (Natural, Moral, and Metaphysical)."

In reflecting on these doors, and what they once led to, one is struck by how things are both similar and yet considerably different today. In terms of the undergraduate curriculum, most colleges and universities (in the United States at least) still claim to believe that students should complete a wide and diverse range of course work in the natural and social sciences, math, humanities, arts and languages in order to establish a moral and academic foundation on which to erect the specialized knowledge and skills of the major discipline or intended profession. When conducted authentically, with genuine dialogue across the disciplines, this reflects the long-cherished ideal of a "liberal" education, something which its most enthusiastic advocates might even claim culminates in better prepared citizens and closer realization of the values of democratic pluralism.

As everyone within the "higher education industry" knows, however, numerous challenges and modifications to the classical scheme of education have arisen in recent times. Whether always welcomed or not, and for political as well as educational reasons, we now have a growing number of courses and programs in gender studies, on aging, on black and Hispanic issues, contemporary social problems, Oriental art and thought, and studies pertaining to the physically handicapped. Much of the falls under the banner of—and, indeed, the aggressive movement toward—multiracial and multicultural contributions to knowledge and, thus, the curriculum. While many, perhaps even most, academics concede that the availability of such courses and program, provided they are well conceived and uphold academic standards, is both necessary and useful, political and academic battle lines are drawn when, for example advocates of feminism or multiracialism insist that the "core curriculum" (i.e., the General Education Program) be reconfigured to reflect the interests and concerns of these new and emerging areas. We need only recall the "national" reverberations of the general education debate at Stanford, the present, tedious controversy over "politically correct" and "politically incorrect" curricula and speech on campus, and the surprisingly popular clamoring over "cultural literacy" and "cultural diversity" present in the works of E.D. Hirsch, Allan Bloom, Stanley Fish, Skip Gates, Shelby Steele, and numerous others. Given a vast array of dramatic and rapid changes in the United States and the world—shifting demographics, the collapse of communism, the role of women and minorities in the workplace and the professions, the extent to which mass communications has shrunk the world—the significant challenges to our understanding, to claims of truth, to our very humanity, are as serious as they are undeniable.

Though caught up in transformation, like everyone else, philosophers have had precious little to say about this perplexing yet potentially liberating situation. Like their fellow academics, most have been content to rest comfortably in what Isaiah Berlin once characterized as a "windowless box," namely, the protected, self-justifying subdisciplinary confines of analytic, phenomenological, deconstructionist, hermeneutical or other styles of philosophizing. This is fine to a point, but the growing challenge will not go away. Changes that have been unleashed within students—as within the world at large—will eventually have undeniable impact on all academics, on how they envision and carry out their research and teaching. In terms of philosophy and its
teaching, an important "national" beginning of dialogue along such lines was staged in California in the summer of 1991, an occasion that confirmed both the pressing and exciting nature of multiculturalism in education.

For several years individual philosophers have struggled with how to structure their courses so as to include multiracial, multicultural and feminist perspectives. But never before had a major, national conference been convened on this theme. Never had there been a broad forum for exchanging views and strategies, reporting on pedagogical experiments, and confronting differing philosophies of education. But from July 15-17 the Department of Philosophy at San Jose State University (with the leadership of Professor Cynthia Rostankowski) joined forces with the American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) to co-sponsor a conference entitled Teaching in a Multicultural Context. Though AAPT had previously co-sponsored conferences on computer use in philosophy and regularly convenes special sessions at divisional A.P.A. meetings—along with its own international workshop/conferences every two years—this was its first major conference activity in the West. The San Jose initiative, as I shall call it, attracted philosophy teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialist from throughout the country. All gathered in a fine collegial setting, typified by sunny weather, gentle mountainous terrain, and inspiring conversation.

A stimulating keynote address was delivered by Professor Laurence Thomas of Syracuse University. His presentation—"Listening as a Moral Imperative"—launched the conference on a positive, upbeat footing. Both substantively and in tone, Thomas set the agenda and identified broad parameters for the following three days of workshops and presentations. Among his principal points, Thomas argued that we (as philosophers and teachers in a multicultural environment) need to understand others. But we simply cannot understand others theoretically or in abstraction. In short, we cannot understand others independently of others. We need to truly listen to what people say, to understand the ways in which others—very different from us—have been "dominantly constituted" to be who they are. By virtue of difference and from us—have been "dominantly constituted" to be who they are. By virtue of experience and different life histories, people are emotionally configured in radically different ways. Though no one will ever know just what it is like to be a Holocaust survivor, a slave, a rape victim—unless one has been there—we must, nonetheless, acknowledge and respect the diversity of people, seek to understand others, and share others' experiences through what Thomas described as an act of "moral deference." Moral deference presupposes that each of us can hear the story of another; each has the power to gain the trust of others. In Thomas's words, moral deference is equivalent to "having earned the privilege of bearing witness to and sharing in another person's pain or joy." As teachers in increasingly multicultural environments, we have no choice but to learn how to listen to those who are different from us. We must cultivate the art of listening." Through listening we earn trust, and it's only through trust that we can be effective as teachers. Through genuine listening, whole new worlds open up to us and nourish our work. Reminiscent of the thought of Martin Buber, listening, thus, becomes a moral imperative. Caring, trust, affirmation, confirming others through trusting them and listening to them—this establishes the foundation for philosophizing and teaching in any kind of context. Moral deference becomes arguably the most important act of anyone in the complex, ever changing modern world.

In keeping with what has become something of a tradition in AAPT-sponsored conferences, the sessions following the keynote were designed as workshop presentations, informal and discussion-oriented rather than occasions for formal paper readings. In all, over twenty such cooperative workshops were given, each in varying ways involving brief presentations, handouts of syllabi and readings, videos, role-playing and other group exercises, and general discussion.

A random sampling of the offerings included Jo Sprague of San Jose State whose session, "Techniques for Handling Discussion of Difficult Topics in the Multicultural Classroom: Respecting Diversity," challenged participants to envision how to make the diverse classroom a genuine learning community built on civility and decency. Clara Sue Kidwell of U.C.-Berkeley gave a fascinating talk on "Native American Philosophies and Western Culture" in which she compared world views, that is, the contrasting sets of assumptions about the very nature of the world. She then demonstrated how basic physiological issues of ontology and epistemology are overlaid on the contrasting world views of Native American, Greco-Roman, and Judeo-Christian cultures. Tommy Lott of San Jose gave a detailed and suggestive account of various ways of "Incorporating the Black Experience Into the Philosophy Curriculum."

Ken Stikers of Seattle University has been working for some time on reconceiving and expanding the canon in the history of American philosophy to include lesser known, diverse figures whose voices have not been adequately heard. His workshop, "Teaching American Philosophy From a Multicultural Perspective," demonstrated how he has begun to implement such changes in his American philosophy courses. In a radically different vein, Helene Dwyer of the University of Wisconsin, Baraboo, reflected on her experience teaching in a session titled "Prison Classroom as a

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Most of the members of the philosophy department at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte teach a lower division course in informal logic entitled “Critical Thinking” in addition to the more traditional lower division courses in formal logic, entitled “Deductive Logic.” Both courses teach the same concepts (though differently named), but the critical thinking course focuses on applying those concepts to reading, writing, and talking about controversial issues while the deductive logic course focuses on applying those concepts to deductions in symbolic logic.

Although university general education requirements justify our offering both the Deductive Logic and the Critical Thinking courses, we continuously seek a more satisfying educational justification, in the form of an answer to the following question: What special contribution to education is made by the course in critical thinking? At a Spring 1990 departmental seminar on critical thinking, four speakers theorized that the critical thinking course aims to develop in students a unique set of intellectual skills and personal attitudes which have wide applicability outside of the course. Two of the speakers, the authors of this article, identified “increased metacognitive skills” and “increased self-esteem” as the unique contributions of the critical thinking course. Discussion at the seminar revealed that the speakers saw the two contributions as related to one another, in a way which will be explained below.

Successful completion of a critical thinking course may increase a student’s metacognitive skills. The educational psychologist John Flavell defines “metacognitive skills” broadly as “the ability to monitor one’s own thinking process.” In one specific application of the concept, a high level of metacognitive skills has been linked with the ability to evaluate correctly the degree of one’s own reading comprehension. Reading comprehension requires the ability to reorganize information as it is presented in a text into some sort of scheme which recognizes the relative importance of and the relationships between different segments. Most college students understand the concept of a “topic sentence” and use it as a tool for checking reading comprehension. They believe that if they can summarize a paragraph or an article in one sentence then they understand it. The critical thinking course offers students a far more complex scheme for checking reading comprehension. A student who makes careful use of critical thinking skills will view a text as an argument and a topic sentence as the conclusion to an argument. This student recognizes that she or he does not understand a reading until she or he can identify (1) the conclusion or “claim;” (2) the minor premises or “grounds;” (3) the major premise or “warrant;” (4) the scientific, philosophical or common-sense theory behind the major premise, or the “backing;” (5) a counterexample or “rebuttal” to the argument. In this way, critical thinking increases a student’s ability to evaluate the degree of her or his reading comprehension.

On the assumption that a course in critical thinking also increases other kinds of metacognitive skills, we claim that the activity of studying critical thinking may also contribute significantly to one’s self-esteem. John Rawls provides a two-part definition of self-esteem. According to Rawls, self-esteem involves (1) a conviction that one’s plans and aspirations are worthwhile; and (2) confidence in one’s ability to accomplish those objectives.

By increasing metacognitive skills, i.e., the ability to monitor one’s own thinking process, a course in critical thinking may contribute in two ways to a conviction that one’s plans and aspirations are worthwhile. (1) A course in critical thinking may help to remove some barriers to self-understanding, such as overgeneralization and formulating false or impossible goals. Removal of these barriers helps a student formulate clear and worth-
while plans and aspirations. (ii) A course in critical thinking strengthens the ability of the rational aspect of one’s personality to lead the other aspects. Rationality enables a person to defend her or his plans and aspirations against criticism and to formulate appropriate short-term objectives.

By increasing metacognitive skills, a course in critical thinking may contribute in two ways to confidence in one’s ability to accomplish her or his objectives. (i) Critical thinking develops an attitude of confidence in one’s ability to understand others and to express oneself. Students learn what it takes to understand a person or a text and learn that if they make the effort, they can come to understanding. Students learn what it takes to express themselves clearly and learn that if they make the effort, they can express themselves clearly. (ii) The specific skills developed in the critical thinking course can be directly applied in a wide variety of arenas and can therefore help students achieve their academic, professional and personal goals.

We have argued above that if critical thinking increases the ability to evaluate reading comprehension, then it increases metacognitive skills. We have also argued that if critical thinking increases metacognitive skills, and if those skills in turn help remove barriers to self-understanding, strengthen the rational aspect of the personality, develop an attitude of confidence in the ability to understand others and express oneself, and can be applied to a variety of areas, then critical thinking increases self-esteem.

We should note two possible situations in which our argument would be moot. If a student fails the course in critical thinking, then most likely the course has not developed that student’s intellectual skills. If a student is alienated from the activity of studying critical thinking, then that student, however well she or he performs in the course, will probably not apply critical thinking skills in other areas of her or his life.

Because a theory about the outcomes of a course is a theory about its effect on students, we asked students whether they shared our perceptions of the outcomes of studying critical thinking. During the summer of 1991, we sent a letter to forty students who graduated from critical thinking classes one to two semesters earlier, asking them to reply in writing to three questions. Each question inquires about one of the outcomes we have identified: reading, metacognition, and self-esteem. Only seven students (17.5\% of the sample) responded. The low response rate may be partially explained by inaccurate addresses, as students tend to move often, and by the summer timing of the questionnaire, as some students may be out of town and others uninterested in reading mail from the university. However, the few answers that we did receive seem to corroborate our theory. Below, some general remarks will be followed by a presentation of excerpts from student responses.

Some students reported increased facility at reading comprehension, although their answers indicate that they did not conceptualize reading as involving metacognitive skills. In order to provide an answer that does link reading with metacognition, students would have to think of the process of reading as a process of reconstructing a text. Unfortunately, the phrasing of the question about reading did not require them to do so.

All the students who returned the questionnaire wrote enthusiastically about increased metacognitive skills. Their comments indicate that some equate critical thinking skills with metacognitive skills. Students reported that argument analysis and fallacy identification gave them tools with which to monitor their thinking more effectively while speaking and listening. We hope that they have applied the tools to personal problem-solving but no student comments speak directly to that issue.

All but one of the students wrote enthusiastically about an increase in self-esteem linked directly to increased critical thinking skills. Some of the comments reflect Rawls’ definition of self-esteem, as two students find that because they studied critical thinking they are comfortable with their career choices and more confident about their abilities to succeed. In addition, some students reported increased confidence in their academic abilities and in their skill as conversationalists. No comments speak directly to rationality, but again, the question was not phrased to stimulate reflection on that issue.

Below we reprint each question with a sampling of student responses.

Question (1): Did the course improve your ability to read complex prose? If yes, please say in what way and give a specific example.

“I can more easily identify where the argument is weak or strong. Specifically the course was useful in introducing me to ways to sort out the author’s intent in a text and mentally classify all the points made.”

“I was able to locate main points/ideas easier. I learned to ‘cut through’ insignificant phrases/words and actually analyze major points. I learned how people use emotional words to try to prove a point, and knowing this helped me to react more to the well-supported points.”

“An example can be found in the Reading Comprehension aspect of the LSAT...this course enabled me to do it at a more expedient rate.”
Question (2): Did the course improve your ability to monitor your own thinking process? For example, are you more able to recognize when you do and don’t have sufficient evidence for a claim, or when you do and don’t understand something?

"[The course] gave me the (technical) names for things which I already thought about for years and used."

"Before, I had gotten stumped, but knew my evidence was bad. The course allowed me to be able to come up with better evidence for my claims."

"I find myself examining the argument more carefully and mentally finding the claim and grounds. I carefully and logically critique my own words before I speak or write. Example: LSAT essays." [This is not the same student who mentioned the LSAT above.]

"I think about what I’m going to say before I say it—and I’m careful about making statements that I can’t really support. I also...make better judgments about advertisements and claims."

"I am now able to detect fallacies in my own thought process."

Question (3): Did the course improve your self-esteem in any way? Did the course possibly increase your self-esteem by improving skills in reading, thinking or self-examination? If yes, please give a specific example.

"The course gave me more confidence in my responses because I gained an ability to successfully sort my ideas and form logical arguments. It has immensely aided me in writing logical academic papers, or at least well-supported and sound."

"It gave me more confidence in respect to personal argument and in noting fallacies or weaknesses in other persons’ statements."

"I feel more comfortable when I talk to people because I can form ideas much easier. If someone says something to me that I don’t agree with, I know now why I don’t agree with it and I know now how to react to it. People react to me differently in conversation, too, because they seem to be more careful about making a clearer point.... It will be very useful in my business career."

"Most definitely this course improved my self-esteem when it comes to defending my idea or way of thinking...After speaking with many lawyers...I find my background in psychology and philosophy is one of the best to have. I feel extremely comfortable with what lies ahead."

The student responses supplement our informal observations with anecdotal evidence in favor of our theory about the outcomes of studying critical thinking. (We would welcome the assistance of an educational psychologist in constructing an appropriate empirical study.)

Laura Duhan Kaplan
The University of North Carolina
Charlotte, NC

Norris Frederick
Queens College
Charlotte, NC

NOTES


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! Please call us at 419-447-6442 (Tiffin University) or 419-772-2197 (Ohio Northern University) for guidelines for submissions.—The editors
San Jose Initiative
(Continued from Page 4)

Multicultural Laboratory: Coming to Understand the Other from Different Perspectives." John Lenssen of the Oregon Department of Education gave a very well received workshop on "Multicultural Activities and Simulations." Betsy Decyk of Cal State-Long Beach spoke about "Using World Literature and Film to Explore the Multicultural Dimensions of Philosophy," while Rene Trujillo of San Jose State dealt with "Integrating Spanish and Latin American Materials Into the Philosophy Curriculum." Joe Rudinow of Sonoma State explored problems and opportunities associated with contemporary ways of raising age-old philosophical problems in aesthetics in his innovative session, "Aesthetics, Cultures, and American Popular Music," and Laurence Thomas enjoyed a return engagement with his workshop, "The Art of Unorthodoxy," in which he argued for the breaking of stereotypes and the much needed adoption of a posture of unorthodoxy by the teacher, an approach which supports order and standards while challenging the typical "expert-authority" oriented conception of the teacher and her role.

Remaining sessions, which space does not permit a full description of, dealt with applied ethics, the multicultural fiction of National Book Award winner Charles Johnson, culturally diverse philosophy majors, and the teaching of Confucian ethics. The concluding plenary session ("Brining Up Persons: An Ethics of Care for Teachers"), conducted jointly by Michael Katz and Rita Manning of San Jose State was extraordinarily spirited, rife with fables, thought experiments and visualizations, and brought the conference, in its waning moments, back to the high point at which it began. In concluding they sought to articulate one central purpose of the conference by inviting all to continue on the journey toward self-realization, integrity and wholeness, toward living in accord with one's basic values, and toward an enhanced realization of ourselves as models for our increasingly diverse students.

The exceptional richness and variety of the parts that comprised the program, the witnessing of radically diverse people sitting down together in a spirit of cooperation, and the dialogue that ensued, attest to the magnitude, the energy, and exciting quality of the challenges posed by diversity in higher education generally and philosophy more particularly. It also afforded some hope, some glimpse of what the possibilities for the future might be. All in attendance at this first-ever national forum can only hope that what was experienced in the microcosm of San Jose State in the summer of '91 can and will come to permeate the larger dialogue within higher education in America, and, in turn, have some growing influence on the achievement of the ideals of democratic pluralism, something in which we all have a major stake.

Richard E. Hart
Bloomfield College
Bloomfield, NJ

NOTES


[2] Consider, for instance, the influential books of John Dewey (i.e., The School and Society, Democracy and Education, and Experience and Education) that addressed fundamental issues of education and a democratic society.

[3] One refreshing, and provocative exception to this is a recent article by Patrick J. Hill, "Multi-Culturalism: The Crucial Philosophical and Organizational Issues," that appeared in the July/August 1991 issue of Change.


Call for Reviews

Review submissions in the following categories are requested:

(1) books directed at philosophy teachers (e.g., the review of Demonstrating Philosophy in a previous issue of AAPT News),

(2) books that you have used in your classroom either successfully or unsuccessfully (the focus here should be on the book as a teaching tool, and explicit reference should be made to students' experiences with it), and

(3) books designed for classroom use (the focus here should be an assessment of the book's likely success in the classroom).

In addition, we will print reader requests for comments on the classroom success of specific volumes. Finally, any reader who is willing to review books is urged to submit his or her name to the editors. As we receive books from publishers, we will contact you regarding a review.
"Out of the Mouths of Babes"

or

"Quotable Quotes"

Are you so caught up in trying to convince students that philosophy is fun (because you "need" those warm bodies in your classes) that you sometimes feel that "only" professional philosophers give a hoot about anything "really" philosophical? Well, we have some good news for you. The QQs Center has received word that there is whole another group of people interested in at least "two" philosophical issues:

"Knowledge of our experiences and the introspection of consciousness has intrigued philosophers and introverts alike."

So instead of wasting time trying to convince students of the fun-filled nature of philosophy, simply recruit a bunch of introverts for your courses and talk about knowledge of our experiences and the introspection of consciousness (it doesn’t matter if you’re teaching intro, logic, or philosophy of science or whatever). If you could find out what issues have intrigued "extroverts," you could then do the same for other courses (assuming you "like" to teach the issues that have intrigued extroverts). You might even suggest to your department chair (or do it yourself if you’re your department chair) that student be assigned a particular section of any given course depending on whether they were introverts or extroverts. That of course could mean a total curriculum revision with only two course titles listed in the catalog, "Intriguing Philosophical Issues for Introverts" and "Intriguing Philosophical Issues for Extroverts". But in the current economic atmosphere where the head honchos are mainly concerned about the body count in your classes, we believe this is an idea worthy of being publicized.

Speaking of publicizing stuff, we philosophers should call a news conference when we have reason to think that we have refuted a philosophical theory instead of keeping it a secret by only publishing it in esoteric philosophy journals. That violates the public’s right to know. Besides, publicizing refutations would forestall such suspicious remarks as the following, which might leave the public with the impression that philosophers are engaging in covert activities:

"I am not implying that Ryle’s theory is totally incapable of being refuted. I am stating that it has not been refuted at this point in time, or at least a refutation has not been publicized."

Another reason philosophers should call periodic news conferences is to assure the public that some particular theory is safe. Now we aren’t suggesting that such a news conference be a three hour seminar or even a fifty minute lecture; it could be as simple as a statement of the following sort:

"Currently an antireductionist point of consciousness is not causing harm to anyone."

And if reporters want to know whether an antireductionist point of consciousness has the "potential" for causing harm to someone even though it isn’t "now" doing so, simply tell them that as a philosopher you cannot make any irresponsible claims about what an antireductionist point of consciousness will or will not do. You must be "very" cautious in how you respond to questions, you know. For instance, suppose you were asked about the consequences of euthanasia; you should say:

"The consequence of euthanasia usually means death..."

You want to set a good example and not make any hasty generalization about whether euthanasia "always" has death as a consequence. Remember, no matter where you are or what you are doing or whom you are with, you are a PHILOSOPHY TEACHER FIRST AND FOREMOST. Your non-philosopher friends and lovers may not appreciate that but that’s just too bad. Your primary obligation is and preoccupation must be with TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AT ALL TIMES POSSIBLE. This means you must try to make students and people alike aware of anything that might possess our society and which has gone unquestioned:

"With the choices nowadays and not having someone torture you into changing your mind, there are
still some traditions that still possess our society that we take on blind faith because it has been around for a very long time. An excellent example is religion that is happening right now, where morality is really taken as a give-me.

It's those darn give-me's that are a main source of the difficulty you face in your work since you can't torture someone into giving up a give-me. You might have an easier time if torture were permitted as a means of getting someone to relinquish a give-me or if religion were happening yesterday or the day before and morality would really be given as a take-me.

Students don't always just accept give-me's (unless it happens to be money from parents); some actually think it is a good idea to be skeptical:

"Throughout our lives we are sheltered by our parents and friends. They try to keep us away from bad experiences they had in their lives. Although they try, we still have to experience what life has in for us for ourselves because of the belief factor which makes us doubt Thomas."

So inform your students that because they are fortunate enough to have a skeptical belief factor (SBF) they don't "have" to accept all those give-me's.

Also impress upon them the fact that their SBF is not just restricted to doubting Thomas; it can also work as a way to doubt Dick, Harriet, Jack, and Descartes. Here is an actual example of an SBF at work:

"Descartes may say that animals do not have mental states—but how does he know? Has he ever been an animal for a day?"

We personally find ourselves being somewhat doubtful that Descartes was ever an animal for a day, which is proof that we "too" must have an SBF too. If you doubt the existence of SBF's, that just proves they exist; remember that the SBF makes you doubt lots of different people, not just Thomas.

Sometimes the SBF's of others might foil your plans. Suppose, for instance, you want to convince some people that you aren't really you; so instead of acting liking you normally do, you decide to "imitate" you. Now:

"To imitate yourself, you would have to know how others interpret you. If you imitated the manner in which you thought you acted, you could be mistaken for being yourself. This may confuse others and have them tend to believe that it really is you."

In which case you should hope that their SBFs aren't working because then they would believe that it "isn't" you and you would have pulled off an imitation of you done in the way "others" would imitate you and not in the way "you" imitate you. (We "think" we understand that but we can't be too certain—which is just "more" evidence that we actually have an SBF because our being skeptical as to whether we understand what we just wrote is one more example of our SBF at work.)

From the Q's Center's No Comment Department:

"Women feel that housekeeping is as important a job as the man's. However, if it were not for the man's job, there wouldn't be a house, or anything else for that matter, for women to look after."

"...it is unethical and immoral to have a 13-year old boy living with two homosexuals as parents. In my reasoning, homosexuals can't have children because God never intended them to. God made Adam and Eve and not Adam and Steve."

(From Patrick Rardin, Appalachian State University)

Mary Ann Carroll
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC 28608

Calendar of Events
(Continued from Page 12)


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