

# The Dialectic

Classics & Philosophy Newsletter  
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## Dear Philosophers and Classicists,

I am pleased to offer up for your enjoyment and edification another edition of *The Dialectic*. As you will see, there are many exciting things happening in the Department of Philosophy and Humanities at UTA.

Lauren Grady  
President  
Philosophy Club at UTA

## Professor Harry Reeder Rocks Our World

Professor Harry Reeder presented a lecture as part of the *Phi Sigma Tau* Faculty Colloquium series on Friday, 11 October 2002, in the Red River Room of the University Center. The lecture was entitled "Globalizing Education and the Preservation of Indigenous Cultures."

In his lecture, Reeder discussed the insights of Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl against the backdrop of a discussion of the effects of globalization on indigenous cultures.

Edmund Husserl, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, was a phenomenologist. Also a phenomenologist was his student, Martin Heidegger.



**Professor Reeder lectures to a rapt audience**

Professor Reeder dealt specifically with the activities of a Guatemalan group that wishes to preserve the remains of the culture of the Mayans. "These people are very concerned that

we don't turn Guatemala into 'little America'," he said.

Reeder proposed a sort of dissolving of the cultures, in which the native culture of a people is not itself lost. He said that a phenomenological understanding of culture is a way of forming a mutual understanding or "subjective" understanding of the cultures involved.

Yet the ideas from indigenous people can only truly be understood in their native language. This presents a problem. "English will be the language of globalization, and there are many languages that have concepts that don't translate well into English," he said.

Reeder said that phenomenology itself has been attacked as being ethnocentric. "Even the things we think we know most clearly can be stood on their head and seen in a different way."

Reeder concluded that rather than overrunning indigenous cultures we should preserve them, drawing on one of Heidegger's insights.

Heidegger rejected the idea that humans are separated from the world, an idea that he said natural science too often subscribes to. Heidegger's idea of "Dasein," literally "there-being," suggests that human life needs to be understood "as-lived." Therefore, indigenous cultures—which are often more closely a part of the natural environment that the globalizers are set on developing—need not be destroyed by a globalizing society.

## The *Philosopher's Index* Keeps on Giving!

Last October, Noel Anderson, Humanities Bibliographer and Librarian for Philosophy, provided a lunchtime demonstration in the Central Library of the *Philosopher's Index* bibliographic database. The Philosophy Department usually sponsors such a demo at least once a year; using this great resource is now a requirement in all 3000- and 4000-level PHIL courses in which students are assigned a term paper involving outside research.

Accessible from the UTA Libraries' homepage, the *Philosopher's Index* allows one to search for books and articles in philosophy by author, keyword, title, and so forth. Over a

sandwich lunch, Noel demonstrated how to use the *Philosopher's Index* to a room of interested philosophy students. As one student noted, "It doesn't get much better than this: food and philosophy!"

You can get to the *Philosopher's Index* website by linking from the Libraries' cool Subject Research Guide to Philosophy page:

<http://www.uta.edu/library/research/rt-phil.html>

(Click "Databases for Philosophy!")



**Scott Pickering ponders a point in a recent Philosophy Club meeting**

### **Philosophy Alumnus Ken Williford Returns to UTA to Lecture**

Kenneth Williford, a 1995 UTA graduate in philosophy, gave a Philosophy Lecture Series lecture, Friday, 7 February 2003, in Room 101 College Hall, on "The Intentionality of Consciousness and the Consciousness of Intentionality."

Williford has really been globetrotting—giving presentations or lectures during the past year in Tucson, Arizona; Paris, France; Columbia, Missouri; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Barcelona, Spain; and Miskolc, Hungary.



**Cookies and Ken Williford at the "pre-talk" reception**

He began his graduate-school career by studying early modern philosophy and during that period presented papers on the work of George Berkeley in Chicago, Illinois; Newport, Rhode Island; and Dublin, Ireland. More recently, Williford has been working in the philosophy of mind, a subdisciplinary area of the profession that he said is very competitive.

He told a group of students over cookies at a pre-talk reception not to be afraid to read papers when they study philosophy. "Start going to conferences as soon as you possibly can," he advised students. "Just being there and meeting people helps."

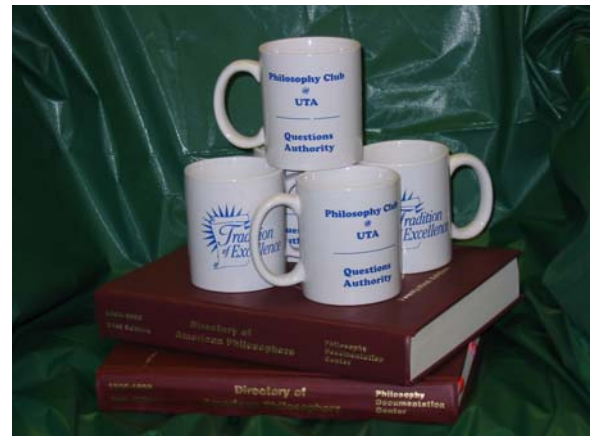
Williford described philosophy as a slightly "isolating discipline," so he encouraged students to exchange ideas with other "like-minded people."

He is currently completing his Ph.D. dissertation, *The Logical Structure of Consciousness*, at the University of Iowa. He holds a Dissertation Year Fellowship and has articles forthcoming in *Hume Studies* and *The British Journal for the History of Philosophy*.

### **Mug Mania Continues!**

A few mugs still remain for those of you who want to buy more for the "gifting" of friends and relatives during the upcoming year—check with Billie in 305 Carlisle Hall. These are a bargain at \$5 each.

Mugs sales have been a good fundraiser for the Philosophy Club, according to Vice President Lizzy Ruska. "Giving your friends a Philosophy Club mug on their birthdays really makes quite a statement," she said.



**"Philosophy Club @ UTA—Questions Authority"**

### **Phi Sigma Tau Party a Smashing Success**

In November, Jon Olson, President of our local Texas Mu chapter of *Phi Sigma Tau*, the International Honor Society in Philosophy, hosted an informal party for new and old members at his home. Members reported having a great time eating snacks, playing pool,

and talking. Jon's dog Vince was also the recipient of much attention.



Vince mugs for the camera at a *Phi Sigma Tau* soirée

### Ciaran Cronin Lectures on Kant

On Friday, 8 November 2002, Professor Ciaran Cronin, from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Illinois at Chicago, presented a Philosophy Lecture Series lecture entitled "Kant's Politics of Enlightenment" to an audience of more than 50 people in the Red River Room of the University Center.

Cronin defined enlightenment, following Kant, as "the human being's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity." Thus, he described the motto of enlightenment, "Have courage to make use of your *own* understanding."



Professor Cronin answers a question

Cronin described how Kant's theories of enlightenment were developed during the reign of Fredrick the Great in an "absolute regime." He described the "social contract" that the absolute ruler and the people shared in the time Kant was writing.

This contract was one in which the people gave the ruler power in exchange for protection by the "rule of law." However, this led to the battle Cronin described between the absolute monarchy and free expression.

"Argue as much as you will and about what you will, only obey," Cronin quoted from Kant.

Kant's theories of enlightenment encompassed the use of what Cronin described as "public" and "private" uses of reason, where "public" is always free and "private" restricted, but both contributed to the progress of the enlightenment.

Cronin described the transition from this "absolute regime" to people ruling themselves. He also said writing was a tool of the enlightenment. "Thus, freedom of the pen..." he said, "is the sole palladium of the people's rights."

### Homerathon Approaches Swiftly! *The Timeless Story of One Man's Quest to Reach Home begins again...*

The Classical Studies Program at UTA together with the Classics Club is again sponsoring this year's Homerathon, a day-long recitation of Homer's *Odyssey*. It is scheduled from 7 a.m. until 10:30 p.m. on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, on the Nedderman Hall Mall. (Lizzy says, "Let's all sign up!")



It is free and open to the public. Sign up to read a 15-minute chunk of the text, at

<http://honors.uta.edu/classics/>



### Feeling grateful...nostalgic...generous?

Please send your donations in support of our programs and activities to the address at

<http://www.uta.edu/philosophy/contact.php>.

Also be sure to send your alumni news to [bhughes@uta.edu](mailto:bhughes@uta.edu).