

The Phi Sigma Tau

Bulletin

A Publication of the Department of Philosophy, Southwest Texas State University

Spring, 1996

Issue 2

ORENDUFF AND SILBER TO INTENSIFY THE DISCUSSION OF MORALITY AND VALUES IN THE UNIVERSITY

A lecture and a press conference/dialogue by two prominent philosopher-administrators with roots in central Texas will be the centerpiece of the continuing speaker series on "Morality and Values in the University" at SWT this spring.

J. Michael Orenduff, former chair of the Department of Philosophy at SWT, will return to campus February 21 to speak on the topic, "Autonomy and Responsibility in Higher Education," at 2:00 p.m. in Old Main 320. Since his tenure at SWT in the late 1970s, Orenduff has held a variety of administrative positions, and served as chancellor of the seven-campus University of Maine System until he recently became president of New Mexico State University. Orenduff, whose philosophical background is in logic and mathematics, has been an ardent defender of individual liberties and "free market" principles in the educational environment. His efforts to bring about certain changes in the Maine educational system are noted favorably by House Speaker Newt Gingrich in his 1995 book, *To Renew America*, and have made Orenduff one of the most controversial figures in higher education.

One week later, on February 28, John Silber will be available at 11:00 a.m. in Evans Auditorium to answer questions from students, faculty, and people in the community about his educational philosophy and its implications for current controversial issues in education. A native of San Antonio, Silber is a respected author and internationally famous public lecturer who began his

academic career teaching philosophy at UT in 1955, where he later became department chair. In 1967 he was named dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at UT, but left UT in 1971 to become president of Boston University, a position he has held for a quarter of a century.

Silber's moral and intellectual moorings are in Kantian philosophy; he has identified Kantian principles as the "North Star" upon which his moral compass is set when deliberating about educational decisions. Known for both outspokenness and eloquence, Silber took his ideas about education to the public in 1990 by running for Governor of Massachusetts, but was defeated by now-Governor William Weld in the closest gubernatorial election in Massachusetts's history. In spite of their former political rivalry, Weld this fall appointed Silber chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Education, saying that he was just the person to "rattle the cushy coach the education monopoly has been riding in far too long."

Many questions about the proper role of the university in moral education and the creation of students' values were raised by four speakers who addressed this topic in the fall--Hazel Barnes, David Hoekema, Edward Long, and Robert Kane. Drawing on the background provided by these speakers, *Phi Sigma Tau* members are currently formulating a set of provocative questions to put to both Orenduff and Silber, questions which should help to identify both commonalities and differences in their educational philosophies.

The lectures of all six speakers in the series will be published in a book to be entitled *The University as Moral*

Teacher with an introduction and an epilogue by Jeffrey Gordon and Vincent Luizzi. Sponsors of the lecture series are the SWT Department of Philosophy, the Freshman Seminar Program, the SWT Presidential Task Force on Core Values, the University Lecture Series, and the Texas Committee for the Humanities.

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STUDENT COMMENTARY

by Carlos Armintor

Ever wanted to "grill" a university president? Well, this month you're going to get your chance.

This semester *Phi Sigma Tau* will explore "Morality and Values in the University." On February 21, J. Michael Orenduff, President of New Mexico State University, will give a speech here at SWT on "Autonomy and Responsibility in Higher Education," with a dialogue session to follow. Orenduff is known for endorsing programs that allow students to use computers to obtain degrees with a method called "distance learning." Wouldn't widespread use of such programs jeopardize the student/teacher relationship? What will our future graduates be like if they are not involved in the dialectical process? Was Socrates right in thinking that the best way to learn was to have a dialogue between the students and the teacher? Can we take advantage of technological advances and still

preserve the dialectical process? Doesn't critical thinking require much more than a computer lab, even if it's an "interactive" one? I'm sure Orenduff will be glad to address these issues and we will all have a chance to ask some more questions when he visits SWT.

On February 28 John Silber, long-time president of Boston University, will visit SWT to talk about value controversies in education, to which he is no stranger. He has said that because of his Kantian philosophy he knows where his moral North Star is. He also says that the university is not a democracy. He compares the university president to a heart surgeon who doesn't ask the patient's opinion on what the best procedure is during heart surgery. It is true that one of the weaknesses of democracy is that it tends to commit the biggest fallacy of them all, that is, the appeal to common opinion. Maybe Silber is afraid that as a majority we can probably be talked into anything, whether it is right or wrong, leading to a "tyranny of the majority." For example, look at slavery, the oppression of women, and other injustices which have been widely accepted. Does majority opinion, which may very well have been "created" by special interests and influence-peddlers with lots of money to spend, automatically know what is best for education? Maybe we need some people with moral North Stars to protect us from the efficiency-prone university presidents with "corporate" views of education.

Perhaps Silber sees himself as the savior of the university system. But power can be abused. What would protect us from a university president that went a little overboard? This could lead to totalitarianism and tyranny as well. Furthermore, if we do everything a strong leader suggests without question, we have committed the appeal-to-authority fallacy, which goes against a basic requirement of the dialectical process, asking for reasons to

support ideas. It is an interesting subject which we will be able to explore more in our meetings and with the speakers.

In the meantime think about the following questions: What do you compare the role of university president to? Would Orenduff compare the role of university president to that of a CEO? Does the university president have a right to control what is being taught in the classroom? Is there a covenant that exists between the university and the students (as Edward Long suggested in his lecture last semester)? If so, has SWT kept up that covenant with purchases like Aquarena Springs? In our covenant with the university how much control should the university have with our student fee money? SWT is spending millions on a new student center, when we have an adequate one now. What about things we need more, like parking, refurbished dorms, and a new food service, not to mention the investments which could be made in academic programs, supposedly the reason that all the other stuff exists? Also, is it the university's place to enforce morals and values on the students (or faculty)? Did we come here to learn to be "good boys and girls"? Or should we be left alone altogether when it comes to figuring out our "core values"?

I hope after you read these questions many of your own questions will start to form. Write them down and be ready for an exciting and provocative exchange with Orenduff and Silber as we ask them these and more.

[Armintor is a philosophy senior and a member of *Phi Sigma Tau*.]

LUIZZI AND WILLIAMSON TO ADDRESS *PHI SIGMA TAU*

In response to requests by *Phi Sigma Tau* members for more speakers from within the SWT faculty, Professors Vincent Luizzi and Mark Williamson will be meeting with the group in March and April.

On March 22 Professor Luizzi, who chairs the SWT Philosophy Department, will describe the events, issues, and thought processes which culminated in his book *A Case for Legal Ethics: Legal Ethics as a Source for a Universal Ethic* (SUNY Press, 1993). In this work Luizzi challenges what he believes is the faulty but common assumption that lawyers are governed by a set of rules which fall outside the sphere of general moral principles which guide human conduct. On the contrary, he claims, rules governing the proper conduct of lawyers involve critical reflection on the role of lawyer, just as general moral rules emerge from critical reflection on what it means to be human and to take the different roles which humans take. In the foreword to the book, John Silber has this to say about this process of critical reflection:

Professor Luizzi argues that the ethical rules governing the conduct of lawyers derive from a conception of the role of a lawyer and so evolve through critical reflection on that conception and the rules appropriate to it. This critical reflection is constrained by moral principle: a conception of one's role as a lawyer is valid only if one--following Kant's principle of universalizability--would be willing to have others also adopt that conception. And this mode of ethical thinking, Professor Luizzi argues, is paradigmatic, not only for the ethics of other professions but for ethics in general.

In April Mark Williamson, who is currently doing graduate study at Rice University while teaching at SWT, will share some of his "work in progress" with *Phi Sigma Tau* members. Date and topic to be announced.

The *Phi Sigma Tau* Bulletin

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Phi Sigma Tau
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Spring, 1996

February 16 (Friday)	4-5 p.m.	Meeting: Dialogue Room, LA 367 Elect/Install Officers Preview Orenduff and Silber
February 21 (Wednesday)	2-3 p.m.	J.M. Orenduff to lecture on "Autonomy and Responsibility in Higher Education" Cates Room, Old Main 320
	4-5 p.m.	Discussion with Orenduff Dialogue Room, LA 367
	6-8 p.m.	Reception Home of Jeff Gordon <i>Phi Sigma Tau</i> students welcome!
February 28 (Wednesday)	11-12 a.m.	John Silber Press Conference
March 22 (Friday)	4 p.m.	Meeting Guest Speaker: Vince Luizzi
April 12 (Friday)	4 p.m. (or TBA)	Meeting Guest Speaker: Mark Williamson
April 15 (Monday)	2 p.m.	Teague Lecture Ted Schneyer Topic: "Some Sympathy for the Lawyer as Hired Gun"
April 19 (Friday)	4 p.m.	<i>Phi Sigma Tau</i> Initiation with Reception following

Fall 1996 Philosophy Courses

2311 History of Philosophy Before 1600

Early Greek, Roman, and medieval systems of thought.

2330 Elementary Logic

A Study of nature and forms of correct reasoning, both deductive and inductive.

3301 Philosophical Issues

The great philosophical concepts which through the years have challenged the best thoughts of people and have contributed to the fulfillment of the good life. Emphasis upon the applicability of those concepts to human life in our time and to the development of intellectual perspective.

Approximately one half of this course will focus on the student's critical thinking skills. Credit cannot be given for both 3301 and 1305.

3322 Business and Professional Ethics

Study of major topics in business and professional ethics, including what a profession is, whether it differs from business, and what is involved with the moral education, social responsibilities, and ethical standards of professionals and business people.

3331 Philosophy of Law

The major theses which have been set forth in the history of jurisprudence: foundations of law, natural law, legal positivism, the judicial process, etc. (Capstone)

3340 Symbolic Logic

A study of the logic of propositions through propositional calculi, formal proofs, and first-order functional calculi. Also included is an investigation into the axiomatic method as used in logic and mathematics, including the concepts of completeness and consistency.

3350B Philosophy & Literature

The course is intended to explain the relation between philosophy and literature.

Hon 3390H The Problem of Evil

Is it reasonable to believe in an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good God, despite the appearance of gratuitous evil? The course consists in an examination of major attempts to answer this question.

FULMER REVIEWS JOHNSON'S REASON IN THE BALANCE

In October of 1995, Phillip Johnson, author of *Reason in the Balance* and Professor of Law at the University of California at Berkeley, lectured at UT and SWT regarding what he claims to be the failure of naturalism in science, law, and education. Gilbert Fulmer has reviewed Johnson's book in "A Failed Case Against Naturalism," which appears in the current *Free Inquiry* (Winter, 1995/96, p. 53).

Following is a précis of that review:

Johnson claims to give "the case against naturalism," offering traditional Christian theism in its stead. He identifies (correctly, I believe) theism and naturalism as the two major world views available to educated Westerners, but he presents no arguments whatever for theism. Instead, he blames most of the evils of the contemporary world on naturalism, but gives no argument that this blame is deserved. Nor does he respond to arguments against theism, such as the problem of evil, and arguments that theism is incoherent.

For more on this subject, see Faculty Notes below.

FACULTY NOTES

BOOKS

Marie-Luise Schubert Kalsi is the author of *Alexius Meinong's Elements of Ethics*, recently published by Kluwer Academic Publishers. This 1996 book, which includes both commentary and a translation of Meinong's *Ethische Bausteine*, is Professor Kalsi's fourth significant contribution to Meinong studies and Austrian philosophy. Her previous works in the area include *Meinong's Theory of Knowledge* (1987), *Alexius Meinong On Objects of Higher Order and Husserl's Phenomenology* (1978), and *Alexius Meinong, On Emotional Presentation* (1972).

In *Elements of Ethics*, Professor Kalsi uses her understanding of Meinong's epistemology and ontology to give a critical exposition of his value theory and early attempts to formulate a deontic logic. The author finds in Meinong's ethical theory a mixture of experiential and *a priori* knowledge. She gives particular attention to Meinong's views concerning the possibility of absolute values, the presentations of values, personal and impersonal values, actual and potential values, existence and values, as well as his use of the "Law of Omission" and the problems it raises for his ethical theory.

The University in Your Life, the text prepared by Jeff Gordon for SWT's freshman seminar, has been published by Brown and Benchmark (a subsidiary of Times-Mirror Publishing) and is available for distribution in the world market.

PAPERS AND LECTURES

Vince Luizzi recently spent a week as visiting scholar at the Institute for Philosophy at the Catholic University of the Louvain in Belgium. During his stay, he lectured on the topic, "Human Nature, the Social Reality, and a Reformulation of Kant's Moral Rule," and discussed his book *A Case for Legal Ethics: Legal Ethics as a Source for a Universal Ethic* (1993). He also explored opportunities for SWT students and faculty to affiliate with the Institute.

Both Lynne and Gilbert Fulmer are presenting papers at the February 1996 conference of the Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In "Dirty Linen: Real Problems with Feminists against Pornography!" Lynne Fulmer criticizes ideas being advanced by pro-censorship feminists such as Catherine Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin that censorship of sexual materials and pornography is necessary to reduce violence and discrimination against women. Arguing that "pornography is the sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures and words," these feminists have allied themselves with religious fundamentalists to wage an increasingly successful war on sexually oriented expression, including art, literature, and even materials concerning abortion, contraception, and sexual orientation.

Fulmer argues that this war is profoundly damaging to women's rights and may serve to perpetuate the very violence and discrimination it seeks to end. Moreover, according to Fulmer, the fight to protect women from discrimination and violence through censoring sexual materials diverts attention from the root causes of this discrimination and violence: the ideologies of religion, law, science, sports, and the military, to name only a few. Fulmer agrees with Molly Ivins that the idea that pornography is violence to women mocks the many women who experience real and brutal violence every day.

In his paper, "Reason Unbalanced: Anti-Naturalism in Texas," Gilbert Fulmer identifies what he takes to be the main difficulties of the "case against naturalism" presented by Phillip Johnson in *Reason in the Balance*.

According to Fulmer, one problem with Johnson's view is that, while he claims that supernatural explanations are required to

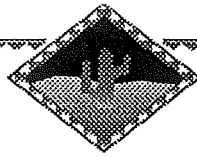
understand the world and life, he denies that his view constitutes an appeal to a "God of the gaps"—one which follows scientific, naturalistic understanding until it runs out, then invokes the supernatural. Fulmer argues that a long line of thinkers, including William Paley, F.R. Tennant, and Pierre LeComte du Nouy, have appealed to a God of the gaps, that Johnson does so also, and that such an appeal is inevitable with any form of teleological argument such as Johnson employs.

Fulmer sees a second and more fundamental flaw in Johnson's view, one which he claims is shared by any argument which purports to explain nature in supernatural terms. Here Fulmer's criticism stems from his counterclaim that the concept of a supernatural being is logically incoherent. Briefly put, Fulmer argues as follows: If any being is to make anything happen, that being's will must be effective, that is, whatever that being wills must happen. However, this fact (an effective will) cannot have been willed into existence by the person himself—for that would require that he have an effective will, in order to bring his effective will into existence. So there cannot be a supernatural being.

Gilbert Fulmer will also present a paper, "Miracles, Consciousness, and Swinburne," at the April 1996 conference of the New Mexico/West Texas Philosophical Association. Fulmer claims that Richard Swinburne's "argument from consciousness" for the existence of God (*Existence of God*, Oxford University Press, 1991) is a variant of the argument from miracles and, as such, is subject to a standard objection: No event can be known to be miraculous, because it is possible that an explanation might exist in terms of natural laws not now known to us. Fulmer argues that, although Swinburne attempts to evade this criticism (by arguing that it is unlikely that any scientific explanation of consciousness is possible), this attempt fails.

TEAGUE LECTURE SET FOR APRIL 15

The third annual Marvin O. Teague Lecture in Applied Jurisprudence has been set for Monday, April 15 at 2:00 pm. This year's speaker will be Ted Schneyer, Professor of Law at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, whose topic will be "Some Sympathy for the Lawyer as Hired Gun." Professor Schneyer, who holds degrees from Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and Stanford, will discuss some of the misconceptions concerning legal ethics which have found their way into moral philosophy. More details will be forthcoming.



LECTURES TO BE PUBLISHED

The topic, "Morality and Values in the University," proved to be fertile ground for the four thinkers who addressed it in the fall, so much so that the Texas Committee on the Humanities has decided to fund the publication of the lectures.

In the first lecture, "Learning Who You Are and Teaching It to Others," Hazel Barnes sparked the imagination of students by asking them to think of themselves as "singular universals" engaged in a process of self-creation which must meet the twin demands of authenticity and responsibility. She challenged university educators to regain their focus on the question, "What does it mean to be human?" and to recognize that it is the university which must become the "conscience of our time."

In "Moral Community on Campus," David Hoekema followed up on these challenges by criticizing the modern university for its permissiveness and abdication of moral responsibility in regard to the moral development of its students. Although Hoekema did not advocate a return to the traditional and repressive doctrine of *in loco parentis*, in which the university attempts to function as an

"institutional parent," he did recommend that the university not shy away from taking a directive stance in regard to character formation, one that actively encourages respect for others, a sense of community, and moral guidance by professors and administrators.

The thrust of Edward Long's lecture, "Predicaments and Promises of the Learning Experience," was that colleges and universities will be able to create an environment hospitable to moral and intellectual development only if they first re-focus on the nature of learning itself and recall that giving direction and guidance to the basic human impulse to learn is their primary reason for being. Long suggested that many academic institutions are losing their sense of direction because they have confused the unique features of the teacher-learner relationship, which he characterized in terms of a "learning covenant," with other human pursuits, particularly those involving the market or "consumer/product" model which is becoming increasingly prevalent in some educational circles.

In the culminating lecture, "Searching for Absolute Values in a Pluralistic World," Robert Kane argued that the fundamental human quest for truth, objectivity, and

absolute values need not be abandoned in spite of the uncertainty and conflicting points of view present in our pluralistic and increasingly multicultural society. Kane maintained that an attitude of openness to all points of view is essential to the university, but that such a commitment to openness need not lead to the relativistic conclusion that there are no objective or absolute values that hold for all persons and all times, as many have mistakenly assumed. Kane took his audience through a six-step process designed to show that there is a moral ground which avoids the extremes of both authoritarianism and relativism. This process, according to Kane, is rooted in a version of Kant's Ends Principle: "Treat every person as an end and not as a means (to your or someone else's ends)." If followed, it does not lead to relativism, but rather to "general norms of human behavior that remarkably conform to a broad range of everyday ethical intuitions." Since an attitude of openness is the catalyst for this process, and since the aim of the university is to open students' minds to every possible truth, an institutional commitment to openness on the part of the university is itself an ethical obligation which is the core of academic freedom.