Another Great AAPT Conference

Stimulating! Collegial! Fun! These are words that describe for me the 9th International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy that was held at the University of Vermont in Burlington, August 7th-10th, 1992. Over that one week-end, 139 people came together to share their ideas about teaching philosophy in an exciting multi-log of conversations and presentations. There were more than sixty workshops to improve the teaching of philosophy Kindergarten through University.

The keynote address, "The Child as Natural Philosopher," was given by Dr. Gareth B. Matthews of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. [text included in this issue---eds.] Professor Matthews provided a fascinating set of examples of philosophical inquiry and insight from children, bringing into question some of the current theories of intellectual development and encouraging us to listen more carefully to what children say and ask. His books include Philosophy and the Young Child (Harvard, 1980) and Dialogues with Children (Harvard, 1984).

On Saturday evening Terry Bynum gave the Presidential address. Terry "performed" for us a multimedia presentation that he gave at the very first Conference on Teaching Philosophy, and used that as a stepping stone to talk about the advances in teaching philosophy that are on the technological frontier. As a sign of the changing times, a large number of the 1992 workshops utilized slides, video and other media in their presentations, and each time-slot on the schedule had at least one computer presentation as well.

Each morning began with a plenary session, a tradition that began in 1990 at the AAPT conference in Bloomington, Indiana. On Saturday morning, Richard Hart gave a summary of the AAPT Conference at California State University, San Jose in 1991 on Multiculturalism and then he facilitated a discussion of some of the issues of multiculturalism and their implications for teaching philosophy. The topic is a rich one, and the forty-five minute plenary session could only just begin the discussion. On Sunday morning, Scott Farber gave us a wonderful introduction to the philosophy/exercise of Ta'i Chi. I found that some of the principles and movements of Ta'i Chi were similar to techniques I use in mediation, so that was an interesting connection that I would like to explore further.

The workshop sessions were well-attended, and the discussions, which flowed out into the halls afterwards, were enthusiastic and stimulating. I would like to thank all the conference for their participation. As the program chair, I was in a position to know about all

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(Con'd on Page 17)
A Philosophers View of Childhood

Gareth B. Matthews
University of Massachusetts/Amherst

[This is a shortened version of the keynote address in Burlington. Interested readers are also referred to Matthews' "Teaching Philosophy as Reconstructing Childhood," AAPT News, June 1989, pp. 7-13.—eds.]

The Twentieth Century has seen an amazing growth in the study of childhood. Two ideas have been central to the way childhood has been studied in our time. One is the idea that children develop, and that their development is a maturational process. In part, maturational is, quite obviously, a biological process. Children grow bigger, their legs and arms grow longer, baby faces grow into older-looking faces, baby teeth fall out and are replaced by adult teeth, and so on. But maturational is also a psychological and social process. Baby talk, baby thoughts, and baby behavior are replaced by the talk, thoughts, and behavior of young children, then by that of older children, adolescents, and, finally, adults.

The second idea central to the recent study of childhood is the idea that growth takes place in identifiable stages. Recently I attended the birthday party of a neighbor child. When all the children at the party were gathered around to play a game, I suddenly noticed in those open, up-turned, faces that each child was in the process of getting new front teeth. Some children had one or more gaps, where their familiar baby teeth used to be. Others displayed at least one oversized tooth, entirely out of proportion, it seemed, with the surrounding face. The radiant, smiling faces of these children in "dental transition" began to strike me as very funny. It was as if the cosmic dentist were in the midst of working on them all at the same time. I began to wonder whether, if you were a child, you had to be in the process of getting new front teeth. Some children had one or more gaps, where their familiar baby teeth used to be. Others displayed at least one oversized tooth, entirely out of proportion, it seemed, with the surrounding face. The radiant, smiling faces of these children in "dental transition" began to strike me as very funny. It was as if the cosmic dentist were in the midst of working on them all at the same time. I began to wonder whether, if you were a child, you had to be in the process of getting new front teeth to get invited to this party. In any case, however the hostess had arrived at her guest list, all the children who actually came to this party were clearly at the stage of getting new front teeth.

As school teachers can testify, the stages of biological growth children experience can be correlated only roughly with their actual ages. Thus one child in a given class will tower over the rest, while another has yet to catch up with the class average. But the stages of biological, as well as intellectual and social, growth are at least broadly age-related.

Putting the idea of maturation and the idea of a sequence of age-related stages together we get the conception of child development as a maturational process with identifiable stages that fall into an at least roughly age-related sequence.

Clearly maturation has a goal; its goal is maturity. Early stages are superseded by later stages that are automatically assumed to have been less adequate. Thus the "stage/maturational model" of child development, as we can call it, which has found unquestioned acceptance in the study of childhood, has an evaluational bias built into it. Whatever the biological or psychological structures in a standard twelve-year-old turn out to be, the stage/maturational model of development guarantees, before any research is done at all, that those structures will be more nearly adequate than the superseded structures of, say, a six-year-old.

In many areas of human development this evaluational bias seems quite appropriate. We don't want grown-ups, or even adolescents, to have to chew their adult-sized steaks with baby teeth. But when it comes to philosophy, the assumption is quite out of place. There are several reasons for this.

First, there is no reason whatsoever to suppose that, simply by virtue of growing up in some standard way, adolescents or adults naturally achieve an appropriate level of maturity in handling philosophical questions -- in, for example, being able to discuss whether time might have had a beginning, or whether some supercomputer might appropriately be said to have a mind.

Second, it should be obvious to anyone who listens to the philosophical comments and questions of young children that these comments and questions have a freshness and inventiveness about them that is hard for an adult to match. Freshness and inventiveness are not the only criteria for doing philosophy well. Discipline and rigor also count. And children can be expected to be less disciplined and less rigorous than their adult counterparts. Still, in philosophy, as in poetry, freshness and inventiveness are much to be prized.

I recently asked a college class to respond, in writing, to Tim's question from the beginning of Philosophy and the Young Child. ("Papa, how can we be sure that everything is not a dream?") A mother in my class recalled that her daughter, then three and a half, had once asked, "Mama, are we 'live' or are we on video?" This child's question obviously bears an important resemblance to the traditional dream question. But it is also a delightfully fresh and new question, one that couldn't have been conceived before TV, indeed before the development of video cameras and VCR's.

Some features of the dream problem carry over
Greetings from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. And greetings especially to the new members and to the non-members who attended our recent and successful meeting in Burlington, Vermont. I found out first hand why so many persons told me that they really liked coming to that area: Burlington is a charming, beautiful little city, on the banks of a large and picturesque lake, surrounded by hills and within visual range of mountains. The facilities at UVM (the local designation for the University of Vermont) were excellent for our purposes. I refer you to Betsy Decyk’s account and description elsewhere in the newsletter for more details about the program (of which she was an able chair) of the conference.

This is my first column in the newsletter as your new president. To be honest, it is a bit daunting to be president of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers. I very much want to do a good job for this organization. AAPT is the only philosophy organization I have ever belonged to about which I have had no intellectual reservations and about which I have felt consistent and unqualified affection. AAPT exists to promote the effective teaching of our strange and difficult discipline, a goal which I endorse with energy and passion. I have yet to miss a one of our workshop conferences, and from every one I have returned to UT-K inspired and further enlightened by many of you who have come and presented workshops to teach philosophy better, more creatively, and more conscientiously.

One thing which makes being president daunting is following Terry Bynum. Terry started the workshop conferences back in 1976 with that first conference at Union College, and AAPT came into existence during the second conference two years later. He has consistently provided a vision of what philosophy teaching could and should become in the future. His is an impossible act to follow. I follow it only in the historical sense.

A second thing which will make taking on this job daunting is finding a successor for Richard Wright who has been our executive director for a long time. His shoes are virtually as large as Terry’s: he has organized our activities so that for the newsletter, conferences, membership, and finances, we have a clear picture of what we are doing, how much it is costing, and who we are in terms of membership. If Terry has been the heart of AAPT, then Richard has been the nervous system of our organization. Replacing him will not be easy. He has generously agreed to stay on until we can find a replacement.

The third thing which makes this job daunting is the whole constellation of challenges and problems which attend any organization which is, in essence, voluntary. All of our work is done by volunteers, all of whom do this as a labor of love and in addition to their full-time plus jobs as philosophers, teachers, administrators, advisors, committee members, library representatives, dissertation directors, interdisciplinary committee members, and so on. What is the best way to lead a volunteer organization, when the liveliest time of its existence is when it is holding its workshop conferences every other year?! What should we be doing the rest of the time? I am not sure. You already know some of what we do in answer to this question: we publish a newsletter (and I urge you to submit items to it; Mark and Daryl eagerly await their arrival); we sponsor meetings on teaching at the major
Impressions of a Teachers Conference

“You should join the AAPT. The people are friendly, they care about teaching, and their conferences are a lot of fun.” These words—the words of a colleague—came back to me as I was driving home from Vermont after my first AAPT conference in August. The phrase, “philosophy with a human face,” also kept running through my mind, which, I suppose, is a way of saying that, as far as I was concerned, my colleague had been proven right. Besides, no one else had ever asked me to jot down my impressions of a philosophical gathering before. An organization that not only wants to improve the teaching of philosophy but also takes an interest in the thoughts of its newest members—well, what more could anyone reasonably ask for?

Sitting in those uncomfortable desks in the classrooms during the conference, not to mention carrying around plastic trays at lunchtime or sleeping in the Spartan dormitory, made me feel like a student again. It proved to be a useful reminder. In the workshops I worried somewhat, as students sometimes do, that I would do well or at least follow the instructions. Once I found myself asking, “Did I miss something here, or could the workshop presenter have been clearer or better organized?” I wondered whether students sometimes blame themselves for the lapses of their teachers. Perhaps the good ones do, at least initially, and only later correct their errors in judgment. Anyway, it struck me just how important the little things are in the classroom and how much can go wrong. I resolved to be clearer in the future in my own teaching and always to keep in mind the students’ point of view. I also decided I would allow my students to stand up and stretch during class if they begin to suffer from excessive desk-induced pain—unless, of course, the topic under discussion concerns the later Wittgenstein.

The conference provided, however fleetingly, the elusive sense of community. Philosophy as commonly practiced tends to be a highly individualized activity, with each philosopher going his or her own way. But teachers of philosophy have similar tasks and share a common inner life. A number of the workshops I attended were centered on the familiar micro-decisions of teachers committed to the continuous improvement of their teaching: Should I use method A or method B in the classroom? Would it be better if I tried it this way rather than that way? I guess teachers need feedback as much as students do. In these workshops I discovered that many of my thoughts and experiences as a teacher were not unique and could be suitable topics for public discussion. I also discovered that other teachers had already tried some of the things I had only thought about trying in class and were successful. These discoveries in me a felt sense of confirmation: that my ideas about teaching philosophy had some validity and merit after all, that I was somehow on the right track. This renewed sense of confidence derived entirely, I think, from being part of the larger group—an unanticipated benefit of community, for which I am appreciative. It will make the fall semester a little bit easier to face.

One highlight of the conference, at least for me, was the session on philosophy clubs. For over two years I have been a club advisor, and I wanted to compare notes with other philosophers in a similar role. I suspect that good teachers sometimes try to make up for deficiencies in their own educations by giving their present students opportunities they wish they had when they were in school. Running a philosophy club is one way to do this. I was particularly pleased to see some students who have been active in clubs attend this session. They were intelligent and articulate and apparently all on fire with philosophy. When I asked what accounted for the fire, one student said he remembered a particular moment when some of his former assumptions had fallen away and he experienced the liberating power of philosophy. Creating the conditions for these decisive moments to occur is what every philosophy teacher should aim for, I think, whether in philosophy clubs, classrooms, or hallways. To investigate such moments is no doubt a matter for the aesthetics of teaching and learning. But that they do occur is beyond question. Why else would anyone ever go into philosophy? And why else would anyone ever join a philosophy club? To see genuinely interested students drawn to philosophy through a club confirmed my belief in the value of club activities. That such students are possible can only mean that some philosophy teachers must be doing something right.

I believe the next AAPT conference is planned for 1994. I hope I will be able to attend.

Thomas G. Miller
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The Eighth Annual Conference on Computing and Philosophy (CAP) has been scheduled for August 12-14, 1993 at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

This conference, which is co-sponsored by the APA Committee on the Use of Computers in the Profession, the Department of Philosophy at Carnegie Mellon, and the Center for the Advancement of Applied Ethics, has become the central meeting place for all aspects of computing and philosophy.

The Program Committee welcomes submissions dealing with, but not restricted to:

**The use of computers in the teaching of philosophy.** This may include their use in symbolic and informal logic as well as in the teaching of other courses in philosophy.

**The use of computers as research tools in philosophy.** This may include any substantive use of computers in areas such as electronic texts and communications as well as topics in logic, the philosophy of language or the philosophy of mind.

**The philosophical aspects of artificial intelligence.** This may include current theories and methods as well as relevant areas of the philosophy of science.

**The area of computer ethics.** This may include philosophical issues in the ownership of software, liability of software design, and privacy rights in the information age.

The conference format strongly discourages mere ‘paper reading.’ Speakers are urged to use computer-based or generated presentation materials wherever appropriate.

The CAP conference also serves as a demonstration site for philosophy software. Aside from exhibits of published software, works under development can be shown during a "Software Fair."

The deadline for both submissions (five-page abstract) and requests for software display during the Software Fair (equipment needs) is Monday, February 15th.

Materials for submission as well as general enquiries should be e-mailed to Robert Cavalier at rc2z@andrew.cmu.edu (or BITNET: rc2z@andrew). Snail Mail and telephone number: Robert Cavalier, CAAE, Smith Hall, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 (412/268-7643).

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**Critical Thinking Tests Available**

The California Academic Press has announced the publication of The California Critical Thinking Skills Test (C.C.T.S.T.) and The California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory (C.C.T.D.I.).


The test manuals for the C.C.T.S.T. and the C.C.T.D.I. supply validity and reliability information, the administration and the interpretation of both instruments.

Both the C.C.T.S.T. and the C.C.T.D.I. assessment instruments are based on the construct of critical thinking established by the Delphi Report. The Delphi Report, commissioned by the American Philosophical Association in 1987 and completed in 1990, represents a national consensus definition of critical thinking. It has been used by the U.S. Department of Education in their discussions of critical thinking in American Secondary and Post-Secondary schools. The full Delphi Report is available as "Critical Thinking: A Statement of Expert Consensus for Purposes of Educational Assessment and Instruction" (ERIC Doc. No. ED 315423).

For more information, contact California Academic Press, 217 La Cruz Ave., Millbrae, CA 94030.
Let us take as a rough-and-ready definition of academic cheating: any attempt to deceive for the purpose of a grade. This practice is known to us all. But is it a problem? I think so — a serious one, and in two ways: It is despicable and widespread. How widespread it is has been brought to light by various studies, but the individual teacher may come to realize this on his or her own. The moment of truth for me was inadvertently discovering four-fifths of my ethics class (of twenty-five students) in the act. However, the prevalence of cheating is almost superfluous given how contemptible it is; by this I mean (and I shall argue) that even a few instances of cheating will accomplish the evil that a great number would.

What exactly is wrong with cheating? A standard theoretical ethical approach would yield answers such as these:

- An egoist answer. "You only cheat yourself." This cliche is so obviously true (at least if not too much emphasis is placed on the "only") that I shall not dwell on it.

- A utilitarian answer. There are few if any acts whose consequences are confined to the agent. In the case of cheating, the resultant incompetence in a subject or skill area may jeopardize not only a cheat's career prospects but also the well-being or even lives of others; for example, a bridge collapses because an engineer copied someone else's answers on a test.

- A Kantian answer. Cheating shows a callous disregard of the rights and interests and very personhood of one's fellow students and the teacher and any others whom one dupes in the process. They are merely used for one's own ends.

I accept all of those answers, but, in my role as teacher, I have become acutely aware of another kind of evil (perhaps of a utilitarian sort) attendant on cheating: the undermining of educational possibilities in a course. There are three main reasons for this:

1. Life is short. There is precious little time to devote to teaching to begin with if one has (as I do) 100 students at all times as well as other professional responsibilities (not to mention a family life). I found that a significant portion of that time was being spent on the prevention, detection, investigation, confrontation, and prosecution of cheating.

2. The more I attempted to "outsmart" the cheats, e.g., by replacing homework essays with in-class essay exams, the more I was restricting the range of philosophical work my students could engage in.

3. The experience of being deceived can lead to teacher burnout. This is a natural response to the repeated betrayal of the teacher's good faith efforts at seriously studying and responding to (what was supposedly) one's students' writing. I myself was becoming paranoid: Any good paper was a plagiarized paper. (And, amazingly, I now know that this "paranoia" may even be largely justified.) I was becoming cynical, bitter, the typical teacher whom students hate ... because the teacher hates the students! It was becoming more and more: student versus teacher, two opposing roles becoming rigidified along moral grounds. Clearly this is the destruction of a learning environment.

I was led by these experiences to a genuine philosophical moment, i.e., I began to examine some fundamental assumptions. For example, I was moved to ask: Why should I be the upholder of the prevailing system of grading? (For if there were no grading, there would be no cheating.) I had never before actually reflected on why or even whether I ought to participate in the dispensing of "A's" and "C's" and "F's"; it just came...
with the territory.

It is easy to see that a prolonged, indeed lifelong, reflection on education and the meaning of life could result from this beginning; and I suppose that is now what I am embarked upon. But in the short space remaining, I would like to report on the practical upshot my reflections have had to date for cheating and teaching in my classes.

I must begin with a major caveat. I have attempted to find a solution for my particular situation, and I am not prepared to defend it as a panacea for all problems of cheating. The kind of course I have in mind is in introductory ethics, intended mainly for the non-philosophy major. I would hope that elements of what I shall propose would be applicable in other settings, but as of this date I am not certain it is fully satisfactory even in this one. Nevertheless, one year of experimentation has convinced me the approach is worth pursuing.

The heart of the matter is to alter the response — and, in the first instance, the teacher's response — to cheating. Until last year I saw cheating solely as something to be policed. I now think of that as a knee-jerk response. The results were as described above: Classes became war zones, and the teacher, the students, and education were the first casualties.

But a totally different response to cheating is possible. To adopt another image: When the tiger is attacking ... jump on and ride it! Here are the key particulars of my new approach, not only to cheating but to grading and teaching:

1. The student's grade for the course is based only on how much work the student does for the course. In a nutshell, for each hour of attendance and/or homework, the student receives one point, and points convert to letter grades in the standard way (e.g., 60 is the minimum passing grade and 100 is "A+").

2. Students are not required to submit written work to the teacher, but a student may submit work at any time for the teacher to review critically. Otherwise, students receive feedback from one another (a different classmate for every paper) since they receive points for time spent reading and commenting on one another's work.

3. The student assigns all points to him- or herself.

By way of justification of this system, I shall now discuss some of the predicted and actual results of its implementation:

1. **Student integrity has been enhanced.** Cheating in this course has been reduced to its purest form; it is almost effortless. I cannot and will not attempt to verify most of the students' self-assignment of points; if at the end of the course a student tells me she spent 100 hours on the course, then, unless I happen upon a deception, she will probably get an "A+", even if she did nothing but attend class. I emphasize this repeatedly to the students. It becomes a topic of discussion, part of the content of the course. The burden of honesty is squarely on the student's shoulders; it is not a matter of playing a game of hide and seek, but solely (or as much as is humanly possible) a matter of integrity. This appears to have its intended effect.

2. **The students' attention has been "hooked" to the content of the course.** Most of the courses I teach are about ethics or have a significant ethical component. A standard problem has been to get the students to care about the subject. Grades are definitely something my students care about. By bringing issues about grades front and center, a host of possibilities has arisen for broadening my students' ethical concern. For example, grading itself is a practical issue to which they are encouraged to apply the theories we study. And the subject of cheating lends naturally to considering honesty and integrity, Mill and Kant, etc., *ad infinitum* ("Why be moral?" = "Why not cheat in this course?"). One of my most effective assignments now is to ask my students to write about deceptive practices which they discover in their chosen careers and which may even be a part of their professional training at our university.

3. **Teacher burnout is averted.** While on the one hand the opportunity to cheat has been enhanced to the maximum, the incentive to cheat has been greatly reduced. There are no exams, and nothing is graded on quality; furthermore, submissions to the teacher are voluntary and do not affect the grade in any way. Therefore on any occasion when I, the teacher, sit down with a student's paper before me, I can be confident that what I am reading and thinking about and commenting on has been written by, and probably even written thoughtfully by, the student. I am happy to do this job. This is what it's all about!

4. **The classroom ambience is much improved.** There is no longer any reason whichever for a student to ask, "Will this be on the test?" (This in itself is worth the "costs" of implementing this system!) I myself know that when I enter the classroom, there is only one thing to discuss: philosophy. What a breath of fresh air. Even if the students brought no positive change of attitude of their own, I think the effect of mine would improve things for everyone; but I also have reason to believe that the students themselves develop a new outlook.
5. The amount of time my students spend on homework has increased dramatically. Typically my students have balked at spending more than one or two hours a week on homework. The university catalogue stipulates a norm of two hours of homework per class hour. That works out to approximately eight hours (classroom plus homework) per week per course, and that in turn comes to approximately 100 hours for the semester (allowing for a reasonable number of missed classes and assignments). Now that the course grade has been tied explicitly to work hours, those hours have, I estimate, at least doubled.

By way of further justification, I shall address a number of objections to this system:

1. The cheats are likely to get away with cheating. It's not fair to the other students in the class. Premise is true; conclusion does not follow. Switching over to this system of grading, I had to make a choice: Am I more concerned about punishment (justice?) or education (consequences)? Yes, it grates that cheats may get a higher grade than conscientious students. But when one considers that situation in toto, the fact is that the resources directed to dealing with cheating must be diverted from teaching. Have students' interests, or the interests of education, really been best served when the administration of justice has vindicated their right to a superior grade, but meanwhile deprived them of the opportunity to, say, receive additional feedback on their work (due to the diversion of the teacher's time and energy or the dissolution of the teacher's morale)?

2. This system rewards quantity, not quality. Explicitly, yes. That is what makes the system objective and easy for the students to administer. But does this then undercut one of the functions of grading, not to mention teaching, namely to foster good work? I think the answer is that, while quantity is certainly not sufficient for quality, it is by and large necessary for it; and that necessary ingredient has been sorely lacking heretofore among my students under the previous system. The issue is not whether this is a perfect system (none is), nor even if it is the best possible; but only if it is better than the known alternatives. And for students such as mine, under working conditions such as mine, this seems to be superior to the main alternative available to me simply because it does appear to increase dramatically the amount of work the students do for the course. But furthermore, there is still in place — indeed, for reasons already given, I think much more so than before — opportunity for directly fostering quality; e.g., I am wholeheartedly available to critique student work and ideas.

3. The teacher who employs this system is not doing the job he or she is paid to do, namely, grade. I am paid first and foremost to educate (and do research and professional service, etc.). It is true that I am also bound to turn in grades for all of my students. But my understanding of academic freedom and academic collegiality (which is reinforced by the faculty constitution at my institution, for which I am grateful) is that it is up to the educator to judge the best use of that grading system for the promotion of education... in just the way the educator is responsible to choose and develop texts, topics, assignments, classroom formats, and so forth. Here is one of those cases where reflection on a previously unexamined assumption has proved fruitful; for once I began to think about it, I could see no reason why the requirement that I hand in grades also requires that I be judge, jury, and executioner of my students.

4. Isn't this just a way of reducing your work load? It is true that, so far, not many students have voluntarily submitted their papers to me for critique. (I am working on increasing the percentage; it is too early to tell whether this is intrinsic to the system or just a bug.) However, it does not necessarily follow that my work load has been reduced, and it certainly does not follow that I am shirking my responsibilities. For an educator in a position such as mine, who must teach four courses per semester, with no teaching assistant, and who maintains a respectable involvement in research and other professional and campus activities, a forty-plus-hour week on the job (and covering twelve months, not just nine) is achieved even without critiquing a single student paper. The survival mechanism I have employed heretofore is to limit severely the amount of written work I require of my students. But one of the truly liberating aspects of implementing this new system has been to sever the cord between the amount of work I assign to my students and the amount of feedback I provide them. Specifically, I no longer believe that the individual teacher has an obligation to peruse every item that a student writes. Of course to do so is an ideal, and I would dearly love to be able to (I really love teaching!). But it is not practical in the situation most of us find ourselves in, and to retain that ideal in the face of a countermanding reality is to sacrifice the end for the means. One learns to write by writing; furthermore, the teacher is not the only person capable of providing meaningful feedback. We must make use of all available resources. The system described here attempts to do this. (Nevertheless, I am prepared to give up much of the limited time I would otherwise spend with my family to review any work that my students want me to.)

5. This system contributes to grade inflation. Yes it does (at least if "inflation" means simply "increase"
and not "undue increase"). But, as B.F. Skinner would have reminded us, this is not necessarily a bad thing. Does it indicate failure on the teacher's part when most of the students receive "A's" ... or does it indicate success? I used to make my dean quite happy because the average grade in my courses was "C+." Now my dean may be very unhappy, but my students are doing a lot more work, presumably learning more, and also not leaving the class with a really bad attitude toward philosophy.

6. The system is not fair to students in other teacher's sections who may get lower grades for the same amount of work. Life is not perfectly fair. This consequence of my implementing this system is nothing new; e.g., different teachers have vastly different grading standards even when quality is the criterion. But there may be an overriding good that allows such inequalities to persist; in the case of grading generally, I believe the overriding good is the scope for individual judgment by teachers (accompanied by ongoing consultation with colleagues and others as a matter of course). Furthermore, inequities like this often even out; what student has not received as many undeserved "A's" as "F's"?

7. The system is not fair to colleagues whose sections may be canceled when all the students flock to yours because of the easy grades. I haven't stopped beating my wife, either. The grades in my course are not "easy" ... at least if the student does not cheat. The honest student must put in far more work than he or she would typically anticipate in order to earn a high or even an "average" grade. But judging from the anonymous course evaluations filled out by my students, as well as the quality of classroom interactions, cheating is minimal and working is maximal. Another response to this objection is as above: Life is not perfectly fair (although it sometimes "evens out"). I no doubt lost many students in the past to colleagues who had more engaging classroom presences, or who graded less stringently, or who taught a subject more to the student's liking, or whatever.

8. The system fails to meet the responsibility an educational institution has to the society at large, namely, to assure competence in the given subject or skill area. My first response is as above, that, compared to the alternative, this system appears to fare better in virtue of the increased amount of work it inspires among the students. That may be the best I can or need answer in my particular circumstances. However, the broader issue is whether the sort of grading or evaluating that inspires cheating has any place in the educational setting. I suppose I agree that it does. But the solution to the perversion of education would then, I believe, lie along the lines of the English system, where formal testing is kept separate from instruction. Obviously that sort of system is prone to problems as well, for example, the standardization of curricula. But at least it may be capable of preserving much of the improved educational environment of course and classroom as described herein.

9. This system is too radical to implement fully. It should perhaps be tested as one component of the total course grade. My own experience has been that it is (almost) all or nothing. If the students suspect that, in the end, I am in control and can ignore their autonomy in grading, they are likely to revert to old attitudes. The power of (traditional) grading to distort the social and educational environment should not be underestimated. For example, I have still not completely divorced point-assignments from the notion of right and wrong answers on some of the reasoning homework I assign in my ethics courses; and what fights we do get into over a half point! But also I think this is true for the teacher as well as the student. One of the more interesting aspects of this experience for me has been to discover the depths of resistance I have to giving up control of evaluating my students' work. This was most blatant the very first time I tried the system, for I completely violated my students' trust by lowering the grades of several of them on the basis of my quality judgments of their work — I just couldn't help it! After making amends for this, I have found that old attitude cropping up in other places. Now, it would be one thing if there were some point to having such an attitude; then my fighting it would be like fighting a bad conscience. But the various considerations I have adduced in this essay have made me, to say the least, suspicious of this attitude; and so I am now treating it like a bad habit.

This is surely not the end of the dialogue. Not only is there room for much more discussion, but the empirical aspects of the matter remain to be tested thoroughly. I have only used the system for a couple of semesters so far; furthermore, much will obviously depend with this system as any other, on how it is employed, including personal variables. But I do think early indications are positive enough to justify continuing the experiment.

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Notes

[2] Sissela Bok has of course presented a much more comprehensive, and subtle, analysis of the wrongness of deception, of which cheating is a species, in Lying (NY: Vintage, 1989). You can be sure that this is required reading in my courses.

[3] Employing a play on words, my claim could also be expressed in this way: "cheating" is a perversion of "teaching".

[4] To use another metaphor, the "cure" was at least as harmful as the disease.

[5] Actually there are several checks in place, but only because they are almost unavoidable; I will not intentionally ignore cheating ... just not seek it out or try to prevent it.

[6] And given that a full-time student is expected to take five courses, the student work load is, appropriately enough, forty hours. Being a full-time student is a full-time job.

[7] There is a rough analogy in our criminal justice system, where it is more important to protect the innocent than to punish the guilty. Of course in that case a complicating factor is that the punishment of the guilty may itself be an important way of protecting the innocent. Nonetheless our system has chosen, for better or worse; and I have chosen similarly.

[8] An even quicker reply to the objection is that cheating under the standard system is rampant and goes largely undetected; it is hard to imagine that there could be more than there already is, and, as indicated earlier, some reason to believe that this new system actually reduces the incidence.

[9] This is certainly not intended to rule out professional and collegial consultation. I consider my writing of this essay, for example, to be a way of eliciting thoughtful critiques of the system I am advocating. Furthermore, the system did not arise *ex nihilo*; I have been picking up ideas for years from discussions and reading.

[10] I like to think of myself as "marking" rather than "marking" when I review and critique a student's written work. It is important to distinguish conceptually between the kind of evaluating that provides meaningful and helpful feedback and the very different kind that involves assigning a grade [subject to indefinite interpretation] for the purpose of a permanent and public transcript.

[11] Although perhaps there is an ethical objection to my willingness to sacrifice family for students.

[12] At my university this issue is moot because of tight student schedules and an insufficient number of faculty to staff the courses we would like to offer.

[13] And if I myself am true to form, I will be trying something completely different two years hence!

[14] I would like to thank those who attended my seminar on cheating at the 9th IWCTP; I believe they will see their concerns addressed in this essay. I would also like to thank the AAPT officers and other members for putting on the conference itself; if you haven't been to one of these, you are really missing something. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the helpfulness of an ongoing dialogue on teaching with my colleague, P.-M. Coste.

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**From the President**

(Cont'd from Page 2)

divisional meetings of the APA; we will try more systematically to connect with other special interest organizations and invite them to send their members to our conferences to present workshops on their various subject matters. And we will continue to organize and put on the largest, most interesting, conferences on teaching philosophy in our whole discipline, conferences to which families are invited and in which there is an atmosphere of cooperation and dialogue.

I believe that Terry is right in his claim that electronic communication will become a major mode of scholarly communication in the near future. I invite you to get on e-mail and to send us your e-mail address. Perhaps before too long we can have a newsletter on e-mail and have some extensive interactive exchanges about teaching, using this medium. My own e-mail addresses are:

Bitnet: hamlin@utkvx
Internet: hamlin@utkvx.utk.edu

Please let us hear from you: send us suggestions, offers of help, names of possible recruits. Tell your department heads and deans about the existence of our organization, about its purpose, and about our workshop conferences. Plans are being made for the next conference. We will let you know when and where as soon as we can. Most likely it will be at the same time of the year as the last one, over the first weekend of August. We will be holding elections; exercise your citizenship -- VOTE! (I will not add "early and often!"). Let me and the rest of the officers hear from you. And have a good Fall term.
into the video problem. Thus just as I might have had the
thought, in my dream, that I am awake, so the word 'live'
might appear on the screen when I am watching a video.
But some features are new. Unlike the dream problem,
the video problem suggests that our lives might already
be there on tape, just waiting to be shown. That idea
suggests another familiar doctrine in philosophy, namely,
fatalism.

So children are often fresh and inventive thinkers. All too often, maturity brings with it staleness and
uninventiveness. This is a second reason for rejecting the
evaluational assumption built into the stage/maturational
model of child development.

Third, Descartes taught us to do philosophy by
"starting over." Instead of assuming the correctness of
what my teachers have taught me, or the society around
me seems to accept, I am to make a fresh beginning to see
if I can show by some means of my very own that I really
do know whatever it is I claim to know. As college
students soon learn in their first philosophy course, it isn't
easy to rid oneself of adult assumptions, even temporarily,
and even for a fairly circumscribed purpose. It
doesn't come easy, that is, for adults. Children have far less of a
problem. In a certain way, then, adult philosophers who
follow Descartes in trying to "start over" are trying to
make themselves as little children again, even if only
temporarily. That is hard for adults. It is unnecessary for
children.

It isn't that "starting over" is all there is to doing
philosophy. That isn't true at all. But learning to be
comfortable with "naive" questions is an important part
of doing philosophy well. Thus for this reason, as well as
for the other two, when it comes to doing philosophy, the
evaluational assumption of the stage/maturational model
gets things all wrong.

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Like The New Yorker's view of the United
States, my view of children as little philosophers is
certainly a distortion. But so also is the conventional
view of childhood as a development through a sequence of
roughly age-related stages, a development that is
aimed at maturity. Sometimes, it seems, the best way to
correct one distortion is to pair it with an appealing, but
opposed, distortion. I hope that that is true in this case.

Clearly the philosopher's view of childhood I
have been presenting has implications for the way we
should conceive childhood. Does it also have implica-
tions for the way we should conceive philosophy? I think
it does. Let me explain briefly what I think some of those
implications are.

In my personal career as a philosopher it was
actually something of a crisis in my own teaching that
first led me to think about the connection between
philosophy and children. The period was that of the so-
called "student unrest" in the very early 70's. At that time
I had already been teaching philosophy for over ten years.
But I had suddenly found teaching large introductory
courses much more difficult, and, it seemed to me, much
less successful than ever before. My students had begun
to suspect that philosophy was an "establishment" plot to
distract them from thinking about the ills that afflicted the
society -- and especially, of course, from thinking about the
Vietnam War.

Many of the male students in my classes were
facing the prospect of being drafted to fight and perhaps
be killed in a war they didn't believe in. Under the threat
of being drafted I had myself joined the Navy 15 years
earlier. During the last gasps of the Korean War and, in
what turned out to be a premature anticipation of a U.S.
involvement in Vietnam, I had even been trained for six
months in the Vietnamese language. But when, in the
60's we actually did commit troops to Vietnam I opposed
the war there and took part in several demonstrations
against it. During one such demonstration at our local Air
Force Base in Western Massachusetts I was even arrested
in the company of the then President of Amherst College,
William Ward. But the idea that my beloved subject,
philosophy, might be an establishment plot to take stud-
ents' minds off that horrible war was so bizarre to me
that I didn't know how to try to dislodge it.

Superficially, this conspiracy theory of philoso-
phy had a great deal going for it. Hardly any of my
university students had encountered philosophy in high
school. So they were not used to the idea that philosophy
was as well established an academic discipline as math or
history or chemistry. Furthermore, philosophy seemed to
them to have no practical application. So far as they could
tell, it was something that popped up suddenly and quite
unexpected in college. Moreover, it didn't even, like
music or sports studies, support a pastime that any people
they knew actually enjoyed engaging in. Graduate study
in philosophy seemed only to prepare yet other people to
be teachers, and especially, of course, of the war?

Conspiracy theories are very hard to dislodge. I
sensed that an indirect attack on this one might be more
effective than a direct one. But what sort of indirect
attack?

One night as I was reading a bedtime story to our
youngest child, I got an idea. The story I was reading, it
occurred to me, raised the very same philosophical issue I was to discuss in a big lecture that next day. Why not take the children's story I was reading to class the next day and begin my lecture by reading it to my students. Then I could say, "Do you remember worrying about this issue when you were a child?" The point would be to convince as many of them as possible that what we were doing in philosophy class was actually the continuation of an activity some of them had already begun as children. 

More generally, the line I began to develop was that philosophy is, for many members of the human race, partly, no doubt, because philosophy is sometimes a music. It gets relatively little support from society, socially subversive activity, but also partly because philosophy serves little or no obviously practical purpose.

I have revised that view of philosophy somewhat over the years; I have also collected support for it and written it up in a couple of books. There is now considerable evidence in the literature that young children, many of them, make comments, ask questions, and engage in reasoning that compares well with classic passages from the history of philosophy. Such spontaneous comments, questions, and chains of reasoning tend to disappear at age seven or so -- just about when children become settled into school and internalize the reward-structures of our society. Needless to say, those reward-structures make almost no place for philosophy.

That doesn't mean, though, that once children are socialized out of raising philosophical questions on their own, they lose their gift for doing philosophy well. The contrary, I think, is true. Whether one goes into schools with Mat Lipman's materials from his Philosophy-for-Children Program or with something like what I have found is that the kids I meet in the classroom soon reinvent the old questions of philosophy that are so dear to me have any natural resonance among young people today. What I usually find is that the kids I meet in the classroom soon reinvent the history of philosophy. And that reinvention confirms my belief that I am dealing with something of natural and direct importance to human thought and experience.

Let me conclude with one rather extensive bit of evidence for this conclusion.

In Germany in June I read three Platonic dialogues with German children -- the Laches, which deals with the question as to what bravery is, the Lysis, which is concerned with friendship, and the Euthyphro, which, as I presented it in Germany, is concerned with the problem of rational authority. I interpreted Socrates's question in the Euthyphro, "Is it pious because the gods love it or do they love it because it is pious?" as a question about whether it is morally defensible to let anyone -- parent, teacher, rabbi, priest, or even God -- decide for us what we ought to do. Either that authority figure has a good reason for telling us to do such and such a thing or not. If the authority has a good reason, then surely we should look to that reason for guidance, and not simply to the fact that the authority tells us to do something. Alternatively, perhaps, the authority has no good reason. But then we are not ourselves justified in doing what we are told by the authority figure to do.

I have also used the Euthyphro in a less generalized way -- not to discuss the problem of rational authority as such, but rather to discuss the religious idea of holiness. On one such occasion I worked with a rabbi in a very good Hebrew day school. With his two seventh-grade classes I first read Leviticus 19, which presents a myriad of different commandments that illustrate the vast compass of Jewish law. We then focused our attention on the specific commandment of what is called sha'atnet in verse 19: "You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; nor shall there come upon you a garment of cloth made of two kinds of stuff."

I passed out to the kids the following story I had made up, which, as you will see, centers on Socrates's question from the Euthyphro.
occurred to me, raised the very same philosophical issue I was to discuss in a big lecture that next day. Why not take the children’s story I was reading to class the next day and begin my lecture by reading it to my students. Then I could say, “Do you remember worrying about this issue when you were a child?” The point would be to convince as many of them as possible that what we were doing in philosophy class was actually the continuation of an activity some of them had already begun as children. More generally, the line I began to develop was that philosophy is, for many members of the human race, quite as natural an activity as playing games or making music. It gets relatively little support from society, partly, no doubt, because philosophy is sometimes a socially subversive activity, but also partly because philosophy serves little or no obviously practical purpose.

I have revised that view of philosophy somewhat over the years; I have also collected support for it and written it up in a couple of books. There is now considerable evidence in the literature that young children, many of them, make comments, ask questions, and engage in reasoning that compares well with classic passages from the history of philosophy. Such spontaneous comments, questions, and chains of reasoning tend to disappear at age seven or so---just about when children become settled into school and internalize the reward-structures of our society. Needless to say, those reward-structures make almost no place for philosophy.

That doesn’t mean, though, that once children are socialized out of raising philosophical questions on their own, they lose their gift for doing philosophy well. The contrary, I think, is true. Whether one goes into schools with Mat Lipman’s materials from his Philosophy-for-Children Program or with something like what I described at the beginning of this talk, one finds that children can be spectacularly good at doing philosophy.

I spent the month of June reading Plato with German schoolkids in Hamburg and Lübeck. This project in Germany is just the latest in a long series of forays into school both in this country and abroad. My classes in Germany this time were observed by teachers and graduate students of the University of Hamburg. After one of those sessions I had a long chat with a university student who had observed my class and had then participated in a seminar session in which I had discussed what I was doing. “I think I understand what you are trying to do,” this student said, “but what I still don’t understand is why you do it.”

Why do I do it? Well, one very important reason why is that I find in my encounters with children a welcome confirmation of the significance of my subject. The place of philosophy in our colleges and universities, though only modest, is well assured. Nobody would think of founding a new liberal arts college or a major university without including in it a philosophy department. But are there good reasons for this assured place in higher education, or does it rest simply on unexamined tradition?

When I go into an elementary school, or a junior or senior high school, and especially into one in which there has been no philosophy previously, or at least none at the age level of the schoolkids I am working with, I have a chance to judge freshly whether the old questions of philosophy that are so dear to me have any natural resonance among young people today. What I usually find is that the kids I meet in the classroom soon reinvent the history of philosophy. And that reinvention confirms my belief that I am dealing with something of natural and direct importance to human thought and experience.

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I passed out to the kids the following story I had made up, which, as you will see, centers on Socrates’s question from the Euthyphro.
Ruth and Sam had just come out of a class at Maimonides School, where they had been discussing the part of Leviticus 19:19 that says, "You shall not put on cloth from a mixture of two kinds of materials."

Ruth: "That seems pretty silly to me, that business about not wearing any clothing made of two kinds of material."

Sam: "It's part of shaatnets, you know."

Ruth: "I know. But it still seems pretty silly to me."

Sam: "Well, that's what it says; that's what God told Moses to tell the people of Israel."

Ruth: "I know, but look. One of my jackets is 100% cotton. Another one is 55% cotton and 45% polyester. How can it matter to God, which jacket I wear? Surely He's got better things to think about."

Sam: "Well, you can't just pick and choose, you know. Either you take the Torah seriously, or you don't."

Ruth: "But God wants me to use my own brain, doesn't He? So the law here has got to make some sense to me. I can see the point of the law against stealing. And I think leaving some of the harvest for the poor is important. But this cloth business is ridiculous."

Sam: "Okay, sure, some of the laws have to do with ethics. And that's part of being holy. Anybody can understand the ethics part. Holy includes being ethical, but, of course, you can be ethical without being holy."

Ruth: "Okay, if you're so smart, what does being holy mean?"

Sam: "That's what the whole chapter tells you. To be holy is to do all those things we are told by God to do."

Ruth: "Okay, but here's a question for you. Is doing all those things holy because God commands them, or does God command them because they are holy things to do?"

Sam: "That sounds like a trick question."

Ruth: "Well, it is, in a way. But it's not just a trick question. It's also important. Look, your mom and dad want you to eat a balanced diet because it's good for you, right? It isn't good for you because your mom and dad want you to eat it. Right?"

Sam: "Okay, eating a balanced diet would be good for you, whether or not your mom or dad wanted you to eat it. I get that."

Ruth: "Good, So is doing all those things you have to do to keep the law like eating a balanced diet? Are they doing holy things, things that make you more holy, whether or not God wanted you to do them?"

Sam: "I'm not so sure. What's the alternative?"

Ruth: "Well, the alternative is that God's wanting us to do these things is what makes them holy. It's like, if pickles and strawberry ice cream are my favorite kinds of food, they are my favorites because I like them better than anything else. That's what makes they my favorites. It's not that I like them better than anything else because they are my favorites."

Sam: "Okay. So what difference does all this make, anyway?"

Ruth: "Well, if doing those things is holy because God tells us to do them, there then doesn't have to be anything that all those different things have in common -- not stealing, not lying, leaving some of the harvest for the poor, not worshiping idols, and not wearing garments with two kinds of materials. It might be that all those very different things have in common is that God just happens to want us to do them. And God's wanting us to do that is what makes them holy, or anyway makes us a little more holy when we do them."

Sam: "Maybe I get it now. If doing all these very different things is doing holy things just because God wants us to do them, then there may not be anything they all have in common, except that God wants us to do them. That's the bottom line. It's like your favorite kinds of food, pickles and strawberry ice cream, don't have anything in common, except that you like them better than anything else."

Ruth: "Yeah! So which is it? Is doing those things holy because God wants us to do them, or does God want us to do them because they are holy?"

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After I had read this story with those seventh-graders I asked them each to write down on a slip of paper how they thought Ruth's question should be answered and why. I told them that after they finished doing that, we would discuss the question together.

As you may know, the answers to Plato's Eur-
thyphro question to be found in the history of philosophical theology, fall pretty neatly into three camps. First, there is the camp of the so-called Theological Rationalists, people who suppose that God has reasons for everything He commands and that these reasons are, by themselves, a fully adequate justification for us to do the things God commands us to do. According to the opposing position, Theological Voluntarism, God is not in any way limited in what He commands, not even by reason, and the only finally satisfactory reason for us to do what God commands is simply that God wants us to do those things. The third position is an effort to combine, somehow, Rationalism and Voluntarism.

What those seventh-graders did -- as naturally as a baby bird makes its first flight -- was to reinvent the familiar three positions, though the directness and simplicity of their modes of expression made each of the positions, if anything, even more attractive than in the classical texts.

Consider Theological Rationalism. It's great strength is that it liberates us from the necessity to think of God's commands as merely willful and arbitrary. One student put that point this way:

If [had] God told us to kill, steal, and commit adultery, would those be holy things to do? I don't think so. I think these things [we are commanded to do] are holy and God wants us to do them because they are holy.

Yet Voluntarism is also attractive to the religious believer. It puts God at the center of things. As one child put the point, "The only reason for something to be holy is that God makes it holy. So how can God want us to do something because He thinks it is holy?"

It is also important to Voluntarists to be able to reject the idea that God and God's power are limited by anything. "He can do anything He wants," wrote one student; "so why would He have to have a reason?"

The Combined Position also had eloquent defenders. Here, from one of those seventh-graders, is an incisive statement of that position:

It's on two levels. First, God made them holy. And then He wanted us to do them because they are holy.

The headmaster of the school I was visiting attended one of my sessions. Later he sent me a xerox of the relevant passage in Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed in which Maimonides discusses the Euthyphro question. Maybe he thought we should have been reading Maimonides before the kids began to formulate their own positions. He didn't say. But I like to think he was impressed by how good the kids were at reinventing Maimonides.

I would go further. Though I myself like to teach Maimonides in my medieval philosophy classes, I would say that the kids in those two classes -- if you put all their responses together -- did better than Maimonides.

In any case, whether I am discussing the problem of rational authority with schoolkids in Germany or the problem of holiness with kids in a Hebrew day school in this country, or, with children anywhere, the question of what makes a person brave, or how you tell whether one thing is the cause of another, or whether time, or the universe, has a beginning, I continue to be impressed by how quickly and how naturally these problems become their very own problems. When I see those little eyes sparkle and those hands shoot up, I know I am in the right field. If you, as a college teacher of philosophy, have never tried doing philosophy with kids, you have missed one of the real blessings of life. If philosophy didn't exist, kids could invent it!

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SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

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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, Internet 76170.2351@compuserve.com; or Mark Lenssen, Internet 71165.533@compuserve.com.

Please call us at 419-447-6442 (Tiffin University) or 419-772-2197 (Ohio Northern University) for guidelines for submissions.—The editors
Philosophy teachers should make it a point not to forget what it was like to be a student. So may we suggest that you write an essay, “What Is It Like to Be an Intro Philosophy Student?”; in doing so it will occur to you that students are a constant reminder that you probably have a tendency to interpret a philosophy article all wrong. For instance, we bet that you probably interpreted Nagel’s now-famous and often-referred-to work, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?”, as an essay dealing primarily with consciousness. Well, do we have news for you. That interpretation is ALL WRONG. What that article is REALLY about is the question whether being a bat is a viable alternative lifestyle for humans. And here is the answer to that question:

“Humans could not become bats and expect to live very long, because they have their own special way of living. They sleep hanging upside down during the day. . . . Humans are not used to such behaviors. They would be doing something that was totally irregular from their normal routines of daily life. Most humans usually like to sleep lying down. This explains my theory that no mammals can take the place of another and expect to survive.”

This answer, however, raises a couple of additional questions: If humans did get used to sleeping while they hang upside down during the day, what would happen to the bats whom they would thereby be taking the place of? and can they expect to survive for any length of time whatsoever? So when you finish writing your article on “What Is It Like to Be an Intro Philosophy Student?”, you might want to write one in which you answer the proposed question. You, too, could end up with an article that gets referred to and quoted a lot; why, you might even get invited to be on Donahue and become real famous. However, lest you become so taken with your own thought in writing this landmark-to-be article in philosophy, you will need to keep telling yourself:

“What I think is not the only thought that could exist.”

This will ensure humility; after all, your thought MIGHT BE WRONG. Not very likely, we agree; but logically possible.

Suppose you were to ask us whether you can put yourself in your students’ place. We weren’t real sure that could be done so we consulted with our research staff here at the QQs Center and this is what we were told:

“Putting yourself truly in someone’s body is basically impossible, but you can try to empathize to the best of your ability. This brings psychiatrists into the picture, but even they can sometimes not get on the level of some people, and if they succeed, it is only into the person’s head.”

Now you might think that, given the above answer, our staff misunderstood the question. After all, you might say, your question had absolutely nothing to do with putting yourself in someone else’s BODY; and besides, what do psychiatrists have to do with the price of beans on Sunday? And why is it possible for them to get into a person’s HEAD if you can’t even get into someone’s BODY? what’s so special about PSYCHIATRISTS ANYWAY??!!??! All we can say is that such a maniacal response to our staff’s answer indicates that you are a very shallow and disturbed person because if you don’t see how it brings psychiatrists into the picture then you probably should start seeing one since you obviously don’t see things the way your normal colleagues and students do.

However, because we anticipated ranting such as this, we took it upon ourselves to speak with Doctor Reality who, as you might recall, is on staff here. Doctor Reality said that even though you aren’t normal you don’t have to be alarmed and that Descartes wasn’t normal either but that doesn’t mean he wasn’t SMART. To prove the point, Doctor Reality gave us a mini-lecture on Descartes and we are happy to share it with you:

“According to him, people are constantly sleeping and life is basically what occurs in their dreams. So, as we are sleeping, we create our lives, the people in them.
and the surroundings in which the entire episode takes place. This attitude could be most strongly interpreted as man being able to complete his life ultimately without hardly having to interact with any other real human because he himself believes that he creates and lives his own world and interacts with people while he sleeps and dreams, thus creating all of the real people himself.”

In sum, said Doctor Reality,

“In Descartes’ theory, the central idea is based upon the mind being where the entire world as you as a human see everything happening and where you partake in life as well, all while you are asleep.”

Furthermore,

“Descartes did not believe that something could be real just for the pure sake of being real.”

In light of this, we take back what we said; there’s no point in your going to a psychiatrist because that would only be a real person that you created. Besides, you are constantly sleeping anyway, all while partaking in life. And if something is going to be real, then by golly it had better have a reason because it’s not going to get away with being real for its own sake.

Now the other side of the coin is that your dreams can deceive you:

“The dreams we have may be somewhat real reality wise and then sometimes the dreams may be totally unprobable in real life. These dreams may give us extraordinary powers of some sort or give us some kind of wealth unattainable to us in real life. This is what Descartes meant when he stated that dreams can be deceiving.”

You may find all this Cartesianism confusing, what with you always sleeping and creating all the real people yourself while at the same time dreams being only somewhat real reality wise and real things not being able to be real just for the pure sake of being real, not to mention the fact that Descartes himself stated that dreams can be deceiving. Even we got confused and felt a case of the RTs (Reality Troubles) coming on; first we started to wonder whether the world was made of ghost particles and if it is can we really explain anything. So we went to Doctor Reality, described the situation, and got this response:

“If the world is full of ghost particles and reality can not be defined until it is observed and the one doing the observing is part of reality then most things can be explained.”

At first we were very relieved to know that most things can be explained even though we weren’t sure just how. But then, alone in our Executive Suite at the Qqs Center, we began wondering if we could doubt the existence of everything but ourselves and what would happen if we did. It was a good thing we went immediately back to Doctor Reality for another consultation before waiting until we had a full-blown case of RTs, for we found solace and reassurance:

“. . . it is impossible to doubt existence of everything except ourselves. We need the many things that surround us in order to make ourselves function. If it wasn’t for knowledge we wouldn’t be able to think, if it wasn’t for oxygen we wouldn’t be able to live, and so on. The existence of most things allows us to live normal lives or just live period. Today in life, we depend so much on our services that are provided that we wouldn’t be able to survive without them.”

But our solace and reassurance was short-lived, for we realized that the above response only raised some further questions like, if we doubted the existence of our house mortgage, did that mean we didn’t have to pay it? And what is it to just live period? might one just live comma or semi-colon? Furthermore, how can WE depend on our OWN services? And does everybody feel the same way?

This brings up the problem of the knowledge of other minds. We got to thinking how neat it would be if everyone knew everything about every person’s mental states. But when we mentioned this to our research staff this is what they said:

“There would be no individualism if everyone knew everything about every person’s mental states. People would be manipulated because everyone else would know what made you tick. Events would occur to purposely make you happy, and then horrible things would happen to you as far down as possible. All because other people knew empirically what cause you to go into certain mental states.”

Naturally we hadn’t thought of such dire consequences; it must be awful for events to occur that would make you happy on purpose and then no sooner do you turn around than WHACK! -- something horrible occurs that takes you as far down as you can go. Of course the person doing all this to you would first have to ask you, “How low can you go-o-o?” And we would be willing to bet dollars to doughnuts that the question will have nothing to do with your doing the Limbo Rock.
Quotable Quotes
(Cont'd from Page 16)

This column can be summarized in one sentence: If you sleep during the day hanging upside down, don’t expect any real people to try to deceive you into thinking you can do the Limbo Rock in that position.

In closing, we offer you a QQ to consider when writing your to-be-famous article, “What Is It Like to Be an Intro Philosophy Student?”:

“I would say that I bullshit more than I brainstorm but I think about my bullshit carefully.”

Mary Ann Carroll
Department of Philosophy and Religion
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC 28608

Great AAPT Conference
(Cont'd from Page 1)

of the workshops that were offered, and it would have been terrific (though tiring) to go to all of them!

There were some friends from past conferences who did not make it to this AAPT conference. We missed you! Please plan to come in 1994!

Finally, if any of you wish to serve on the Program Committee for 1994, please fill out the form included in this issue of AAPT News [Form appears on Page 19] and send it back to me!

Teach well, everybody!

Betsy Decyk
California State University at Long Beach
Long Beach, CA
The Bulletin Board is a new feature of AAPT News. All items concerned with teaching philosophy are welcome. You may send us your postings at any time. E-mail correspondence is not required, but if you have it available, we appreciate it. —eds.

Is anyone teaching philosophy at the pre-college level or teaching teachers to teach philosophy - or know people who are? Please send names and addresses to: Rosalind Ladd, Wheaton College, Norton, MA 02766 Internet: jladd@brownvm.bitnet

(1) Anyone, suggestions, texts, ideas about teaching an introductory philosophy course which covers the history of philosophy since the Renaissance. I will be teaching this in the spring term, and for the first time. What will make it unique is that it is an attempt to combine intro and history in one course. (2) Suggestions, titles, articles, books even treating the portrayal of religion, religious life, faith and belief, existence of God, etc. on film; I am teaching a special topics course on religious ideas in film, and want to use films which emphasize religious themes or ideas, or which can be taken as doing that. Would be interested in some e-mail exchanges with anyone interested in this subject. Phil Hamlin, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37916. Internet: hamlin@ukvx.utk.edu

I will be teaching Philosophy and Engineering in the Spring. I would like to trade unpublished cases, particularly those collected from students. Nelson Pole, Philosophy, Cleveland State Univ., Cleveland, OH. Internet: r0731@vmcms.csuohio.edu

(1) Classroom-tested, issue-focused, energy-increasing activities (i.e., as far from a lecture-format as possible) specifically designed for the "Introduction to Philosophy" course are sought. Your generous sharing of these will be greatly appreciated. (2) If you are or will be teaching a course in existentialism, the film "Wage of Fear" provides an accessible introduction to many of the standard existential themes. The film is directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot and stars Yves Montand. It's available on videocassette from Reel Images, Box 137-M, Monroe, CT 06468. Mark Lenssen, Philosophy, Ohio Northern Univ., Ada, OH 45810. Internet: 71165.533@compuserve.com
American Association of Philosophy Teachers
10th IWCTP Program 1994

Xerox this page and mail to: Betsy Newell DeCyk, Dept. of Philosophy, California State University Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, CA 90840-2408

Yes, I would like to serve on the 1994 Program Committee:

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________

Work Phone ________________________ FAX number ________________________
Home Phone: ________________________ E-mail address: ________________________
Institutional Address (if different from above) ____________________________

Department: ________________________
Specialties and Special Interests in Philosophy: ____________________________

Ways in which I am willing to help: ____________________________

Suggestions for the next IWCTP Program: ____________________________

(Please attach additional sheets if necessary)
Calendar of Events


June 7-10, 1993 - International Conference: Education for Democracy in a Multicultural Society, Jerusalem. Sponsored by the Jerusalem Foundation, the Bertelsmann Foundation, and the Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace. Contact Professor Daniel Bart Tal, Faculty of Humanities, Tel Aviv Univ., Ramat Aviv, 69978 Tel Aviv, Israel.


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