

## CSB/SJU PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

# THE GADFLY

Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit

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### WELCOME BACK ALL YE PHILOSOPHERS!

The Philosophy department welcomes you back. Let's have a big year together. Please welcome Erica Stonestreet to the department. Wahoo!

### ERICA STONESTREET-*IN HER OWN WORDS*

I'm a native Minnesotan, growing up swimming and canoeing on the lakes and enjoying our macho winters, and I'm glad to be back here after an eight-year exile. After I graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College, I thought I wanted to get a Ph.D. in Logic, Computation and Methodology at Carnegie Mellon University. After three years there, I decided I was wrong about what I wanted, so I left with an M.S. in Logic and Computation and transferred to the University of Michigan. I spent five years there working on my Ph.D., and I kept myself sane throughout all that school by playing the piano (my latest project is Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*), taking camping trips with friends, and writing poetry and essays. I met my husband Aaron in 2005, and we had an eight-hour first date including lunch, a walk, lemonade, and dinner. He eventually convinced me to try sushi, which I now like. When we get fully settled, we'll enjoy taking our kayaks out on the lakes and rivers out here, and watching Michigan football (a habit I'll probably never be able to break him of).

Even though I left Carnegie Mellon and the world of logic, I still enjoy teaching logic. My main interests, however, are in ethics and moral psychology. My focus is on the ethics of individuality, on how we build lives for ourselves, and the relationship between morality and what we care about personally. I draw on examples from literature and film to examine the choices characters make and how it affects the lives they lead. I also have a deep affection for many historical figures in philosophy, including especially Aristotle, Hume, Kierkegaard and Dewey.



### DID YOU KNOW?

No matter how ticklish you may be, you can't tickle yourself. Why not? The brain somehow distinguishes between expected and unexpected sensations. The cerebellum may be the culprit. In any case, you can stop trying to tickle yourself now. It just won't work. So stop. Now. Doesn't that feel better?



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## PHILOSOPHERS GO A'ROAMING 'ROUND THE WORLD

Jean Keller & Charles Wright Give Papers in Seoul, South Korea

Two years ago an announcement entered Jean's in box-- the 22<sup>nd</sup> World Congress of Philosophy would be held in Seoul, Korea in August 2008, with the topic, "The Future of Philosophy." As the parents of two children born in Seoul Korea, this was a challenge worth taking on. With two years notice we could figure out the future of philosophy—and finagle a trip to S. Korea for our family! As it turned out, Chuck did figure out the future of philosophy, and presented a talk on Natural Selection and Moral Sentiment. Jean, though, turned her ideas in another direction. Her talk on feminist philosophy and Korean adoption was accepted by the International Association of Women Philosophers (IAPH) at Ehwa Woman's University, which was held the week prior to the World Congress. While many philosophy conferences seem to be international in name only, these conferences truly were. The co-presenters on Jean's panel came from Thailand, S. Korea, mainland China, and Hong Kong. Chuck's panel had representatives from Russia and mainland China (as well as Korea) – and two of his most energetic questioners in the audience were from Nigeria.

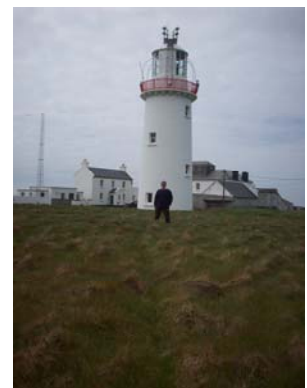
For Jean, it was a truly fascinating experience to be in a country where the reference points were so different, and the philosophical tradition being engaged was as likely to be Buddhism and Confucianism as western philosophy. Jean experienced a moment of anxiety, looking out at her overwhelmingly Korean audience before presenting her talk on Korean adoption, but her paper, which used the example of Korean adoption to rethink the idea of motherhood contained in Sara Ruddick's classic work, *Maternal Thinking*, was well-received.

Chuck was delighted that there were as many as 40 people in attendance for his panel and that he received so many thoughtful questions from audience members. It was the first time he presented a paper at a professional conference that didn't address the philosophy of Jürgen Habermas. The experience was very encouraging because so many people seemed to understand what he was talking about. He's decided that he might try to limit his papers on Habermas to conferences in Europe, where people are more likely to be familiar with the German philosopher's work.

And the kids? Well, visiting Korea meant swimming everyday and lots of time with Mom and Dad. So, the trip was an all around hit.

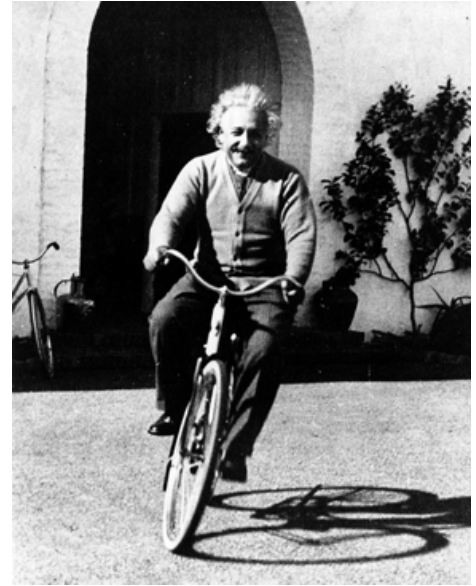
### Cunningham Goes Back to the Old Sod

Tony Cunningham went to Ireland in May to deliver a paper at the Limerick Philosophical Society. His talk was called "Kantian Consolation," and like usual, he explained why Kant's view of something or other is misguided. While there, he spent a week at the Loop Head Lighthouse in southwest Clare to do some research. Loop Head and Galley Head Lighthouses serve as backdrops in his novel, *Mick's Man*. Cillian MacSweeney is an old lighthouse keeper looking back on his life and trying to make some sense of it to leave a record for his American grandson. In typical Irish style, Cillian's story is a dark one (he was the protector of Michael Collins, the Irish patriot). But you'll be glad to know that everything comes out just fine in the end (sort of).



A very small Tony Cunningham in front of Loop Head.

See old Albert Einstein over there? At one time, folks called him *Albert The Thick*. You see, the man just wasn't getting any blood to his brain. All that thinking about the great expanse of the universe was actually shrinking the inside of his own head. And then one day he was late for class and borrowed a bike to get there. It was a lovely fall day. The sun was shining with the last bit of summer warmth and the air had that little chill of winter to come. As he was riding along, he thought to himself, "Damn, this is pretty fun." Well, the next thing you know, he was riding all over the place that fall. All that riding finally got the blood pumping to his brain (some people later hypothesized that all that hair on his head may have scared the blood away). Yes, Albert was a new man with some blood in his brain. Suddenly he was pumping out his famous Theory of Relativity. So take a lesson from Albert and get your body moving this fall.



**REVOLUTION  
CYCLE and SKI**



160 29th Avenue South, St. Cloud—320-251-BIKE

Says Albert, "Whoa baby, I feel like a comet going a million miles an hour and it feels just like dark chocolate! Moma!"

## NEWS

### Visiting Speaker

Jacob Held, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Central Arkansas, will grace us with a talk on Friday, September 26th in Quad 360 at 4:15. Refreshments will be served. The title of the talk is "Retributivism Contextualized: The Role of Honor in Kant's Theory of Punishment." Professor Held's talk will explore the notion of *retributivism* in relation to Kant. Retributive theories of punishment stress the notion of *just deserts* or *giving people what they deserve* by punishing them for their offenses. Of course, maybe you'll be tempted to spend a Friday afternoon in something other than philosophical contemplation. But if you don't make every effort to come to this talk, the department will get you. Yes, you'll be hunted down and we'll give you what you deserve. So why not join your fellow philosophers for some food for the mind and body on the 26th. And when you're all done, you can go off for whatever kind of weekend fun you might have planned.

### The Philosophy Club Lives!

Several interested students intend to reform the Philosophy Club this year. The Philosophy club has been inactive for two years, but we are revising our constitution and submitting a budget this fall. Our mission is to facilitate philosophical discussion and to do so we aim to bring at least one non-faculty Philosophy speaker to campus and sponsor at least one philosophy-related trip. We also want to bring together panels and more informal discussions between aspiring philosophers on campus. We want to welcome anyone interested to philosophy to join our club and attend our meeting and events. Our first meeting is Tuesday, September 16th at 7 pm at the Fireside Lounge in Sexton. If you have any questions please contact faculty advisor, Dr. Emily Esch. We look forward to seeing you Tuesday!

## Good Library Books Corner

No doubt you'll do plenty of reading this semester in your courses. But nothing beats taking a good book off a library shelf and immersing yourself for the sheer enjoyment of it. This corner has regular suggestions about interesting books you can find in our very own libraries. Go read yourself silly!

John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography*, Clemens & Alcuin Libraries . B1606.A2.—Mill is a giant of the 19th century. He wrote on all sorts of subjects, but he never held an academic post. He worked as a clerk for the East India Company. His childhood education was extraordinary. Mill studied Greek, Latin, philosophy, history, and calculus as a young child. By his teenage years he was a formidable intellectual. But in his 20th year, he asked himself whether he would be truly happy if he were to get everything his utilitarian philosophy said he should want. A negative answer plunged him into a deep depression. Eventually he diagnosed his problem as a lack of strong affects and he undertook a systematic reading of the Romantic poets. Mill's *Autobiography* is a fascinating look inside the mind of a great philosopher.

## A NOTE FROM DE HIGH CHAIR



Yes? Can I help you?

As chairperson of the Philosophy Department, I have the good fortune to meet with a fair number of students when they are thinking about majoring in philosophy, and then again when they are about to graduate. I'm struck by how many graduating seniors express a degree of disappointment that they never got a chance to study this philosopher or that school of thought. Of course, four years feels like a long time through the windshield and nothing at all through the rear-view mirror. So I'm not surprised that folks would leave here wanting more. You can't fit in everything in four years. But I'd also pass along a bit of advice. You don't have to wait for a philosophy course to read Nietzsche or Levinas or Camus. One of the best things you can ever do is to make yourself a reading list and then read *on your own*. Your friendly philosophy faculty can always help with suggestions and advice. Just ask and you will receive!

Tony Cunningham

## This Space For Rent! (Cheap)

Believe it or not, this space could have some brilliant piece from you. Yes, philosophy majors and minors are encouraged to submit something for the award-winning *Gadfly* (winner of the CSB/SJU best philosophy newsletter for two years running). What sorts of things might the *Fly* be talking about here? Well, the possibilities are almost endless. Maybe you have a favorite book you like to discuss or review. Or maybe you have a wickedly good film you'd like to write about. You might have some item that you'd like to bring to the attention of fellow majors and minors. If you have an idea, just hit Tony Cunningham over the head with it. Don't delay! The next issue is waiting for your touch. Wahoo!



Need some coffee? Contact Brother Dennis Beach (2997) and get some of the good stuff before it's all gone. Jazz up that brain of yours and serve a good cause at the same time.