



quinta essentia

North Georgia Student Philosophy Conference

Friday, April 6, 2007

8:30- 9:00a Registration outside of University Room B and
Breakfast served in University Room A

9:00- 9:30a Opening Remarks in University Room B
Dr. Richard Vengroff, Chair of the History and Philosophy Department
Dr. David Jones, PSA Faculty Advisor
Abbey Swanson, PSA President
Jason Bice, 2007 NGSPC Chair

9:30- 11:00a First Panel Session (* denotes Panel Chair)

<p>Panel 1: Morals and Modernity University Room B</p> <p>Paul Bridges II, Georgia Southern University: <i>Human Progress and Digression: Teleology in Communist Manifesto and Genealogy of Morals</i> *Patrick Brissey, University of South Carolina: <i>Does Rule 8 Evolve?</i></p>	<p>Panel 2: Social Contracts and Constructs University Room C,D,E</p> <p>Adam Adler, Georgia State University: <i>Irresolvable Tension, Reconcilable Differences: Religion and Law at Play</i> Julliane Stout, Middle Tennessee State University: <i>Nationalism and Market Socialism: Why the World Keeps Getting it Wrong</i> *Charles Bauch, University of West Georgia: <i>Just Deserts, not the Main Course</i></p>
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11:00- 11:15a Break: Coffee and Refreshments in University Room A

11:15- 12:45p Second Panel Session (* denotes Panel Chair)

<p>Panel 1: Hustle and Art Flow University Room B</p> <p>Hans Pedersen, University of South Florida: <i>Understanding Heidegger's Conception of "movedness" and its Implications for His Conception of Action</i> Jason Flato, University of Denver: <i>The Work of Art: Towards a Levinasian Body of Art</i> *John Sweeney, University of Hawaii at Manoa: <i>A Place for All and None: Locating the Sacred in Nietzsche's Thought</i></p>	<p>Panel 2: Stranger than Fiction University Room C,D,E</p> <p>Dawid Karapuda, Mercyhurst College: <i>Human Evolution and Technology in a Cosmic Ballet: the interconnection of meaning and beauty in Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey</i> Eric West, Middle Tennessee State University: <i>Notes Under Deconstruction: The Underground Man as Postmodern Man</i> *David Ellis, University of West Georgia: <i>"Man is Not an Idea:" Distinguishing between Sartre and Camus' Understanding of and Response to the Human Condition</i></p>
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12:45- 1:45p Lunch: University Room A

2:00- 3:30p Third Panel Session (*denotes Panel Chair)

<p>Panel 1: So Much Beauty That It Makes You Cry University Room B</p> <p>Julie Ackerman, Boston University: <i>Music, Emotions, and Play</i> Marisa Hinchcliff, Berry College: <i>Nietzsche and the Death of Art</i> *Chris Aflague, Kennesaw State University: <i>Dionysian Rebirth: Fragments of Art</i></p>	<p>Panel 2: There's More to Life Than This University Room C,D,E</p> <p>Aaron McClain, University of Tennessee: <i>The Problem of Authenticity in Kierkegaard</i> John Robinson, Georgia College and State University: <i>Kierkegaard and Truth</i> *Kevin Parks, St. Mary's College of Maryland: <i>Ethics of the Other</i></p>
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3:45- 4:15p Closing Remarks for Day 1: University Room B

6:00p Meet at La Paroquilla Restaurant for dinner

Saturday, April 7, 2007

8:30- 9:00a Registration outside of University Room B and
Breakfast served in University Room A

9:00- 10:30a First Panel Session (*denotes Panel Chair)

<p>Panel 1: The Grass Is Always Greener When There Are Sides University Room B</p> <p>Patrick Ty O'Grady, University of Tennessee Chattanooga: <i>A Pragmatic and Pluralistic Approach towards Appropriating Relativity</i> Nicolas Michaud, University of North Florida: <i>Moral Luck and the Loss of Ignorance</i> *John Roper, Kennesaw State University Alumni: <i>Educating the Other: the Ethics in Education</i></p>	<p>Panel 2: Language Is the Liquid That We're All Dissolved In University Room C,D,E</p> <p>Jason Blunt, University of South Florida: <i>On the Impossibility of both Public and Private Language</i> *Adam Feltz, Florida State University: <i>Most Folk Are Incompatibilists, but Not All</i></p>
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10:30- 10:45a Break: Coffee and Refreshments in University Room A

10:45- 12:15p Keynote Address: University Room B

Dr. Walter Brogan, Villanova University
Passion and the Secret Gift of the Derridean Community

12:15- 1:15p Lunch: University Room A

1:30- 3:00p Second Panel Session (*denotes Panel Chair)

<p>Panel 1: Subjectivity, Strife, and Synthesis University Room B</p> <p>Jack Marsh, Boston College: <i>Levinas and Diacritical Hermeneutics</i> Patrick Ahern, Vanderbilt University: <i>Literacy in Depth: Walter Benjamin and the Struggle for Assimilation</i> *Justin Downey, Kennesaw State University: <i>Of Symbol, Selfhood, and Sacrifice</i></p>	<p>Panel 2: Video Killed the Radio Star University Room C,D,E</p> <p>Joseph Weissman & Taylor Adkins, Georgia College and State University: <i>The Event of the Face (Between the Void and Itself: Reading Levinas after Badiou)</i> Rene Henriquez, University of Florida: <i>Brains in a Vat Once More, or I Can at Least Be Certain that 'Computer Programs' Still Refer to Computer Programs</i> *Jason Bice, Kennesaw State University: <i>The Ego and the Ipod, or The Soundtrack of Your Life</i></p>
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3:00- 3:15p Break: Coffee and Refreshments in University Room A

3:15- 4:45p Third Panel Session (*denotes Panel Chair)

<p>Panel 1: Art Is the New Philosophy University Room B</p> <p>*Abbey Swanson, Kennesaw State University: <i>The Resurrection of Charred Bodies in the Media: Rest in Peace Malachi Ritsche</i> Damon and Heather Hooks, Kennesaw State University alumni: <i>The Spectacle of Taboos: The Situations of MySpace, Ecstasy, and Torture</i></p>	<p>Panel 2: 2 + 2 = MORE University Room C,D,E</p> <p>John Stigall, Middle Tennessee State University: <i>Russell's Horseshoe, Lewis' Fish-hook, and Hume's Problem</i> Jason Carter, University of Georgia: <i>The Infinite Embrace: Truth-Telling and the Need to Overcome Limit in Husserl's Philosophy of Arithmetic</i> *Jason Hemann, Trinity University: <i>A Typed Trivalent Logic to Resolve Category Mistakes</i></p>
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4:45- 5:00p Break: Coffee and Refreshments in University Room A

5:00- 6:30p Fourth Panel Session

<p>Panel 1: A Room With a View University Room B</p> <p>Philip Brewer, University of West Georgia: <i>Truth Beyond Meaning</i> Timothy James Wright, University of West Georgia: <i>What's It All For?</i> *Ryland Johnson, Kennesaw State University Alumni: <i>For a Community of Virtue in a Virtual Community</i></p>	<p>Panel 2: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants University Room C,D,E</p> <p>Paul Boshears, Kennesaw State University Alumni: <i>Univocity in the Confucian Project: Mengzi & Xunzi</i> Jeffrey Long, Georgia College and State University, <i>Heraclitus and the Ring of Fire</i> *John Crow, Kennesaw State University: <i>Epistemological Blindness: Constructivism and Mahamudra</i></p>
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7:00- 7:30p Closing Remarks and Awards Ceremony: University Room B

8:00 Reception off-campus: Please see a PSA member for directions

Map of University Rooms

University Room C, D, E	University Room B	University Room A
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Abstracts: Alphabetical by last name

Julie Ackerman, Boston University: *Music, Emotions, and Play*

There is an intimate connection between music and human emotion. Philosophers of music have attempted to explain this relationship in various ways. In this paper, I discuss Suzanne Langer's philosophy of music as *symbolic* of human emotion. I explore Hans-Georg Gadamer's discussion of the aesthetic experience as an experience of *play*. Using these two philosophies, I construct a description of the musical experience where music is an *emotional self-encounter* with 'sacred seriousness,' or a kind of self-offering play that invites us to enter into its mode of being and to undergo the subsequent transformation.

Adam Adler, Georgia State University: *Irresolvable Tension, Reconcilable Differences: Religion and Law at Play*

The relationship between religion and law creates a situation of perpetual tension. Each force fights for dominant influence over the other, and the convictions of citizens often demand that they oblige one force to the negligence of another. The tension between these two forces follows the model of G. W. F. Hegel's "master-slave dialectic." The law, as the state-enforced code of behavior represents the master, while ethics and religion constitute slaves. This does not mean that the law shapes and controls religion and ethics through unbounded brute force. The Supreme Court cases *Reynolds v. U.S.* and *Edwards v.*

Aguillard illustrate both how the legal and judicial systems affect religion and how religion affects the systems themselves.

Chris Aflague, Kennesaw State University: *Dionysian Rebirth: Fragments of Art*

The rebirth of Dionysus has become a tolling force in the exemplification of the role of energetic forces in the last centuries of the Western experience. Violently and amazingly the will-to-power has affirmed its presence in experiences of sheer terror and others of pure amazement—at the same time we have stood in awe of man’s depravity and our sheer possibility. In the words of Frederic Nietzsche, Dionysus danced and Zarathrusta laughed; we were all invited to invite ourselves to our own experience. Only years later would we realize the irrationality of our state of affairs and to this we have only begun to familiarize ourselves. Through thinkers such as Georges Bataille we have come to see ourselves in a state of affairs that could only be the furthering of great thought and influence passed-on by a few that were keenly aware of the fluidity of life in a society under transformation. Of our desires is born a new understanding of the depths of our psyche and an underlying movement that drives and relegates us to our conditions. The movement of transgression seems to be one that is born out of our Apollonian drives; yet, in its full exercise, it becomes a mechanism that drives us to the Dionysian and back to the Apollonian—in this ambiguity we find an intoxicated existence that can only be appreciated in a perspective that is neither attached to beginning or end: the aesthetic. But what of putting the aesthetic under the same movement—will life as art implode upon itself if it transgressed itself?

Patrick Ahern, Vanderbilt University: *Literacy in Depth: Walter Benjamin and the Struggle for Assimilation*

Walter Benjamin, in his essay “The Storyteller,” mourns the loss of our capacity to exchange experiences, or to tell stories. This loss is lauded in Hegel’s *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, where he triumphs the mode by which we can relate to our stories (that is, our history) at the more rigorously conceptual level. “Intellectual history,” as Hegel describes it, is made possible by a notion of literacy which retreats from the level of affective experience, instead placing it under the authoritative rubric of conceptual understanding. In this essay, I examine the capacity, or lack thereof, to share stories in light of a particular relation to the words and concepts used for expression, the question of the authorship of any given expression, and finally look to the possible faces of a new understanding of literacy.

Charles Bauch, University of West Georgia: *Just Deserts, not the Main Course*

My paper deals with Immanuel Kant’s principle of just deserts and its application for murderers. According to Kant, the only ethical way to punish a murderer is by delivering to him what he has willed (i.e., a sentence of capital punishment). I argue against Kant’s advocacy of the death penalty. I stand in accordance with Kant’s principle of just deserts, which demands that punishments be reflective of what the criminal has willed. However, I argue that capital punishment is, in fact, not reflective of what the criminal has willed. Therefore, according to Kant’s principle of just deserts, capital punishment ought not to be pursued as a means of exacting justice on a murderer.

Jason Bice, Kennesaw State University: *The Ego and the Ipod, or the Soundtrack of Your Life*

It is likely that each of us has experienced the thrill of visiting another time or place through some cinematic event. A trip to the theater can be the beginning of a journey into another universe entirely, or simply an intimate glimpse into the life of another. In the darkness we can lose ourselves entirely, and escape whatever might weigh us down in the open sun. But, what happens when we linger in the shadows of another world? What are the consequences when we try and bring that world into the light of our own existence? Drawing on Kristeva and Lacon, I hope to illuminate several things: what goes on during this lingering process, several of the consequences we face when we are drawn deeply into the darkness, and what power we have that we might return to the light.

Jason Blunt, University of South Florida: *On the Impossibility of both Public and Private Language*

In his paper titled *The Individual Strikes Back*, Simon Blackburn proffers a rather peculiar dilemma which I attempt to address and critically analyze. At first glance, a commonsense reaction to the issue under scrutiny here could be one of puzzlement; or simply just confusion and disbelief. The issue directly concerns the impossibility of any public language. The existence of a public language, Blackburn contends, must be as implausible as the existence of a private language if and only if private languages are deemed impossible within the context of Kripke’s interpretation of Wittgenstein’s private language argument in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Two critical questions to address here are how and why Blackburn arrives at this conclusion. After a sufficient explication of these questions, I shall attempt to defend the general notion, as according to Kripke and (perhaps less directly) Wittgenstein, that public language is possible while maintaining that private languages are not.

Paul Boshears, Kennesaw State University alumni: *Univocity in the Confucian Project: Mengzi & Xunzi*

Kongzi taught his students to look into themselves and into their communities (living and dead) for the answers to the questions of our daily affairs. He advised his students to do as archers must, and adjust themselves if they are to hit their mark. When Kongzi is asked about *xiao*, filial conduct, in Book 2 we are given several answers, none like the last. Meng Yizi is told not to be contrary, but then Kongzi advises his driver, Fan Chi, in multiple ways. In each instance Confucius considers his audience and delivers, not what simply suits the mood, but, what is the appropriate response for each situation. Even with the oral recitation and rote memorization of the Analects, heterodoxy seems inevitable. And yet this is impossible as we see in Book 7.1, “Following the proper way, I do not forge new paths; with confidence I cherish the ancients,” and further (7.28), “I learn much, select out of it what works well, and then follow it. I observe much, and remember it.” On first blush the Mengzi and Xunzi are extreme opposites, but as we will see they are perhaps better understood as the left and right hands of this corporate Kongzi.

Philip Brewer, University of West Georgia: *Truth Beyond Meaning*

The two prominent philosophical camps clearing away the “metaphysical-fog” surrounding truth are Realism and Internalism. In my paper I seek to appease the inherent problem of Realism, illuminated by Hilary Putnam—truth correspondence theory. By abandoning this theory, I have advocated a Realist approach that, while lacking the epistemological-fulfillment of traditional Realism, places truth on objective metaphysical ground. Consequently, the version I propose sacrifices one’s ability to unequivocally *prove* the truth or falsity of statements; however, this is laudable inasmuch as we resist the intellectual seduction of Putnam’s relative truth-theory and create an account of truth so fundamental that “truth” itself becomes interchangeable with the word “exists.”

Paul W. Bridges II, Georgia Southern University: *Human Progress and Digression: Teleology in Communist Manifesto and Genealogy of Morals*

For Nietzsche, human history is the process of the human becoming more adept at suppressing its instinctual drives, of the weak wielding morality as a weapon against the strong. He sees this exemplified and perpetuated by “priestly aristocracies,” systems of religious beliefs designed to govern human thoughts and action. Adherents of these systems teach that people should not act according to their feelings and desires, but should instead act in a well-reasoned (and for Nietzsche, “unhealthy” and conformed) manner. Rather than evolving toward a realization of a harmony of action between instinct and reason, humanity has digressed as a result of belief systems. By convincing people that they must commit to ever-changing sentiments and pay penance for their many faults (thus infusing a need to remember every “faulty” action), belief systems have embedded themselves in human culture and trained people to act in socially mandated ways. This represents a diseased form of life in Nietzsche’s view, as the modern human has relinquished its most important attribute: sovereignty of action according to its individual feelings.

Patrick Brissey, University of South Carolina: *“Does Rule 8 Evolve?”*

Daniel Garber has argued that Rule 8 of Descartes’ *Regulae ad directionem ingenii* was constructed in stages, drafted over an extended period of time, and culminated in the demise of the method of 1619. Garber’s position is based primarily on his developmental reading of Rule 8. He claimed that Rule 8 evolved from a continuation of the early method to a provisional method devised to construct a more useful method to a method that failed to answer the enquiry into the nature and scope of human knowledge. This evolution, Garber argued, led to the demise of Descartes’ early method. I will argue that the status of the method did not evolve in Rule 8. Rather, I will show that Rule 8 contains a coherent title and commentary that further developed Descartes’ method in Rules 1-7.

Jason Carter, University of Georgia: *The Infinite Embrace: Truth-Telling and the Need to Overcome Limit in Husserl’s Philosophy of Arithmetic*

Edmund Husserl’s first major work, *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, is often interpreted as only a precursor to the development of his later phenomenological method, or alternatively, merely a new story about the dual roles that both psychology and logic play in grounding of basic concepts of Arithmetic. However, Husserl’s project in this work actually reveals a deeper philosophic issue that transcends and grounds his concept of number, and this issue is not primarily Arithmetical. It is rather the praxiological-ethical assertion that there is a *general unwillingness to tell the truth* about number resulting from our own psychological need to be “shored up” against the acknowledgment of the defective status of our primary ability to fully survey a domain of knowledge, that Husserl is able to provide a full and “true” account of number.

John Crow, Kennesaw State University: *Epistemological Blinders: Constructivism and Mahamudra*

Evaluating mystical experience is difficult due to the subjective nature of the event itself. Before performing an experiential analysis, one must engage in a necessary evaluation: what epistemological basis will be used to assess the event? This is fundamental because the epistemology used to evaluate the experience predetermines the kinds of conclusions possible. In a 1978 essay, Steven Katz proposed an epistemology, frequently called constructivism, in which "mystical, or more generally religious experience is irrelevant in establishing truth" and is determined by the culture and ideology of the subject. The implications of this assertion are immense. Katz's constructivism not only limits the examination of mystical claims, it also completely disregards some forms of mystical experience altogether. This paper will summarize the constructivist position regarding mystical experience, identify its preconceptions, and illustrate how these preconceptions conflict with claims in Moonlight of Mahamudra. Lastly, I will assert the value of alternative ways to examine the issue of mystical experience that is at least more accommodating to the claims of the mystics themselves.

Justin Downey, Kennesaw State University: *Of Symbol, Selfhood, and Sacrifice*

The heaven grows dark. A furious thunder groans, resounding across the quaking hills and fields. The lightning flashes, a maddening revelation of Divinity that discovers to us the fundamentally symbolic character of being and consciousness. Working from this moment of eruptive theophany, we will consider the various but symbolically aligned levels of being and awareness and will consider the human selfhood as a symbolic activity with regard to this ontological symbolism. All this will help elucidate to us the sacrificial nature of selfhood and symbol, ultimately bringing us to a recognition of the lightning bolt as a beautiful and dreadful signal of the perpetual apocalypse. Our explorations promise to be provocative, daring, and just plain fun.

David Ellis, University of West Georgia: *"Man is Not an Idea:" Distinguishing between Sartre and Camus' Understanding of and Response to the Human Condition*

This essay examines the difference between Albert Camus' and Jean-Paul Sartre's description of the human condition and the different ways in which they respond to it. Sartre claims that humans find themselves in the world without an essence that naturally defines them, leaving us with our "radical freedom" in that we define ourselves through acting in the world. This "radical freedom" entails a "radical responsibility" in that we are responsible for defining all of humanity as well. His response to this condition is to accept one's radical freedom and responsibility, to be careful in one's making of choices, and to create an essence. Camus, however, sees our condition as absurd in that we hope and plan in the face of mortality, we suffer uselessly, and we ourselves are participators in such suffering. His response to this condition is to revolt against the absurd, against creation as one finds it. This rebellion, regardless of its futility, is a value judgment against the condition we find ourselves in, and is not simply a renunciation because it is also an annunciation which demands unity, clarity, and justice from a world and an experience riddled with impermanency, uncertainty, and death. I argue that Camus' response is more authentic because he wants to understand how to live within the limits of our condition comprised of impermanency, suffering, and futility.

Adam Feltz, Florida State University: *Most Folks Are Incompatibilists, but Not All*

Some theorists about free will use what they take to be the folk view as a premise in their arguments. Oddly, some of these theorists think the folk view is compatibilist while others think the folk view is incompatibilist—obviously, both cannot be right. What the folk view is about free will is an empirical question and one for which these philosophers offer no empirical evidence. In this paper, I review two attempts to offer empirical evidence in order to understand what the folk view of free will is. I argue that neither one sufficiently captures the folk view. I present new data which supports two claims: (1) that the majority of folk are incompatibilist, and (2) that there are two discrete groups of folk who express incompatibilist or compatibilist intuitions.

Jason Flato, University of Denver: *The Work of Art: Towards a Levinasian Body of Art*

What happens in the receptive space of the work of art? What precisely is the work the work of art "does"? The ethical thought of Emmanuel Levinas is always concerned with the ability to respond to the call of the other, which has to do with what occurs *between* the self and the other. However, as I will argue in this paper, aesthetics is better equipped to schematize the range of material affects that register on the body. In fact, aesthetics revises the ethical rapport, a central concept throughout Levinas, by placing its emphasis upon the autonomic interaction between bodies. I hypostasize Levinas's notion of sensibility in order to generate the "body of art" which unfolds across a space of invention, and, is co-present with the originary ethical rapport.

Jason Hemann, Trinity University: *A Typed Trivalent Logic to Resolve Category Mistakes*

Under the Classical First-Order Predicate Calculus, we would expect that the formalization of “Phobos is a satellite of Earth” should be evaluated as true. But the formalization a category mistake, such as “Green is a satellite of chocolate” is somewhat problematic. It certainly is not true, but it does not appear to be straightforwardly false in the same manner as the above. “Green” and “chocolate” are not the sorts of things that are capable of instantiating “is a satellite of.” In this paper, I suggest a third value, representing “mismatch” or “absurdity.” I further formalize the notion of types, construct a logic that I claim captures intuitive understanding of that notion, prove it sound and complete in the propositional calculus, and demonstrate some interesting properties and applications of this system.

Rene Henriquez, University of Florida: *Brains in a Vat Once More, or I Can at Least Be Certain that 'Computer Programs' Still Refers to Computer Programs*

A number of past writers on the subject of the Putnamian brains-in-a-vat skeptical hypothesis have argued that one reason why Putnam’s anti-skeptical argument fails is that it does not show that the proposition *that I am a brain in a vat* is necessarily false. According to the argument, Putnam’s detractors claim, that proposition is wholly inaccessible to the brain in a vat. In this paper I am in agreement with these conclusions but argue further that there is a statement which, in effect, expresses the proposition *that I am a brain in a vat* and which, as a brain in a vat, *is* accessible to me. My purpose here is two-fold: first, to square these conclusions with the natural idea that, were we brains in a vat, we could think it; second, and more importantly, to issue an additional challenge to those who defend Putnam on other grounds.

Marisa Hinchcliff, Berry College: *Nietzsche and the Death of Art*

This paper presents the original idea that Nietzsche believes art to be analogous with God. This idea stems from the support Nietzsche holds for Dionysus as well as his belief in art’s capacity to allow individual transcendence. Dionysus is a Grecian artist-god who, when united with Apollo, a representation of rationality and individuality is capable of creating the highest possible aesthetic experience. According to Nietzsche, “it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*.” Nietzsche’s belief that art is God means his controversial declaration of God’s death also represents art’s death. God and art’s death arise due to the confines modernity creates in society. Nietzsche sees God as a universal and artistic spirit; however, in a modernistic society, people have no time to devote to such a spirit. Instead, they find pleasure in monetary items. This eventually leads to a devaluation of spirit, which prohibits individuals from transcending or overcoming themselves.

Damon and Heather Hooks, Kennesaw State University alumni: *The Spectacle of Taboos: The Situations of MySpace, Ecstasy, and Torture*

This presentation will examine the ways in which sex, death, ecstasy, and torture are connected, particularly in today’s technologically-laden society. Drawing upon the writings of Georges Bataille and Guy DeBord, we will discuss the ways that participation in the “spectacle” shields us from the release that comes with the abandonment to the transgression of a taboo. Ultimately, participation in the “drift” (derive) and “situation” provides a means to navigate through the obscuration of the spectacle; we intend to discuss how web-communities (i.e. MySpace) have the potential to operate on behalf of both the spectacle and the situation.

Ryland J. Johnson, Kennesaw State University alumni: *For a Community of Virtue in a Virtual Community*

To the question, “is this community?” where no longer a governing reality principle levies upon the real a play of intelligible signs corresponding to the real’s own truth or untruth, we must answer unflinchingly, uprightly *yes*.

Jeffrey Long, Georgia College and State University, *Heraclitus and the Ring of Fire*

This paper is a simple attempt to summarize the philosophy of Heraclitus.

Dawid Karapuda, Mercyhurst College: *Human Evolution and Technology in a Cosmic Ballet: the Interconnection of Meaning and Beauty in Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey*

Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1986) is a science fiction movie that takes as its main subject the concepts of human evolution and technology. The artwork is an example of how beauty and meaning are interconnected and how by mutual enhancement aesthetics and philosophy formulate new dimensions in which human beings can perceive the world. By analyzing the aesthetic features of the work and its philosophical implications, a concise interpretation of the movie is formed. Pointing out to the issue of experience, it is identified as the exact notion through which beauty and meaning are interconnected. The interpretation of *2001* requires the recognition of its aesthetic features, and the aesthetic appreciation is

enhanced by the understanding of the content. By establishing this connection, Stanley Kubrick has reached a higher level of comprehending the issues presented in his work.

Jack Marsh, Boston College: *Levinas and Diacritical Hermeneutics*

Aaron McClain, University of Tennessee: *The Problem of Authenticity in Kierkegaard*

The problem of human authenticity is one of the utmost importance. This is the case because without authenticity, or a true inner self to rely on, one is merely a puppet. A person in this state is only a person in the broadest sense of the word, in that he/she is anatomically a human being, but personhood has not fully been achieved. I have tackled this problem by analyzing Soren Kierkegaard's masterpiece *Either/Or*. In it, he shows the importance of authenticity and outlines two different attempts to achieve it. These ways of life are the aesthetic, a life devoted to intellectual pleasures, and the ethical, a life devoted to morality and reason. I intend to show that the commonly held belief advanced by Kierkegaard in this work, that states the ethical way of life is more authentic and satisfying than the aesthetic, is fundamentally misguided.

Nicolas Michaud, University of North Florida: *Moral Luck and the Loss of Ignorance*

Michael J. Zimmerman and Brynmor Browne present solutions to the problem of moral luck. When synthesized, these solutions begin to develop a complete story of how we can praise and blame individuals even in events which are "matters of luck." We often want to apply more blame to individuals when there are actual consequences than if there only potential consequences, but how can we rationally do so if we concede that agents should not be held responsible for events outside of their control? It is my hope that in this paper I can help to create a more complete answer to the problem of how to assign praise and blame in a world in which luck plays a significant role.

Ty O'Grady, University of Tennessee Chattanooga: *A Pragmatic and Pluralistic Approach towards Appropriating Relativity*

Wittgenstein enigmatically asserted that the man who says that there is an afterlife and the man who says that there is not do not disagree. In this paper, I am going to help unpack this statement by placing it into the context of a pragmatist's instrumental understanding of truth. The results make immediately evident the foundations of pluralism and also present a means of dispelling the bugaboo of nihilism that many assume accompanies relativity.

Kevin Parks, St. Mary's College of Maryland: *Ethics of the Other*

The three most influential ethical figures in Western philosophy (Aristotle, John Stuart Mill, and Immanuel Kant) all propose ethics that focus on the self. Emmanuel Levinas offers an account of ethics where the Other, and the relationship that the self exists in with the Other, becomes the focus. My paper explores Levinas's understanding of the Other, and offers of critique of his conception of the Other as it is defined qua language. In the final sections, I offer my own definition of Otherness, which I define in terms of intentionality, and discuss some of the implications it holds for thinking about ethics, not just in dilemma situations, but in everyday life.

Hans Pedersen, University of South Florida: *Understanding Heidegger's Conception of "movedness" and its Implications for His Conception of Action*

In his early writings, Heidegger often describes human life in terms of its movement. However, the term he frequently uses is not the normal German term for movement, *Bewegung*, but rather the neologism, *Bewegtheit*.¹ *Bewegtheit* is typically translated as 'movedness'. What does it mean to talk about *Bewegtheit* instead of *Bewegung* when discussing human existence? In this paper I attempt to provide an answer to this question and then proceed to consider the implications of understanding human life as movedness for Heidegger's conception of action. I first consider the connection between Heidegger's conception of care (*Sorge*) and Aristotle's conception of desire (*ōrexis*) insofar as it is relevant to understanding life as movedness. I then develop a Heideggerian account of action based upon the preceding interpretation of movedness and through a comparison with the dominant account of action in the philosophy of action literature, the mental causation account.

John Robinson, Georgia College and State University: *Kierkegaard and Truth*

John Preston Roper, Jr., Kennesaw State University alumni: *Educating the Other: the Ethics in Education*

I will open this dialogue by explaining that I teach fourth grade at a Georgia public school. The ins and outs of teaching, especially in the public school setting, are complex and multifaceted and I think that there is little in the way of interesting thought from the profession, so I bring these thoughts to the philosophical table. An idea was posed to me by a peer to post on the bulletin board in the work-room. "Are there ethics

¹ See for example Heidegger's 1921-1922 lecture course, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*.

in education?” While I laughed at the prospects of what the responses by the majority of the individuals that teach at my school would be (ranging from “Ethics? Is that some new fangled computer program?” to “I treat all of my students the same way regardless of who they are.”) I was also intrigued by what I considered as ethics within my chosen profession. I began reading Emanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida with a new interest in their concepts of ethics to the Other. In this paper I will attempt, however clumsily, to ally the complexities of Levinasian and Derridean ethics with the elements of curricular and classroom environments that are present in the public education.

John Stigall, Middle Tennessee State University: *Russell’s Horseshoe, Lewis’ Fish-hook, and Hume’s Problem*

This paper is an attempt to address the question “What does it mean to state that one event causes another?” My main concern is not with questions concerning whether or not causation is an actual phenomenon in nature or how to go about establishing the existence of the causal relation from empirical data. The concern is instead with plausible definitions. I intend to explore the consequences of possible definitions based on a simple thesis: with certain qualifications, ‘C causes E’ means ‘If C occurs, then E occurs.’ I intend to explore the notion of causation as implication between events.

Julliane Stout, Middle Tennessee State University: *Nationalism and Market Socialism: Why the World Keeps Getting it Wrong*

When Karl Marx first began publishing philosophical and political essays he had an ultimate goal that remained expressed throughout his later works. That goal was significant social change via Revolution. After Marx’s death, followers of his doctrine had varying opinions on how to win the war against capitalism. Although some of the leaders of the Communist movement still remained revolutionaries, many such as Edward Bernstein, chose to change society through reformism. While in some cases, reform can produce many progressive results, inevitably, reformist and nationalistic conceptions of Marxism evoke deadly results. Concepts like market socialism, communism in one nation, and socialism as an electoral process do not push the envelope far enough. Some of these concepts and movements might work outside of the capitalist system. However, when these concepts of reform are disguised as revolutionary, they can only spell failure for the socialist movement. In short, only revolution can perpetuate significant social change.

Abbey Swanson, Kennesaw State University: *The Resurrection of Charred Bodies in the Media: Rest in Peace Malachi Ritscher*

Malachi Ritscher committed the most extreme form of political protest when, on November 3, 2006, he set his body aflame near an exit ramp in Chicago alongside rush-hour traffic bearing a sign that read, “Thou shalt not kill.” Ritscher’s self-immolation was reduced in the media as a futile act of a mentally unstable man. In this paper, I will discuss Ritscher’s suicide in terms of affectivity and symbolism and set it against the simplified version found in mass media.

John A. Sweeney, University of Hawai’i at Manoa: *A Place for All and None: Locating the Sacred in Nietzsche’s Thought*

“While there has been some discussion of Nietzsche as a religious thinker, not much has been said about the nature of this new, Dionysian religion....” –Graham Parkes

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), perhaps more than any other intellectual, is known for being an unabashed iconoclast; indeed, his scathing critiques of religion, namely Christianity, are difficult to overlook within his *oeuvre*. In spite of these attacks, and in many ways because of them, a new trend in Nietzsche studies has surfaced—one that looks to position Nietzsche as a decidedly *religious* thinker. As such, this study examines the potentiality of Nietzsche’s *sacred* as a movement, both conceptually and concretely, (back) toward *place*—as one that reassigns *value* to the world through our *bodily* human experience within it, which, for Nietzsche, is prominent in the (immanently) divine figure of Dionysus and the thought of the *eternal recurrence*.

Joseph Weissman & Taylor Adkins, Georgia College and State University: *The Face of the Event*

Alain Badiou’s *Ethics* represents a momentous event in the history of philosophy. But it raises many questions it does not (and, we think, cannot) answer. Although Badiou claims he is atheist, he mishandles the critique of religion. When Badiou claims Levinas’s project is “not philosophy” because irretrievably grounded in a subjective religious assumption, his criticisms fail to convince, for two reasons. First, this condemnation neglects their congruent metaphysical projects. Second, unlike Sartre, Badiou does not elaborate the philosophical consequences of atheism. Badiou condemns Levinas because he raises too many troubling questions. The trauma of this encounter inspires deep (but unwarranted) hostility. Yet a hermeneutics of the event is not just possible but necessary. Moreover, the encounter between subjects and

event(s) begs the question of relationality. If the radical break of the event founds *inter*-subjectivity, isn't the event correlative to an asymmetrical relation whose basis is, ultimately, the 'event' of the face?

Eric West, Middle Tennessee State University: *Notes Under Deconstruction: The Underground Man as Postmodern Man*

Dostoevsky's *Underground Man* prefigures the political paralysis of postmoderns Derrida, Lyotard and Baudrillard—thinkers concerned with the limitations which structures impose on possibility. Out of a similar desire for freedom from all structures, the *Underground Man* becomes first capricious then unable to act at all. Derrida, in *Spectres of Marx*, calls for the institution of a "New International." But if the "New International" is not to limit any possibilities, it must be an entity entirely spectral itself. In *Just Gaming*, Lyotard tries—and fails—to form a non-prescriptive definition of justice. Baudrillard's "The Masses" embraces the postmodern paralysis, suggesting that being and will are binding structures to free ourselves from, and identifying the torpor of the masses as a liberation strategy. Dostoevsky portrays the paralysis which must result from any project attempting to gain freedom from all structures—a project which bears a striking resemblance to that of the postmoderns.

Timothy Wright, University of West Georgia: *What's It All For?*

For this paper, I will write from the philosophically liberal perspective on the original purpose of the State and its laws. I will propose that the true nature of the State and its laws is as an understood collection of its members, created to serve and protect its members, not as a separate entity that surveys, manipulates, and controls its citizens in order for it to thrive. I will cite historical instances of cases where peoples have created great things, such as governments and churches, designed to serve and generally better their lives, and having forgotten this original function, they became servants to this thing that they have then allows to become a controlling entity in itself. The negative outcome of this activity will be apparent in the examples cited. Also, I will find where this change from useful tool of society to separate, more powerful entity occurs and why.