

LANGUAGE truth & GOSSIP

A newsletter for graduates of the
MSU Philosophy Department

Language, Truth & Gossip is published annually by the MSU Department of Philosophy, 503 South Kedzie Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824

Editor
Hilde Lindemann

Acting Department Chair
James Lindemann Nelson

Associate Chair
Fred Gifford

Director of Undergraduate Studies
Matt McKeon

**Acting Dean, College of Arts
and Letters**
Patrick McConeghy

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MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Faculty Notes &
Activities

Graduate News

Fall 2005

Dear Graduates,

The department is wearing rather a different face this year. We have three new members—Christian Lotz who comes to us from Philipps-University in Marburg, by way of the University of Kansas, to teach 19th and 20th Century Continental philosophy, Tamra Frei, an ethical theorist, who brings a brand-new Ph.D. from UNC Chapel Hill, and Corinne Painter, formerly of Emporia State University, who does phenomenology, history of philosophy, and logic—and three new people in old jobs: Fred Gifford takes over as Associate Chair from Marilyn Frye, Matt McKeon will be the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and I'm sitting in for Chair Steve Esquith, who will be a Fulbright Fellow in Mali this year. The door swings both ways, alas: our colleague Bill Lawson, who does such valuable work in the philosophy of race, has left to take a distinguished professorship at the University of Memphis, and Hilde Lindemann—who among her many rich contributions as a scholar and teacher in feminism and bioethics, initiated and edited *Language, Truth & Gossip*—will be leaving in the spring for the University of Pennsylvania. Here's where I'll say something that may sound like spin, but is in my view flatly true for all that: as much as we'll miss Bill and Hilde, it's a testimony of the vigor of this department that its faculty attract such intense interest from such high-quality institutions. We are mounting searches for philosophers working in their areas to carry on the department's tradition of distinguished research, imaginative teaching, and innovative outreach.



And as our tradition has been invoked, I will mention two emeriti of this department, Rich Hall and Joe Hanna, who did so much to nurture it. An important way that their influence continues is the Hall-Hanna Young Scholars Fund. We're making progress toward our goal of a \$30,000 endowment to provide undergraduate and graduate students with the kind of strategic support—travel grants, scholarships, teaching awards, *inter alia*—that can be crucial to getting their careers in philosophy off to auspicious starts. There is still a way to go, though. Any support you might be able to provide would be deeply welcomed.

We're looking forward to another stimulating round of distinguished visitors this year, thanks to the McCracken, Benjamin, and Suter endowed lectureships. We'll start in October with Cynthia Freeland (a former major in this department and now Chair at Houston), whose lecture is entitled "Portraits and Objectification." Georgetown's Robert Veatch and Princeton's Daniel Graber will visit later in the academic year. Our graduate students are welcoming Minnesota's Helen Longino to keynote what will surely be another sterling conference, and other visitors will alternate with our own faculty to present their research throughout the year. That homegrown research continues to do very well indeed, as indicated by Fred Rauscher's NEH grant to support his work on Kant's political philosophy, and by Paul Thompson's leading role in an interdisciplinary NSF- funded project that concerns ethical and social issues sparked by developments in nanotechnology.

So, like everyone else, we continue to deal with change and persistence, those venerable philosophical topics. It's been a pleasure to provide you with this snapshot of the state of the department today, and I very much hope you enjoy the rest of this issue of *LTG*.

My best wishes,

Jim Nelson, Acting Chair

Introducing the New Faculty



Christian Lotz has joined the department this year, coming to us from the University of Kansas, where he has taught between 2003-2005. He earned his Ph.D. in philosophy from the Phillips University in Marburg, Germany, after two years of graduate research at Emory University in Atlanta. Lotz has edited three books and published a self-authored book entitled *Vom Leib zum Selbst. Kritische Untersuchungen*

zu Husserl und Heidegger [Lived Body and Self: Critical Investigations in Husserl and Heidegger], which is forthcoming from Alber Verlag in 2005. He is currently preparing a study on Husserl to be published in English. He has published numerous articles on Heidegger, Fichte, and Husserl, some in German-language journals but also in the *Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology*, the *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, and the *Southwest Philosophy Review*. His main interests are in European philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries. This academic year he'll be teaching (in addition to one of the Integrative Studies courses) three 400-level courses: one on Heidegger and phenomenology, one on Foucault, and one on Hegel. Beside European philosophy Lotz is interested in aesthetics, as well as in broader issues within the history of philosophy.



Corinne Painter has just joined the faculty this Fall (2005) as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy, having come to MSU from the Department of Social Sciences at Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas, where she was an Assistant Professor of Philosophy from 2004-2005. She earned her Ph.D. at Loyola University in 2004. She has published several essays, some in ancient philosophy

and some in Continental philosophy, and is co-editing and contributing to a volume for Kluwer/Springer on the ontological and moral status of the nonhuman animal. Her own contribution is entitled "The Empathic Relation Between Nonhuman and Human Animals: Implications for Moral Relationships Between these 'Others.'" During her first semester at MSU, Professor Painter will be teaching several courses in logic, and this spring she will be teaching an upper-level course on Karl Marx. Her research interests include her longstanding interest in ancient philosophy (primarily Plato and Aristotle), in 20th century Continental philosophy (primarily Heidegger and Levinas), and in ethics (both classical and contemporary). In addition, she is currently working in the area of animal rights.



Tamra Frei is a recent Ph.D. graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This is her first academic position. In her dissertation she argues that the Hypothetical Imperative—a principle concerning the relationship between an agent's ends and means—is a categorical prescription and is a necessary feature of Kant's theory of rational action. This academic year she'll be teaching (in addition to one of the

Integrative Studies courses) a 300-level course on ethics and a graduate seminar on the ethical works of Immanuel Kant. Besides metaethics, Frei has research interests in the history of philosophy, especially the early modern period.

Rauscher Research Grant



Fred Rauscher has been awarded a \$75,000 National Endowment for the Humanities Collaborative Research Grant for work on his edition of Immanuel Kant's *Lectures and Drafts on Political Philosophy*. Together with Kenneth Westphal of Northwestern University, Rauscher will translate and edit Kant's work

in political philosophy unpublished during his lifetime—material that sheds light on controversial or confusing (yes, even Kant can be confusing) arguments, for example regarding the nature of the social contract as only a "regulative idea of reason." The book will include three types of material. First, and most important, is Kant's course lectures on political philosophy called the *Naturrecht Feyerabend*, which is the transcript of Kant's lectures as taken by one of his students, Gottlieb Feyerabend, and hand copied for sale to other students (a typical practice at the time for popular professors). Second is Kant's own notes for his course and for working out his ideas—in the margins of his books, on the backs of letters, and whatever other blank space Kant could find at the moment. Third is the surviving drafts for Kant's essays and books on political philosophy. Rauscher will pore over a copy of the original Feyerabend manuscript at the Kant Archives in Marburg, Germany, in Summer 2006 as part of this project. The grant also funds part of his sabbatical to allow him to devote time to the project.

Endowed Guest Lecture Series 2005-2006

The Ronald Suter Distinguished Guest Lecture was established “to honor the sustained and extraordinary contribution that Ronald Suter has made as a teacher and scholar within the discipline of philosophy and at Michigan State University in particular. His contributions to the philosophy of language, ethics, and aesthetics have inspired generations of undergraduate and graduate students. This lecture series honors his contributions as a teacher and a scholar in these important areas of modern philosophy.”

Cynthia Freeland, Chair, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Houston, **October 7, 2005**, “Portraits and Objectification.” (MSU Alum, BA in psychology and philosophy, 1973.)

The Martin Benjamin Distinguished Guest Lecture was established “to honor the sustained and extraordinary contribution that Martin Benjamin has made as a teacher and scholar within the discipline of Philosophy and at Michigan State University in particular. His ability to use philosophical ethical inquiry to shed light upon important practical problems, especially in the life sciences, has inspired generations of undergraduate and graduate students. This lecture series honors his contributions as a teacher and a scholar in the growing field of bioethics.”

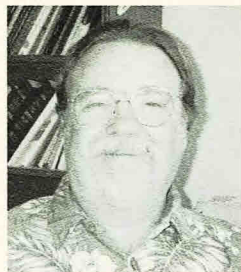
Robert Veatch, Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, **November 18, 2005**.

The Charles J. McCracken Distinguished Guest Lecture was established “to honor the sustained and extraordinary contribution that Charles J. McCracken has made as a teacher and scholar within the discipline of Philosophy and at Michigan State University in particular. His ability to combine a comprehensive grasp of the history of philosophy and an acute understanding of contemporary ethical and epistemological problems has inspired generations of undergraduate students. This lecture series honors the importance of the history of philosophy of our understanding of contemporary problems and the role that an appreciation of pressing contemporary philosophical problems plays in our interpretations of historical texts.”

Daniel Garber, Department of Philosophy, Princeton University, **January 20, 2006**.

Nanotechnology at MSU

From Paul Thompson: The National Science Foundation nanotechnology project yields its first fruit this October 26 & 27 with a conference, “What Can Nano Learn From Bio?” at the Kellogg Center. The conference is dedicated to answering the question of what scientists, engineers, technology developers, policy makers, and research administrators in the emerging fields of nanotechnology can learn from the international controversy over the use of recombinant DNA techniques in agriculture and the food system. I would encourage people to dial into the conference webpage to get a glimpse of our cool graphics: <http://www.carrs.msu.edu/nanoconference/>. We also have a huge crew of students starting work on the project this year, including Zahra Meghani and Bill Hannah from philosophy.



International Bioethics

An international three-year research project, “Naturalized and Narrative Bioethics,” codirected by **Hilde Lindemann**, Marian Verkerk (University Professor of Philosophy and Bioethics at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands), and Margaret Urban Walker (Lincoln Professor of Ethics, Justice, and the Public Sphere at Arizona State University) has received \$35,000 in funding from the NWO (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research), with additional funds from MSU and Arizona State University. The aim of the project is to change the way that bioethics is done by improving the theory under which bioethics operates. The idea is to move from idealized moral theory to theory that arises out of and is corrected by all kinds of information about the world. The project will produce an edited collection of essays in bioethics, clustering around the themes of naturalized moral epistemology, naturalized moral psychology, and practices of responsibility. The first project meeting was held at the MSU Kellogg Center in May; the other meetings take place in The Netherlands.



The Hall-Hanna Young Scholars Fund in Philosophy

When Rich Hall and Joe Hanna retired, a fund was set up in their honor to provide undergraduate and graduate students planning a career in philosophy with support in the form of scholarships, travel grants, teaching awards, and special project grants. Our target is a \$30,000 endowment, and for that, we need your help. One way to give to the fund is through the campus-wide MSU Capital Campaign that is now underway, as contributions can be directed specifically to the Philosophy Department, and, if you choose, more specifically to the Hall-Hanna Fund. The other way to contribute is to donate directly to the Department.

The Department is deeply grateful to all who have shown their support through gifts, large and small. Our hope is that these expressions of support will help us raise the level of active alumni involvement in the Department, and we invite your ongoing participation in the life of philosophy at MSU.

Please complete the form below and return it, along with your donation (could you manage \$5.00 for every year since you left MSU?) to: **Department of Philosophy, 503 South Kedzie Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1032.**

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from the office staff!



Linda Hansen,
Office Supervisor



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Academic Secretary

To send us news about you,

e-mail Linda Hansen at hansen@msu.edu, or write to Linda Hansen, Department of Philosophy, 503 South Kedzie Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1032. We would especially like to receive your mailing address so we can keep in touch with you from year to year.

