

# Sophia

## In Memoriam: Avnita Ghuman

Death is not a blotting out of existence, a final escape from life; nor is death the door to immortality. He who has fled his Self in earthly joys will not recapture It amidst the gossamer charms of an astral world. There he merely accumulates finer perceptions and more sensitive responses to the beautiful and the good, which are one. It is on the anvil of this gross earth that struggling man must hammer out the imperishable gold of spiritual identity. Bearing in his hand the hard-won golden treasure, as the sole acceptable gift to greedy Death, a human being wins final freedom from the rounds of physical reincarnation.

—Paramahansa Yogananda, from *Autobiography of a Yogi*

She first appeared to me in an autumn late afternoon Philosophy 2200 class more than two years ago. A dark haired, quiet young woman with penetrating dark eyes she took a seat in the back of the classroom. She would not stay long. Only three weeks into the semester and already she was appearing/disappearing as so many KSU students do. Then one afternoon she appeared to me standing in the doorway of my office.

She told me that the cancer she fought had reappeared. Her already quivering voice began breaking, her dark eyes moistening in the harsh glare of the institutional hallway. *What could I say?* I am a philosopher, at least by some small amount of academic training if not by my own somber and moody disposition. Human finitude—the repressive limits of being human: death, struggle, suffering, and guilt; as well as the interactive limits of birth, love, sacrifice, and redemption—is thought by philosophers. Hence, if anyone can speak of death, it should be me. Years ago I had a friend who was diagnosed with lymphoma and in the heart-felt multi-page letter I composed to Frank said all the

wrong things. I vowed to keep my piece this time. Instead I assured her that there was no problem with her leaving the class, I didn't think less of her and that I would welcome her back when she recovered. If she liked, we could continue our philosophical conversation via email. Then she was gone.

A year or so later she appeared to me standing outside a classroom in the Social Science building. Somehow we got into a conversation about Jane Goodall and how Avnita had recently become interested in her work on behalf of primates and all human beings. I don't remember much about that brief conversation only that she was once again enrolled in a section of Philosophy 2200 that I was instructing. She remained in the class that semester and it was then that I began to get to know Avnita.

Born into a Sikh family that is part of the Indian Diaspora in East Africa, England and Canada she had multiple citizenship. To me she appeared as an atypical KSU undergraduate co-ed: deeply thoughtful and serenely uninterested in the immediate. As time passed she entrusted me with some of her

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## Contents

- 1 In Memoriam: Avnita Ghuman  
Tom Pynn
- 3 From the Editor: Why Philosophy?  
John L. Crow
- 3 A Call to Help Habitat  
for Humanity
- 3 Call for Submissions
- 4 Banality of Good and Evil  
Lauren Maddux
- 4 KSU Spring Semester 2007  
Upper Level Philosophy Courses
- 5 Proving God's Existence: Anselm's  
Ontological Argument vs. Thomas  
Aquinas's Empirical Demonstration  
Jamie Kiley
- 6 Philosopher Spotlight: Georges  
Bataille
- 7 PSA Rocks!  
Lauren Maddux
- 7 The Osoinach Student Lecture  
Series
- 8 The Mike Ryan Lecture Series



Avnita Ghuman

deeply felt conflicts. Like any real philosopher, she struggled with fundamental questions concerning her humanity: her identity as a young woman and as the daughter of staunchly traditionalist Sikhs, as well as a human being for whom death was close at hand. This is the Urstoff of an ever-deepening philosophical practice. Like Kongzi and Socrates before her, she grappled with the age-old question of how to understand traditional or conventional values in the light of a changing present. Like Rama from her own homeland, she was beginning to confront the unsettling and liberating realization that “true nobility means being true to oneself, not just good and loyal to one’s kin.”<sup>1</sup> Though still a dark thought for her, her facticity was a clue to her deepening concern for the welfare of all living things.

These topics formed the basis of just about every conversation I had with Avnita from then on. At times she seemed to me frantic to uncover the depths of her own being, to begin living an awakened life despite the pull from family to settle down as a good Sikh woman and to embrace the cult of success like her parents and brother. Apparently, her family did not understand the attraction philosophy had for their daughter. I’m not so sure she did any more than any of us who hear the

call of thinking do. Yet, she was always willing to engage in conversation about significant matters.

As she grappled with her own awakening to her vocation, she also carried the burden of the lack of appreciation for the examined life within her own family and among her classmates. Compounding the internal and external pressures on Avnita—perhaps more than any of us deserve—she also struggled with the lack of a philosophy major at KSU. It was unfathomable to her that there wasn’t one here and that she could not take a degree in the discipline she had come to love and admire. I suggested that she transfer, as some have over the years, to Georgia State University or Emory. Financially, Emory was out of the question and true to her own noble humility, she doubted whether she could get into Emory. GSU seemed possible, but she liked KSU and felt at home here. Despite her comfort at being a KSU student, all of us here at KSU must ask ourselves this question: Was Avnita a flower we let wither?

The last conversation we had—late afternoon again—we were discussing her newest discoveries: Joseph Campbell’s work in comparative mythology/religion and the pluralistic philosophical religious practice of Paramahansa Yogananda. She was interested to learn of the myth and philosophy section of Honors Philosophy 2200 I am currently instructing and that I have been an avid reader of Yogananda since my early twenties. We then decided that we would work on a directed study in the spring. . . .

As I write this, the rain has ended and I am facing west. It’s been four days since reading of Avnita’s death in *The Sentinel*. Something seems wrong to me about learning of her death in this manner. Given our moments of thoughtful

concern, I can imagine a more fitting transition for both of us, but we seldom ever get that kind of opportunity. All I know is that she has yet to appear to me in dream to say good-bye. Perhaps some day she will appear in one of my classes or sitting on one of the low stacked stone walls on campus in the late afternoon her somber black eyes penetrating fathomless time. In the mean time, I for one will miss her.

Tom Pynn

<sup>1</sup> Wm. Theodore de Bary. *Nobility & Civility*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

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## *Sophia*

is the newsletter of the  
Kennesaw State University  
Philosophy Student Association

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**Submission deadline for next Issue of *Sophia*  
October 27, 2006**

**Send submissions to PSASophia@gmail.com**

## From the Editor: Why Philosophy?

In today's high-pressure economically-based society, people may wonder why anyone's interested in philosophy. One frequently asked question to those interested in philosophy is, "what kind of job are you going to get with that?" Before answering this question we need to step back and ask ourselves if everything is defined within a structure of economics and commerce. Should all our decisions be based on the potentiality for future employment? Surprisingly, the mere process of asking those kinds of questions is the basis of philosophy.

The philosophical enterprise is often called the search for how to live the good life. As we can see above, within the initial question was a presupposition that the good life means acquiring employment. This is probably true for most students at KSU. However, is this the only aspect of the good life or is there more? What other facets of life make a life good? Many philosophers have attempted to answer this and other related questions. They invite us all to read and discuss their ideas of the good life and decide for ourselves.

The Philosophy Student Association is a group of KSU students who come

together to examine the myriad questions surrounding how to live the good life. In this issue of *Sophia*, you will read various essays where students discuss the characteristics of the good life in its innumerable manifestations. Sadly, in this issue we also remember one KSU student whose life was lost just as she was beginning her process in the philosophical enterprise. Avnita Ghuman, a sophomore, was found in the trunk of her car on the evening of September 14, 2006. Each person's contribution to the enterprise is important and Avnita's death affects us all.

The Philosophy Student Association is always looking for those who wish to join the discussion and begin the philosophical enterprise. You don't have to know anything about philosophy to join—you just have to want to participate in the enterprise in some way or another. Together we meet to discuss ideas, socialize, and also work to understand the good life through the process of creation. We present lectures, hold conferences, and publish newsletters and books. Through these methods, we deeply explore what the good life means to each of us and cultivate relationships with our fellow students.

If you are interested in joining the Philosophy Student Association, just let one of the PSA officers know. You can

email, come to one of our meetings, or come to one of the lectures. There is no cost, your commitment can be based on your schedule, and we always welcome new people regardless of your major. If you don't have time for meetings or lectures but want to contribute, please consider submitting to *Sophia*. We are always interested in essays, poems, artwork, and other material related to the philosophical enterprise. If you have a paper that you wrote for class and like, consider submitting it. If you have a poem, painting, drawing, or picture you think appropriate, please submit it. We are always interested in gaining new ideas and contributors.

Philosophy is not just a practice for a few isolated individuals tucked away in the Academy. It has implications to all of us. How do we all live the good life? It is our hope that the PSA and *Sophia* can contribute, even if just slightly, to KSU's understanding of the good life. If we do, then our mission has been accomplished and everyone is better for it.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Sophia* and will consider submitting to future issues.

John L. Crow  
Editor

## A Call to Help Habitat for Humanity

Come join the PSA and help build a new home for a worthy Atlanta family. We need volunteers who can firmly commit to helping on this project on Saturday, November 11, 2006 from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M..

The house site is in South Atlanta and everyone must arrive promptly by 8:00 AM. Some PSA members will be carpooling. If you are interested in carpooling, please let us know. Lunch will be provided. No tools or construction experience are required, just appropriate work clothes and a willingness to work hard and help someone fulfill their dream of home ownership.

If you are interested, please email John L. Crow at [jcrow@thelema.nu](mailto:jcrow@thelema.nu).

We look forward to hearing from you!

## Call for *Sophia* Submissions

Want to have your writing published? *Sophia*, the Newsletter of the KSU Philosophy Student Association, is looking for submissions.

Submissions can be about any philosophical idea or themes or a related fields. You can also submit short papers or portions of papers you have written for a class.

If you don't think you're a writer but have interesting ideas, we can help you translate them into a reality.

Unsure about your writing style? We can help with editing too. So, there's really no reason why you can't submit to *Sophia*. We also are looking for appropriate original artwork and photography.

To submit material, ask questions, or have something reviewed for inclusion, email [PSASophia@gmail.com](mailto:PSASophia@gmail.com). We look forward to hearing from you!

# Banality of Good and Evil

By Lauren Maddux

Few themes permeate our sensibilities toward the world as completely as the concepts of good and evil. From the very beginning of a child's cognitive development these ideas are quietly presented. Our religious institutions have highly developed explanations of and practices of both evil and good. The entirety of our socio-political constructions exists to deal with the problems that arise between the two. But how do good and evil arise in the world? What actions bring them about? Hannah Arendt and Amy Olberding offer explanations to these questions by examining the lives of Adolph Eichmann and Confucius, respectively.

In her book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt describes the trial of Adolph Eichmann, self-proclaimed "Jewish specialist" and head coordinator of the Final Solution in Nazi Germany. Throughout his testimony Eichmann maintained that he did not commit the horrible actions of which he stood accused out of any sort of deep-seated hatred of the Jews; in fact, he claimed to have known several Jewish individuals and to have thought very highly of them. Eichmann followed orders. He did not do so maliciously, but out of a fervent

belief in his duty to the Reich. He was not a brilliant politician, a learned scholar, or a brave and daring hero. In fact, there was hardly anything at all about him that was noteworthy. He simply followed orders. Yet he took part in and was responsible for deeds so awful that modern history can find no worse nightmare. Arendt shows us that this is how the majority of evil exists in the world. It is not lurking in the dark shadows of psychopathic minds or being conjured up from transcendent realms of damnation. By and large evil is allowed to persist in the world because of apathy and spinelessness or (as in Eichmann's case) an unquestioned devotion to little more than smoke and shadows. Evil is hardly a strong, decisive and willfully negative action, but is rather a manifestation of the human desire for stasis and normalcy.

Amy Olberding pointed out in her lecture on Confucian values this spring that goodness or virtue also manifests itself in less obvious ways than we like to imagine. To the western mind in general, virtue comes with visions of knightly acts of heroism which result from moral testing. Life is deemed significant or virtuous in proportion to one's actions when faced with the certainty of one's death. However, from the Confucian point of view virtue (*de*) does not unfold at the point of a gun, but from our demeanor as we carry out daily tasks. Olberding calls this our domestic sensi-

bility, which not only helps us to be at home in virtue but also is a way of being at home in the world. Three types of domestic sensibility are given to be manners (*li*), good taste, and style. Manners help us to recognize another's humanity and are a way of being at home with others. Good taste is manifested in economy and aesthetic choice. It helps us to be at home in the world. Style teaches us that there can be no disharmony between what is done and how it is done (as with *ren*) and is a way for us to be at home in our own skin. To have virtue one must pay attention to these elements of domestic sensibility and be aware of one's demeanor. To those who see the domestic as pejorative, dull, or tame Confucius tells us that virtue is richer for its subtlety. So while Arendt shows us banality's relationship to evil, Confucius explains how goodness can be cultivated in the banal as well.

As a culture we tend toward sensationalism and excess, and for this reason the small and inward ingredients of life often go unnoticed or are deliberately disregarded. However, if Arendt's and Olberding's observations are correct, the exaggeration of these most basic forms of valuation is not only fallacious but is also damagingly misleading as we attempt to move in one direction or the other.

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## KSU Spring Semester 2007 Upper Level Philosophy Courses\*

Course Number	Course Name	Days	Time	Instructor
PHIL 3305/01	Logic	T R	2:00PM-3:15PM	White, T.
PHIL 3311/01	Modern Western Philosophy	M W	9:30AM-10:45AM	Rouse, S.
PHIL 3313/01	American Philosophy	T R	5:00PM-6:15PM	Rouse, S.
PHIL 4415/01	Feminist Philosophy	M W	2:00PM-3:15PM	Keltner, S.
PHIL 4490/01	Special Topics - Japanese Philosophy	M W	11:00AM-12:15PM	Johnson, J.
PHIL 4490/02	Nietzsche and Bataille: The Aesthetics of Eros and Death	F	11:00AM-2:00PM	Jones, D.

\* Note: Course listing is subject to change.

# Proving God's Existence: Anselm's Ontological Argument vs. Thomas Aquinas's Empirical Demonstration

By Jamie Kiley

Though medieval Europe was a thoroughly Christian continent harboring only a few pockets of unbelievers, the period's foremost intellectuals still felt the need to prove through reason that God did, in fact, exist. The faculty of reason was of supreme importance in the Middle Ages, so the thinkers of the era were understandably preoccupied with applying rational thought to the central claims of their Christian faith. St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas in particular devoted a considerable amount of effort to this task of demonstrating God's existence. Yet while Anselm and Aquinas both developed proofs for the proposition that God exists, the lines of reasoning employed by the two thinkers differ markedly.

The first distinction between Anselm's and Aquinas's proofs concerns the question of whether God's existence is self-evident. Anselm claims that God's existence is self-evident as soon as an individual has understood the meaning of the terms involved. By definition, he says, God is a being than which no greater can be conceived. Since existence in reality is greater than existence merely in the understanding, God must necessarily exist. Thus, "No one who understands what God is can think that God does not exist" (101).

Aquinas, on the other hand, maintains that God's existence is *not* self-evident. He reasons that unbelievers can deny God's existence even when they understand the meaning of divinity. "[T]he opposite of the proposition *God*

*is* can be mentally admitted," says Aquinas, for "*The fool said in his heart, There is no God* (Ps. liii. 1). Therefore, that God exists is not self-evident" (122). In other words, though Aquinas believes God's existence can be *demonstrated*, he does not believe it is *axiomatic*.

A second difference between the two philosophers lies in the nature of their particular proofs and the reasoning they employ. Anselm's argument is purely ontological—it is an analytic, *a priori* argument stemming from reason alone. His premises do not derive from any observation of the external world; instead, his argument relies on interior knowledge of God. Rather than making an inductive argument drawn from empirical inspection, Anselm reasons deductively, inferring God's existence from logical necessity.

While Anselm attempts to prove God's existence using reason alone, Aquinas demonstrates God's existence through sensory experience. He develops his five proofs inductively, relying heavily on empirical evidence to demonstrate his conclusion. His dependence on the senses is evident, for example, in his first proof, the argument from motion: "It is certain, and *evident to our senses*," he says, "that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is moved is moved by another [...]" (125, emphasis supplied). From this observable evidence in the external world, Aquinas concludes that there must be a First Mover. Aquinas's second, third and fifth arguments are similarly empirical, as the evidence for those proofs is drawn from "the world of sensible things," "nature," and "natural bodies" (126-7). Thus, Aquinas begins with sensory evidence and reasons inductively to the conclusion that there must be a God. In other words, whereas Anselm looked *within* the mind for his proof, Aquinas looks outside the intellect to the external world.

A third difference between Anselm and Aquinas concerns the philosophical

influences from which each one drew in formulating his proofs. Aquinas's demonstrations reflect an Aristotelian worldview, whereas Anselm's proof reflects a largely Platonic or neo-Platonic metaphysical framework. The central assumption of Anselm's proof, for example, is that existence in reality is greater than existence merely in the understanding. This notion of greater and lesser degrees of being assumes the neo-Platonic concept of degrees of existence, and Anselm's specific judgments of relative greatness presuppose Plato's idea of metaphysical "perfections."<sup>1</sup>

Aquinas's proofs, meanwhile, do not display this Platonic influence. Instead, one of Aquinas's primary objectives in his demonstrations of God's existence is to extend Aristotle's principles of act and potency within a Christian worldview. Whereas Aristotle sought to understand the workings of motion, matter and being in the existing world, Aquinas goes further and attempts to explain the *origin* of each of those things—in other words, his proofs are concerned with establishing God as the ultimate cause of Aristotelian motion, matter and being. Aquinas similarly reflects an Aristotelian framework in his emphasis on empirical evidence: whereas Plato and others in the rationalist tradition distrusted the senses and emphasized pure reason instead, Aristotle focused largely on the natural world, and thus was not as hostile to empirical observation.

Anselm and Aquinas also differ on the question of which aspect of God is logically prior—his existence or his nature. Anselm opens his proof with an elaboration of God's nature, for he begins with the statement that God is "something than which nothing greater can be thought" (99). Then he argues to God's existence based on what he knows of God's essence: "surely that than which a greater cannot be thought cannot exist only in the understanding." Because of the logical implications inherent in the divine nature, Anselm can conclude that God must exist.

Aquinas, however, criticized Anselm's proof on the grounds that it is impossible for the human mind to comprehend the divine nature, and therefore it is impossible to reason to God's existence based on his essence. "Now because we do not know the essence of God," he argues, "the proposition is not self-evident to us, but needs to be demonstrated by things that are more known to us, though less known in their nature—namely, by his effects" (I.2.1). In other words, whereas Anselm felt the recognition of God's existence follows on the understanding of his nature, Aquinas argues the opposite—that it is impossible to know God's nature through reason, and thus His nature can only be understood after his existence is first established.

A final difference between the two philosophers lies in their views on how faith and reason interrelate in understanding God's existence. While Aquinas argues that a reasoned demonstration of God's existence is logically prior to faith, Anselm appears to believe that faith must come before understanding. Anselm's argument, in fact, is constructed as a prayer, and it is contained within a work originally titled "Faith seeking understanding" (93). Throughout the work, Anselm maintains the posture of a believer who is asking God to "grant understanding to faith" (99). Even after he has completed his argument for God's existence, he thanks God for allowing him to "understand through [God's] illumination" what he "once believed through [God's] grace" (101). From this, it appears that Anselm believes faith in God's existence precedes rational understanding of the same.

Aquinas, on the other hand, argues the reverse: "Faith," he claims, "presupposes natural knowledge" (124). Though Aquinas believes faith is required to understand God's nature, which cannot be understood through reason alone, faith in Christian doc-

trines comes after God's existence has been demonstrated "scientifically" (124), apart from faith. Hence, Anselm takes God's existence on faith and uses reason to gain understanding of his faith; Aquinas assumes that faith follows an empirical demonstration of God's existence.<sup>2</sup>

Though the two developed very different proofs of God's existence, both Anselm and Aquinas have had a significant influence on the history of arguments in defense of God's reality. Modern philosophers like Descartes and Leibniz along with 20th century philosophers such as Platinga and Gödel all followed Anselm's lead in articulating rationalist arguments for God's existence. Aquinas's empirical arguments, such as his early formulations of the cosmological and teleological arguments, have likewise retained influence for centuries. The proofs developed by both philosophers have drawn criticism along with praise, yet their enduring philosophical influence is a testament to the considerable intellect of both Anselm and Aquinas.

#### Endnotes:

- 1 R. Brecher "Greatness' in Anselm's Ontological Argument." *The Philosophical Quarterly*. 24 (1974): 97-105.
- 2 Aquinas believes the Christian faith rests on the proven fact of God's existence; nevertheless, it is acceptable in his view to accept God's existence on faith if one cannot comprehend a scientific demonstration: "[T]here is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof, from accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated" (124).

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## Philosopher Spotlight: Georges Bataille

[During the Spring 2007 semester, Dr. David Jones is presenting a course on Nietzsche and Bataille. Since Bataille is relatively unknown Sophia presents a brief biography. — Ed.]

Bataille (September 10, 1897 – July 9, 1962) was a French writer, anthropologist and philosopher, though he avoided this last term himself.

Founder of several journals and groups of writers, Bataille is the author of an oeuvre both abundant and diverse: readings, poems, essays on innumerable subjects (on the mysticism of economy, in passing of poetry, philosophy, the arts, eroticism). He sometimes published under pseudonyms, and some of his publications were banned. He was relatively ignored in his lifetime and scorned by contemporaries such as Jean-Paul Sartre as an advocate of mysticism, but after his death had considerable influence on authors such as Michel Foucault, Philippe Sollers and Jacques Derrida, all of whom were affiliated with the *Tel Quel* journal. His influence is felt in the work of Jean Baudrillard, as well as in the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan.

Bataille had an amazing interdisciplinary talent — he drew from diverse influences and used diverse modes of discourse to create his work. His novel *The Story of the Eye*, for example, published under the pseudonym Lord Auch was initially read as pure pornography, while interpretation of the work has gradually matured to reveal the considerable philosophical and emotional depth that is characteristic of other writers who have been categorized within "literature of transgression." The imagery of the novel is built upon a series of metaphors which in turn refer to philosophical constructs developed in his work: the eye, the egg, the sun, the earth, the testicle.

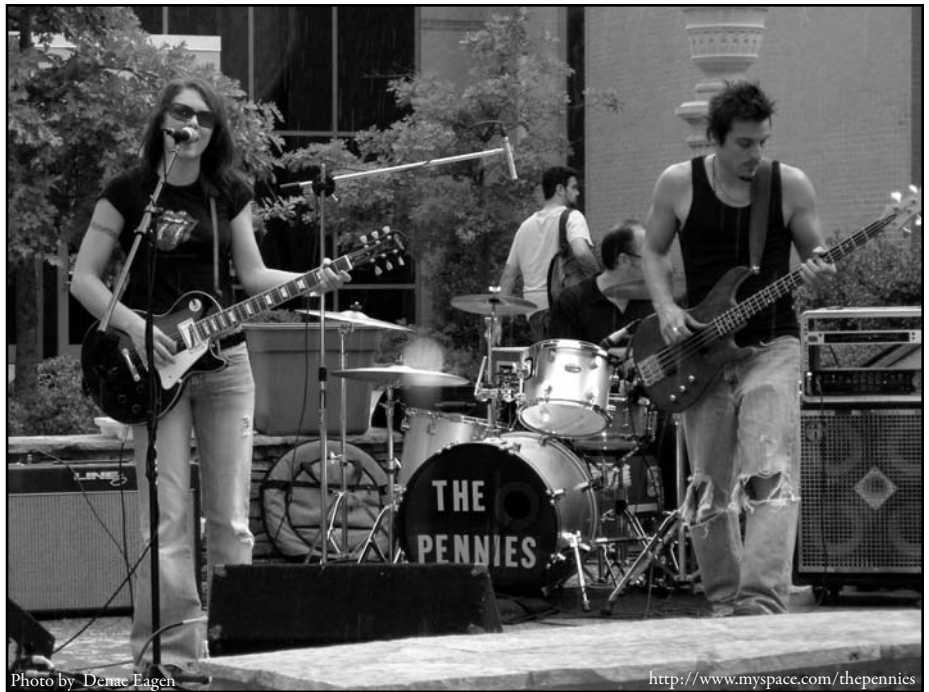
Bataille was also a philosopher, but

for many, like Sartre, his philosophical claims bordered on atheist mysticism. During World War Two, and influenced by Kojève's reading of Hegel, and by Nietzsche, he wrote a *Summa Atheologica* (the title parallels Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*) which comprises his works "Inner Experience", "Guilty", and "On Nietzsche". After the war he composed his "The Accursed share", and founded the also extremely influential journal "Critique". His very special conception of "sovereignty" was discussed by Jacques Derrida, Giorgio Agamben, Jean-Luc Nancy and others.  
 Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges\\_Bataille](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Bataille)

## PSA Rocks!

By Lauren Maddux

This semester's installment of PSA Rocks, (the Philosophy Student Association's fundraiser) was a promising affair but as fate would have it, rain sent us all running for cover. Each semester we in the PSA put together a midday gathering with great food, music and PSA gear for the entire KSU community. We had an especially good lineup this time around with live music by the Pennies, an awesome new band out



of Atlanta. We only got two songs out of them before the rain clouds descended, but both were terrific. Our thanks go out to them for being such good sports. In spite of the rain we had quite a crowd, many of which had pertinent questions about our beloved organization which we were more than happy to answer. The PSA is always delighted to have fresh interest and insights. Keep your ears tuned for the next PSA Rocks and your fingers crossed that next time the rain will stay away.

## The Osoinach Student Lecture Series

The Philosophy Student Association invites KSU students to participate in the upcoming Osoinach Student Lecture Series.

The Osoinach Student Lecture Series provides a forum for current and former Kennesaw State students to share their writing and ideas with the academic community. Through this lecture series, discussion is expanded beyond the classroom and into the community in an informal yet scholarly manner where intellectual exchange can lead to growth.

The series is open to all students who wish to participate. Lectures can be organized as a panel of several papers from multiple participants, or as a single lecture from one presenter. Time is allocated at the end of each presentation for group discussion and sincere objective feedback.

For those interested in graduate studies or in simply enhancing their educational experience, the Osoinach Student Lecture Series is an opportunity which should not be missed. For more information please contact Lauren Maddux at [edana47@yahoo.com](mailto:edana47@yahoo.com).



# The Mike Ryan Lecture Series

## Spring 2006

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### Michael Ruse

Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor Philosophy and Director of the History and Philosophy of Science Program at Florida State University.

**October 23, 2006** at 6:30 in Science 109

*Title: The Evolution-Creation Struggle: An American Story*

*A book signing follows.*

Michael Ruse is Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor Philosophy and Director of the History and Philosophy of Science Program at Florida State University. His books include: *Stem Cell Research*, (Prometheus), *Debating Design: Darwin to DNA*, (Cambridge University Press), *Darwinian Heresies*, (Cambridge University Press), *Darwin and Design: Does Evolution Have a Purpose?* (Harvard University), *Genetically Modified Foods* (Prometheus), *The Evolution Wars: A Guide To The Debates* (Rutgers University Press), *On The Plurality of Worlds: An Essay By William Whewall*, (University of Chicago Press), *Cloning* (Prometheus), *Can A Darwinian Be A Christian? The Relationship Between Science & Religion* (Cambridge University Press), *The Evolutions Wars: A Guide to the Controversies* (ABC Clio), *The Darwinian Revolution: Science Red in Tooth And Claw* (Chicago University Press), *The Philosophy of Biology* (Macmillan), *The Darwinian Paradigm* (Routledge), *Philosophy of Biology Today* (SUNY Press), *But Is It Science? The Philosophical Question in the Evolution /Creation Controversy* (Prometheus), *Is Science Sexist? And Other Problems in the Biomedical Sciences* (Reidel), *Darwinism Defended: A Guide to the Evolution Controversies* (Addison Wesley), *Nature Animated*, (Reidel), *Sociobiology: Sense or Nonsense?*, and *The Philosophy of Biology* (Hutchinson). Michael Ruse has taught at the University of Guelph, Cambridge University, Indiana University, Harvard University, and the L'ecole Pratique Des Hautes Etudes. He received his Ph.D. from Bristol University.

### Bradley Park

St. Mary's College of Maryland

**November 2, 2006** at 12:30 in the Leadership Room (Student Center)

*Title: TBA*

Bradley Park received his Ph.D. from the University of Hawaii and is an Assistant Professor of philosophy at St. Mary's College of Maryland (Maryland's public honors college) where he specializes in East Asian philosophies and religions, including classical Confucianism, Lao-Zhuang Daoism, East Asian Buddhism, and contemporary Japanese philosophy. His research interests also include hermeneutics and phenomenology, particularly as they relate to contemporary discussions about moral considerability, difference, and the question of the "Other." He has published his work on Japanese and Continental philosophy in the prestigious *Continental Philosophy Review* as well as in other outstanding journals.

### William R. LaFleur

E. Dale Saunders Professor in Japanese Studies in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

**November 16, 2006** at 12:30 in the Leadership Room (Student Center)

*Title: Social Issues and Buddhism in Japan: Abortion and Biotechnology*

William R. LaFleur is the E. Dale Saunders Professor in Japanese Studies in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He is also a Professor in the Department of Religious Studies. He did graduate work in Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan and received the Ph.D. in the History of Religions at the University of Chicago. He has taught at Princeton, UCLA, and Sophia University in Tokyo. In 1989 he was the first non-Japanese recipient of the Watsuji Tetsurō Culture Prize for scholarship. His books include *Mirror for the Moon: Poetry by Saigyō 1118-1190* (1978); *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literature Arts in Medieval Japan* (University of California Press, 1986), *Buddhism: A Cultural Perspective* (Prentice-Hall, 1988); *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton University Press, 1992). He edited *Zen and Western Thought: Essays by Masao Abe* (1985), recipient of a prize from the American Academy of Religion, and *Dōgen Studies* (1985), both books published by the University of Hawaii Press. His study, *Awesome Nightfall: The Life, Death, and Poetry of Saigyō* was published in 2003 by Wisdom Publications. He is currently completing work on a volume that studies Japanese critics of American biotechnology and bioethics. He is organizing an international conference to examine differences in bioethics in Japan, America, and Germany. Occasionally he publishes his own poetry.

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