



# Philosophy

Department Newsletter

University of Colorado at Boulder

Fall 2011



## Letter from the Chair

Graeme Forbes

Dear Students, Alumni, Friends and Colleagues:

This is a rather tardy letter from the Chair, who has just survived a complicated semester. Nevertheless, my timing allows me to wish you the seasons' greetings appropriately. And I can also pass on various pieces of recent news which would be a bit old if I didn't get to mention them until next year as a result of having got this letter to the editor on time!

First, you may recall that last year I expressed the hope that we'd rise in the Philosophical Gourmet's biennial rankings of philosophy graduate programs, and I'm happy to report that in the recently unveiled 2011–13 rankings we have indeed gone up, from 26 to 24 (you have less chance of falling over if you take small steps than if you attempt leaps and bounds). We're now 11<sup>th</sup> among state universities, and our new overall position represents a steady climb from 36<sup>th</sup> over the last seven years.

The Gourmet also groups programs by specialty, and here we have some big headlines, for we were placed in the top group for Applied Ethics, along with Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Oxford, Princeton, and Rutgers; and also for Feminist Philosophy, along with MIT, Sheffield, and the University of Washington. In addition, we were strongly ranked in a wide range of other specialties, including Metaphysics, Ethics, and various areas in the History of Philosophy.

We've also learned recently of success in some internal College competitions. Both Bob Pasnau and Mitzi Lee are to be congratulated, the former for his College Scholar's Award and the latter for her Center for the Humanities and Arts faculty fellowship (in which she repeats our success of the previous year with Mike Huemer's award). Bob will be working on "Aristotle through Arabic Eyes", mainly focussing on Averroes' commentaries, while Mitzi will be working on Aristotle's political philosophy. As you can tell, Aristotle is big at CU Boulder. Earlier in the year we also had success, indeed



Graeme Forbes, Department Chair

a double one, in the Kayden Book Prize competition, with Rob Rupert's book *Cognitive Systems and the Extended Mind* winning first place and Kathrin Koslicki's *The Structure of Objects* (with its neo-Aristotelean themes) taking runner-up.

There will be a mini-conference on Rob's book, and he is becoming something of a master-organizer of conferences, since he is also the local organizer for the 2012 meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology here in Boulder, and last spring organized the very successful Cox Family Visitor events, when we had David Chalmers in town for a week. These are one-off occasions, and complement our usual sequence of CHPS conference, Morris Colloquium, Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference, and RoME summer conference.

A clutch of our graduate students have just been attending the APA Eastern Division, where many have had job interviews. We keep our fingers crossed for them as they wait for the phone to ring with an offer of a campus interview, though nowadays it's more likely to be a computer sound-effect signaling an email with the same message. The philosophy major also continues to flourish, with around three hundred students, though we are watching

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## Faculty Activities 2010-2011

**David Barnett** published three articles. In one, he argued that, unlike our bodies, we are not composed of other things. In another, he argued that it's possible to know whether Harry is bald, even if it's vague whether he's bald. In a third, he developed a new theory of counter-factual statements—statements of the form, 'If so and so had been the case, such and such would have been the case.' He delivered the Keynote Address to the Midwest Undergraduate Philosophy Conference at Creighton University. And his house burned down. [Quit whining. —Ed.]

**David Boonin** completed his first year of exile as Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities. In between bouts of harassing department chairs and threatening to cut their budgets, he made the final revisions to his book *Should Race Matter?* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011) and continued to make progress on a new book on our obligations to future generations. He also gave talks to the philosophy departments at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the University of Haifa.

**Eric Chwang** had two more papers

changes in College advising procedures closely, as they may put a barrier between us and those who've expressed an interest in the subject.

There is therefore much to rejoice about, but I can also find some things to complain about. I wrote last year that nearly \$7 million in athletics revenue had been surrendered to switch conferences, and that this was only as much as had been revealed at that point. Putting various articles on different pieces of the process together, I eventually arrived at a conservative estimate of about \$20 million in one form of cost or another, and was told by a senior administrator that this was correct. I was also told of various expected benefits that would justify such a wild gamble—sorry, sober investment—but some of these are already starting to look shaky. Stay tuned for the bad news. Meanwhile, each time we try to put together our class schedule for a future semester, we hit the same stumbling block, that the campus simply doesn't have enough classrooms to satisfy demand. Fixing this would be worth a multi-million dollar investment, I think.



Michael Dummett (1925–2011)

But enough complaining. As I write, I have just finished reading yesterday's Guardian's obituary of Michael Dummett, who was, in the last third of the twentieth century, among a handful of the very best philosophers writing in English, so I shall end with some personal recollections of him. I first encountered Dummett in 1976, at his All Souls' seminar, when I was in my third year as a graduate student at Oxford. I retain one indelible memory from that seminar, of an occasion on which Gareth Evans put a question to Dummett, who seemed not to understand it. Evans

reformulated his question, but Dummett still looked puzzled, and the room, despite the presence of McDowell, Peacocke, Charles Taylor and other boldface names, fell silent. I fancied I had some idea of what Evans was getting at, so I took a very deep breath—no-one who knew Evans will need to ask why—and said "What I think Mr. Evans is suggesting is..." and then turned hesitantly to Gareth, expecting the usual corrosive savaging. But what came out his mouth was "You have stated my point clearly and precisely," and from Dummett, "Ah, I see, thank you." I believe I blushed. I certainly walked on air for the rest of the week, and sometimes wonder if that was the high point of my career, everything since then just being a gentle falling back to Earth.

I got to know Dummett better three years later, when my last two years at New College coincided with his first two as A. J. Ayer's successor in the Wykeham Chair of Logic. He was the most impressive individual I have met, three or four complete human beings rolled into one. Besides being the top British philosopher at that point, he was also a committed campaigner for improved race relations, which he thought the major social issue of the time. When Amin expelled Uganda's Asians, many of them came to Britain, and Dummett spent countless hours at Heathrow helping them navigate the far from friendly reception they were getting from British immigration authorities. His involvement in many practical projects like this explains why *Frege: Philosophy of Language* bears a publication date of 1973 instead of 1963.

Dummett was Britain's leading Catholic intellectual, and regularly contributed to religious "think" magazines. He was also a world authority on voting systems, and on the history of playing cards, writing tomes on each that equaled the length of any of his philosophical works. He devised a voting system that was used at All Souls for the election of a new Warden, though rumor had it that the system was deliberately designed to produce the right outcome (Bernard Williams) but was so complicated that many of the Fellows misvoted, resulting in the wrong outcome. As an antiquarian, he was regularly consulted by Sotheby's and Christie's when playing cards of historical interest came up for auction. In all, then, he had a remarkably eclectic range of intellectual and practical achievements, and was a philosopher of whom the profession can be proud. □

published, "A Puzzle about Consent in Research and Practice" in the *Journal of Applied Philosophy* and "On Coerced Promises" in *Promises and Agreements: Philosophical Essays* (Oxford UP). In San Diego, he presented his paper "Freedom from Autonomy" at the last session of the Pacific APA in San Diego, to a rapturous audience of 10, including two personal non-academic friends who were in the area. He also caught his first plagiarizers (two!) and exam cheaters (also two!) ever, both in the same class. He's not sure whether that's good or bad.

Carol Cleland's anthology (co-edited with Mark Bedau), *The Nature of Life*, was published by Cambridge University Press. Two articles, "Prediction and Explanation in Historical Natural Science" and "Life without Definitions" were published by, respectively, *British Journal of Philosophy of Science* and *Synthese*. She completed an article (with Sheralee Brindell) for a new anthology on science and pseudoscience and is finishing five additional articles on life and historical science for various book projects and special issues of journals. She is finishing up work on a book, *The Quest for a Universal Theory of Life* (under contract with Cambridge UP). She spoke on historical science at three conferences, spoke on the nature and origin of life at three other conferences, and was summoned by the National Research Council to "testify" on the arsenate life controversy in Washington. The highlight of her year was being invited to harass speakers at a select science workshop on the origins of life at Arizona State University.

John Fisher's chapter "Popular Music" was published in the *Routledge Companion to Music*. He delivered a paper on the blues and Joel Rudinow's book *Soul Music* at the annual meetings of the American Society for Aesthetics in Victoria, Canada in October 2010. He delivered a paper on "The Creativity of Nature" at the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association in San Diego in April 2011. Although he attended a very nice retirement party in May (for himself), he continues to work on

# Interview with Ajume Wingo

*Professor Wingo is a political and social philosopher who joined CU Boulder in 2008. He recently spoke with Graeme Forbes about his summer adventures.*

**GF:** You've gone on some field trips recently to pretty "hot" parts of the world. Early in the summer you went to Tunisia and Egypt. Tell us a bit about that trip.

**AW:** Thanks to modern media, many of us witnessed in real time the uprisings in northern Africa that started in Tunisia and spread to Egypt, Libya, and then to the Arabian peninsula. What I find most remarkable is that those uprisings—the Arab Spring—were not sparked principally by a political party or an organized interest group, and that, for the first time on the African soil that I can remember, the armies—which are always the ultimate decider of events like this and nearly always on the side of their benefactors, the ruling governments—turned down orders to crush the uprisings. That the putatively omnipotent President of Tunisia was forced by ordinary people into flight at night; that Mubarak, the "President for life" of Egypt, was compelled to resign by the might of the Egyptian people's will; and that Colonel Kaddafi was led by his people into a losing standoff, were unprecedented events in Africa's history.

As a political philosopher and an African, I wanted to get a first-hand look at what those remarkable African people were going through, and how they were trying to remake their world. And I wanted to write something that is meaningful to me and to the African citizens I was interested in hearing from. That's why I went.

The most frustrating aspect of my trip was obtaining a visa. Once I made the decision, the next step was to obtain the visas to travel to Tunisia, Egypt, and, I hoped, to Libya as well, where fighting between the rebels and Khaddafi's forces was still going on at the time. The Egyptian tourist visa was not difficult to obtain; all the Egyptian embassy really wanted was to know that I had disposable income to spend in Egypt. At the time, of course, the images coming out of Egypt had scared away their normal Western tourists, so they were eager to let in anyone likely to help replace that income.

The Tunisian visa was more difficult to get. For some unknown reason, I was classified as some kind of VIP (which I protested), and was told that I needed approval directly from some council in Tunis. So I waited. And waited. Africans know nothing if not how to wait, but I guess I've lost some of that ability from living



*Ajume H. Wingo*

so long here in the United States. After two weeks of waiting, I finally gave up and ordered them to send my passport back. The passport was sent back, and of course a week later I received a call that my visa had been approved. I had already cancelled my prepaid air ticket and hotel reservations, but I decided to start the process over again, this time successfully. So at last I was set.

**GF:** We are getting the impression from the Western press that Tunisia is doing rather better than Egypt in making progress towards democracy. Does that seem right to you?

**AW:** The answer to that question depends in part on what we mean by "democracy". Democracy entails some general sense of self-rule by citizens through elections. But the kind of democracy that I am interested in seeing countries in Africa and the Middle East develop is more than just a system in which citizens elect their political leaders. As a sort of a prologue to answering your question, let me first say I started studying Western philosophy hoping it would shed some light on the problems of contemporary Africa. More precisely, I wanted to know what it is that has so consistently stymied the talent, energy, and ambition of Africans from creating a better world for themselves. As part of this project, I've been working on a book manuscript entitled *The Citizen of Africa*. When the Arab Spring broke, I was working on a chapter in which I diagnose some of Africa's problems as stemming from what I call *leader-centrism*, or the view that political systems should be represented and analyzed in terms of individual social and

various projects for which he hopes he now has more time. He is currently editing (with Jeanette Bicknell) a special issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* on song, songs and singing.

**Graeme Forbes** gave talks at a workshop on "Mental Files" at the Institut Nicod in Paris, at the Workshop in Philosophy and Linguistics at the University of Michigan, at the University of Bucharest, and at Eötvös University in Budapest. His paper "Context-Dependence and the Sorites" appeared in *Vagueness and Communication* (Springer, 2011).

**Ben Hale** published articles in such journals as *The Monist* and *Science, Technology and Human Values*; published essays in two edited volumes; gave refereed talks at the University of South Carolina, the ISEE/IAEP annual conference, the UNFCCC climate conference in Cancun, among other locations; and was invited to give talks at the University of Montana Geoengineering Workshop, the Geoengineering Working Group at the University of Washington, and the Seminar on the Environmental Economics of Creation Stewardship sponsored by the Foundation for Research on Economics and the Environment. Most of his work recently has focused on ethical questions associated with environmental remediation. Specifically, he is working on the question of geoengineering as a response to climate change. In other areas, he again coordinated Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress with Alastair Norcross. In January 2011 the journal he co-edits re-launched as *Ethics, Policy & Environment*. His book *The Wicked and the Wild: Why You Don't Have to Love Nature to be Green* is under contract with the University of Chicago Press and is expected to be published in Fall 2012.

**Bob Hanna** published 8 articles and 3 book reviews, and did invited talks in San Francisco; Campinas, Brazil; Oxford; Sydney; Melbourne; South Bend, Ind; Victoria, Canada; Oslo, Norway;



political leaders, and the propensity to think of problems and solutions to political problems in terms of finding the right individuals to fill positions of power. This view, in my humble opinion, is one bound to lead to self-deception when one believes that one has found such a personality and/or self-contempt when one realizes that there are no such persons.



Ask ordinary Africans all over the continent what their main political problem is and you get one resounding answer: bad leaders. Ask those same people how to remedy that problem and you are told that the solution is to replace the bad leaders with good ones. The cry in Tunisia was “Bin Ali must go!” In Egypt, “Mubarak must go!” And in Libya, “Kaddafi must go!” I went to these countries to find out from ordinary people (the ones who best know their problems because they live them) what they hope will happen when this trio finally goes.

Now, to your question. When I asked the people I met in both Egypt and Tunisia what they hope to happen after the tyrants finally go, without exception, I was told that the next step for them was to organize elections to elect members of the constituent assembly to put together new constitutions that will enable fair and free elections for new heads of state, presumably, good leaders. Well, Tunisia did just that a few days ago and Egypt is about to follow suit, should the military allow that to happen. The fact that the elections in Tunisia, the flashpoint of the uprising, took place and did so nonviolently should be an indicator of progress. But to the extent that the elections are thought of principally as a means of finding the right leader, it is no progress at all. This is leadercentrism all over again, and puts them back to square one, the place they were before the uprising. Had the people of Tunisia aimed at reorienting the question of political sovereignty from “who should rule” to how to depersonalize governance, this would have meant real progress.

Leadercentrism is not limited to Africa. The United States has its own share, for it seems that wherever you look you find leadership seminars, courses, and institutes; universities pride themselves on identifying “the leaders of

tomorrow”; bookshelves sag with the weight of works on leaders and leadership. Primary school libraries and classroom walls are adorned with images and narratives of past leaders and heroes with the hope that the young will emulate them. Indeed, people may allow consideration of “leadership qualities”—for instance, Barack Obama’s much-touted “temperament”—to trump their policy preferences when it comes to selecting candidates. Not surprisingly, then, well-intentioned Westerners sometimes seek to ameliorate problems in Africa by finding the right individual leaders who will be good “partners” in reform.

But there is a difference in American leadercentrism. America has some good fortune that Tunisia and Egypt do not. The Founders of the United States did everything to orient their politics towards institutions and not personnel. Tyrannical tendencies are a factor of all heads of state and they are devastating to life in leadercentric nations like the ones you find in Africa. The pleasure of political power is infantile in nature. In action it is like a sugar drunk kid feeling immortal, capable of doing just about anything. It is a form of self-expression backed by the resources of the state. As long as Tunisia and Egypt continue on the course of leadercentrism, they are merely giving another personality or faction the chance to consolidate power. Maybe they’ll get their Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus or George Washington or Nelson Mandela this time. But who would bet on that? What’s far more likely is that they’ll get just what they’ve gotten before: ambitious, brutal, and perfectly run-of-the-mill autocrats.



So to answer the question, I’d say that while things look somewhat more stable in Tunisia than in Egypt, both countries have a fundamental problem shared by much of the rest of Africa, that is, an almost complete reliance on the personal qualities of political leaders. Not good at all!

Yet I also have hope for both Tunisia and Egypt, hope borne of the fact that the uprisings happened now. Many in the West see the uprisings in terms of bread and butter. But strongman regimes like those that dominated

New York; and Oldenburg, Germany. He continued work on his book *The Rational Human Condition*, ran two discussion/research groups, supervised the departmental honors thesis program, and generally had his idea of a so-called good time.

**Chris Heathwood** gave talks at Bowling Green State University, San Diego State University, and the Pacific APA. Four articles of his appeared in print—on the ontological argument; on personal identity and abortion; on desire theories of welfare; and on reasons, pleasure, and welfare. He completed a couple of encyclopedia entries—one on organic unities and another on reductionism in ethics—and continues to work on some projects on welfare and in metaethics. He also continues to be disappointed by the Rockies (the baseball team, not the mountains).

**Adam Hosein** presented work on immigration and equality at the Leeds philosophy department and the International Society for Utilitarian Studies conference in Lucca. He gave a talk at CU’s Center for Ethics on the doing/allowing distinction in the law. He gave comments at the Pacific APA meeting. Injury prevented him from continuing his goalless streak as a member of Team Qualia. [Also prevented him from breaking his goalless streak. —Ed.]

**Michael Huemer** published papers on probability theory and the coherence theory of justification, on agent-centered norms in epistemology, on the principle of “metacoherence” (which requires thinkers to see their own beliefs as knowledge), and on the problem of risk for absolutist ethical theories. Another paper on Phenomenal Conservatism is forthcoming. His manuscript on political authority has stretched past 350 pages. In the summer, he learned to write computer games, to give something back to the community.

**Alison Jaggar** published an edited book, *Pogge and his Critics* (Polity Press, 2010). She gave talks at the University of Alabama, the Australian National University, the University of Oslo, and the Pacific APA. She continued her work as

Tunisia and Egypt have no difficulties dealing with protests arising from the physical needs of their people. All they have to do is to increase rice and flour subsidies and get the police (and if necessary the army) to spill some blood and see the situation calm down or simply wait the hungry protesters out. This strategy worked well in the '60s, '70s, '80s and even '90s in Africa.

But when, as in Egypt and Tunisia, the protests are sparked not by physical needs of the citizenry but because citizens are demanding a more responsive government, then those regimes face demands that can only be satisfied through total overhaul of current governmental structures. In fact, the uprising occurred not in spite of but because of the economy's strong performance. Tunisia's economy expanded between 2% percent and 8% percent in each of the past twenty years. Egypt is also much better off than it used to be. Since 1990 its GDP per capita has grown at an annual rate of about 3% percent; its standard of living has almost doubled. Infant mortality has fallen sharply, and life expectancy is rising.

When the demands against governments are for personal freedom, individual fulfillment and meaningful work, then we see a chance for real change, a paradigm shift. It is against this background that one should wonder whether a change in leadership alone in Egypt and Tunisia, *ceteris paribus*, would have any real effect at all.

**GF:** Many credit modern internet technology for the successes in Tunisia and Egypt. What is your take?

**AW:** Humans as information-hungry agents need information to navigate the world, and when that information is readily available, as in the case of Tunisia and Egypt, then we can expect success. Modern information technology—the internet, cell phones, et cetera—played a significant role. I saw internet cafes all over Tunis and Cairo. There were ATMs all over, which is just another indication of the penetration of information technology into everyday life in North Africa. Recent surveys show there were over 100 million internet users in Africa in 2010. More than 17 million Egyptians use the internet, more than a fifth of the Egyptian population. In Tunisia, penetration of the internet is even greater, with about 3.6 million users out of a population of only about 10 million. Compare Tunisia and

Egypt to the tyrant-stricken country of Mauritania, where only about 2 percent of the population has internet access.

Here is the rub. In the '60s, '70s, '80s and '90s, technology in most African countries favored the President, being monopolized by the government. Radio houses were a good example of this. That is why coup leaders in Africa often reached out for the radio house. Nowadays the benefits of technology aren't confined to a ruling elite, and the resulting exchange of information at present has

empowered the masses. African tyrants are still on the verge of positioning themselves vis-à-vis the new information technology, searching desperately for ways to use the technology to their advantage.

Notice that in both Tunisia and Egypt the tyrants' attempt at shutting down the internet could not work, because doing so also shut down the banking system and cell phone services on which they depended to alleviate

the economic depression people were protesting in the first place. Nowadays, many criticize the weak social ties brought about by cyber technology, but this is the reality of aesthetic life, the reality of the time for those looking for personal freedom and freedom of self expression, as I believe was the case in Tunisia and Egypt. Even so, it is said that in the absence of horses, donkeys can do, and so without the strong ties, we should go for the weak ones, "bawling alone" à la Robert Putnam.

**GF:** After that you went to West Africa. What were you doing there?

**AW:** I suppose I am a gypsy philosopher. Again, this question calls for a preamble. As part of my book, *The Citizen of Africa*, I am working on political elections. Recently I have been working (and looking for funding) in a project I call "Election Lab". I intend to bring together an eclectic body of about 65 CU juniors and seniors from across disciplines to work on electoral corruption and to cross-pollinate ideas that would help in the design of a brand new electoral system, one that could deliver for developing nations, especially African states.

Elections are supposed to be a means of tapping into the minds of individual citizens, aggregating the results in some manner, and using the result to determine what the public as a whole prefers or wants on certain issues.



Research Coordinator at the Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature at the University of Oslo, where she co-organized a conference on naturalizing moral epistemology. She is proud that Amandine Catala and Barrett Emerick successfully defended dissertations which she supervised and that both are moving on to excellent positions.

**Dan Kaufman** was on sabbatical in the fall of 2010 and spent much of it in The Netherlands, Berlin, and Prague. While overseas, he gave a talk on Hobbes' mereology at Oxford, which was the worst talk of his career, but it was still fun. The insanely big and excellent Routledge Companion to Seventeenth-Century Philosophy, which he has been editing, is finally being published in March 2012. He gave two invited talks at the Pacific APA in the Spring and will speak at NYU in the Fall. He will soon have time to work on his masterpiece, *Unity and Identity in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*. It will be awesome.

**Kathrin Koslicki** completed three forthcoming articles and began working on a book-length manuscript on dependence and grounding. She won an NEH fellowship; gave numerous colloquia, a plenary address, and a keynote address; and participated in several workshops and conferences. An "author-meets-critics" session was held on her book, *The Structure of Objects* at the Pacific APA meeting. She developed a new team-taught model for the Proseminar for our incoming graduate students. In the Spring of 2010, she taught Introduction to Ancient Philosophy and a graduate metaphysics seminar on dependence and grounding.

**Mitzi Lee** gave a paper on "Justice and the Laws in Aristotle's Ethics" at UC Berkeley and at Harvard University. She co-authored, with C.C.W. Taylor, the entry on "The Sophists" for *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. She is now editing a volume of essays on ancient Greek philosophy, *From Refutation to Assent: Strategies of Argument in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, expected 2012).

**Claudia Mills** was invited to be the



Achieving this is incredibly difficult, due both to the conceptual problems of aggregating preferences and to the more practical problems of ensuring the fairness of the voting system itself. The basic questions about what an electoral system should do were laid out by John Stuart Mill, who, in 1861, distinguished between “government of the whole people, equally represented” and “government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people exclusively represented,” or what is known as winner-takes-all elections. He thought the first one was an ideal. Much progress has been made by mathematicians on the technicalities of achieving such a system of voting, including the development of instant runoff or “preferential” voting.

The Election Lab aims to make progress by modifying the inputs to the electoral systems and rethinking the types of questions voters are asked in the election booth. My journey to West Africa was in part to work on this project by learning from voters what it is that they want to obtain from elections and how best to present information about candidates and particular issues to them. I learned that the voters invariably wanted to see the world on the ground the way they wanted it to be. They wanted to see real projects on the ground that speak to them, ones that they can own and for which they can hold their representatives accountable; those representatives, then, are important only in so far as they can help people realize the world they envision, and not as ends in themselves. Improving the electoral system is about direct delivery of real projects on the ground. That is the subject of my present paper manuscript entitled “Election by Contract: A Covenant to Deliver Concrete Projects on the Ground”.

**GF:** Philosophers don’t often make field trips for their research. Can you tell us how these travels and what you saw relate to your current research project?

**AW:** It is perfectly fine in many branches of philosophy to conduct “armchair” research by considering imaginary worlds or reflecting on conceptual relations. But it is my fervent belief that political philosophers who are interested in making changes on the ground do not have that luxury. In this way, political philosophers are more like scientists—or maybe, social scientists—in that they should describe the world as clearly as they can. They should do this to obtain the little details of life

in ways that—as, say, John Maynard Keynes did in economics—focus on the individually insignificant factors that affect the big societal changes. My aim is to write things that can affect the lives of actual people. If that is the case, then, I do not want to imagine “people that have never been known or seen to exist”—or worse, to create them in my study and then write about them. I traveled to Africa because of this view of how political philosophy should relate to the world. My aim is to bring philosophy back to the agora, to the public square. If that is my aim and my understanding of political philosophy, then it is only fitting that I travel to these hot spots where the action is. I like theory to inform practice, but I also want practice to inform theory.

Many young Africans attempt to answer the questions: What went wrong? How did things come to this? And, why aren’t things better? As they do so, they look outside of themselves, pointing fingers to the colonial legacy and so on, calling for justice. But there is a difference between what justice demands of the West and what Africa needs (or what has been lost). To be sure, it would be convenient if the valid moral claim that Africa has against the West were enough to place the burden of responsibility for fixing Africa’s problems on Western shoulders. But if history tells us anything it is that this is not a convenient world for Africans, and only in an Africa that “has never been seen or known to exist in truth” can it be imagined that what justice demands will actually correct what those wrongs have produced. Justice can demand from the West only what the West can provide—cash, food, loans, debt relief, and technology. What the West *cannot* do is bestow

upon Africans that which has been lost or that which Africans most desperately need—an understanding of what it is to be a citizen, and the character of a citizen with the conviction that the purpose of government is to serve the people, the resolve to follow through on this conviction by

holding leaders accountable, and the stubborn refusal to rely on luck to better their lives. To be a citizen is not to have problems lifted from one’s shoulders—it is to take up those loads along with the burden of responsibility for failure when things go badly (as they surely must from time to time). This is the central argument of *The Citizen of Africa* that turned me into a gypsy philosopher. □



Robert and Carolyn Frederick Distinguished Visiting Professor of Ethics at the Prindle Institute for Ethics at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. She will spend the 2011-12 academic year in residence there.

**Bradley Monton** has three papers coming out any day now. “Mixed Strategies Can’t Evade Pascal’s Wager” in *Analysis*; “Against Multiverse Theodicies,” which critiques the solution to the problem of evil that says God created all universes with more good than evil, and that’s why He created our universe; and “Prolegomena to Any Future Physics-Based Metaphysics,” which argues that philosophers need to be more careful than they have been in drawing metaphysical conclusions from physics. Monton spent a week this summer in St. Paul, Minnesota, as the resident critiquer of the fine-tuning argument at a seminar at the University of St. Thomas.

**Wes Morriston** had his paper “Is Faith in the Ultimate Rationally Required?” accepted for the Central APA meeting as well as the journal *Religious Studies*. His “Doubts about the Kalam Cosmological Argument” was accepted for the book *Debating Christian Theism* (Oxford). His “Ethical Criticism of the Bible: The Case of Divinely Mandated Genocide” (*Sophia*) and “God and the Ontological Foundation of Morality” (*Religious Studies*) have appeared online (print versions still forthcoming). His “Comments on ‘God Beyond Justice’” and “Comments on ‘What Does the Old Testament Mean?’” appeared in *Divine Evil? The Moral Character of the God of Abraham* (Oxford). His “Beginningless Past, Endless Future, and the Actual Infinite” appeared in *Faith and Philosophy*. And he learned that his paper, “What if God Commanded Something Terrible,” was one of the three winners of the 2009 Excellence in Philosophy of Religion Prize.

**Alastair Norcross** spent most of the year drunk. In that condition, he published several papers on ethical theory and applied ethics, and gave numerous talks, including an APA symposium on “How to Be a Good

# Graduate Student Accomplishments

2010-2011

CU has a nationally ranked graduate program in philosophy, number twenty-four in the nation according to the most recent report (<http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/overall.asp>).

Last year, the department was awarded a research assistantship program, to allow us to offer admission to PhD students with full funding and no teaching for the first year. We received close to 300 applications to the PhD program this past year, making us the envy of the world.

Our students distinguish themselves in many ways—winning awards and fellowships, presenting their work at conferences, organizing their own conferences, publishing academic articles, and taking academic posts around the county.

## *Fellowships*

Beth Seacord (PhD student) has been awarded a Templeton Dissertation Fellowship in Evil, Pain, and Contemporary Philosophy of Mind by the Center for the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame. She will spend 2011-12 there, attending workshops and seminars, and working on her dissertation. Her dissertation is on animal pain and the problem of evil; she is working with Wes Morriston.

Cory Aragon and Kacey Warren both won Emerson Student Support Fund in the Humanities Dissertation Fellowships (2011-12). The fellowships provide one year off from teaching to work on their theses. Kacey is working on a dissertation on disability. Cory is working on a theory of individual moral responsibility to work to remedy structural injustice. Both are being supervised by Alison Jaggar.

Tyler Hildebrand (PhD student) was awarded a Graduate Summer Fellowship, by the Graduate School. The fellowship is highly competitive, and is awarded to a promising graduate student to help him or her complete his or her thesis with financial support during the summer.

## *Publications*

Ryan Jenkins (3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD) published “The Paradox of Indiscriminate Warfare: The Battle of Fallujah and the Charge of Genocide” in the *The Journal of Genocide Awareness and Applied Research*. He also published “You’ve Earned It!: A Criticism of Sher’s Account of Desert in

Wages” in *Social Philosophy Today*, as well as three encyclopedia articles, “Moral Imperialism,” “Consumer Society,” and “Oxfam” for the *Springer Encyclopedia of Global Justice* (2011).

Jay Lynch (PhD 2011) had his paper, “Domestic Abuse As Terrorism,” accepted for publication in the journal *Hypatia*.

## *Conference Presentations*

Annaleigh Curtis (3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD student) presented “The Pursuit of Happiness: Utilitarian Obligations to Immigrants” (awarded the prize for best grad student paper) at the North American Society for Social Philosophy conference. Her paper “Just Interpretation: Feminist Standpoint Theory and Experimental Philosophy” was accepted for the North American Society for Social Philosophy Conference and the Feminist Ethics and Social Theory Conference, 2011-12.

Ryan Jenkins (3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD student) presented “‘Knockout Animals’? Knock it off: Vegetarian reasons besides suffering” at the 2011 Animal Ethics Graduate Student Conference at Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

Kelly Vincent (3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD student) presented her paper “Backwards Explanation: What’s Wrong with Weak Ground” at the Rutgers-Princeton Graduate Philosophy Conference, Rutgers University (March 2011). She presented another paper “The Paradox of Commitments” at the Stephen L. Weber Graduate Conference in Ethics, San Diego State University (April 2011).

Chelsea Haramia (PhD student) presented “The Moral Asymmetry of Praise and Blame” at the Pacific APA meeting.

Pamela Lomelino (PhD 2011) presented “Revising Informed Consent in the Medical Context,” at the Florida Philosophical Association Annual Meeting in Daytona Beach.

Joseph Stenberg (MA 2011, PhD 2011-) presented “Aristotle, the common good, and *to kalon*,” at the Pacific APA meeting. He presented “Atomism and Irreducibly Social Goods” at the North Carolina Philosophical Society annual conference, and “Rule Consequentialism, Inconsistency, and the Right” at the Michigan State Philosophy Graduate

Consequentialist in a Deontological World” (which is really hard, because of all the morally degenerate deontologists) [No wonder he drinks so much. –Ed.], and a talk on the moral significance of animal death, at a conference in honor of Tom Regan. He directed an honors thesis, began the arduous task of shepherding Duncan Purves through the writing of the definitive answer to the non-identity “problem”, and served on several dissertation committees. With Ben Hale, he organized the fourth annual Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, which kicked more ass and took more names than you can shake a stick at. With Diana, he ran the Boulder Boulder again (when will he learn?), a couple of half marathons, and trained for his first marathon.

**Graham Oddie** spent the last year on a combination of sabbatical leave (in the Fall) and the College Scholar Award (in the Spring), his first sabbatical since 1990, and his first break from administration since 1997. As the Starr Visiting Fellow at Lady Margaret Hall (Oxford) he wrote and published papers on three main research projects—value, truth-makers, and truthlikeness. He gave presentations in Reading, Bristol, Glasgow, Kent, Cambridge, Delft, Uppsala, Stockholm, and Oxford, and delivered the Starr public lecture at Lady Margaret Hall, entitled “Evil Tyrants, Capricious Gods, and a Thousand Happy Egrets”.

**Bob Pasnau** returned in January from a year in Morocco. He now hopes to write a book on Islamic philosophy, amidst various other projects pertaining to what we know and what we merely believe. [N.B., Bob is not a terrorist. –Ed.]

**Rob Rupert** presented his research at a symposium at the Central APA and commented on a paper at the Pacific APA. He spoke at the International Conference on Memory; the meeting of the International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology; and the University of Edinburgh. He won one of CU’s Kayden Book Awards and was awarded a visiting fellowship at the

Student Conference.

Tyler Hildebrand (PhD 2011) presented "Genuine Empirical Metaphysics" at the Pacific APA meeting.

Amandine Catala (PhD 2011) presented "Self-Determination, Justice, and Flourishing: Reframing the Normative Question of Secession" at the Central APA meeting. She received a graduate student stipend from the APA to present this paper.

Todd Grassman presented "Which Direction to Fundamental Ground?: Four Theories" at the Society of Christian Philosophers Mountain/West Conference at George Fox University in Oregon.

CU PhD students dominated the Society for Exact Philosophy conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba, presenting the following papers: Tyler Hildebrand, "Can Bare Dispositions Explain Observed Regularities?"; Michaela McSweeney, "Against Generalism"; Tom Metcalf, "Prospects for an Empirical Normative Realism"; Noel Saenz, "Truthmaker Theorists Need Not Be Truthmaker Maximalists".

Cory Aragon presented "The Politics of Racial Humor" at the 28th International Social Philosophy Conference at Marquette University.

#### RMPC

The graduate students hosted and organized the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference, a graduate philosophy conference attracting submissions from students from across the U.S. The keynote speakers were Hud Hudson (Western Washington U), Boris Kment (Princeton), and Peter Railton (U Michigan). Seven graduate students presented papers, and CU students did the commentary. Duncan Purves and Chad Vance were the co-organizers.

#### Graduates

Pamela Lomelino defended her PhD dissertation on December 9, 2010 under co-chairs David Boonin and Eric Chwang. Her title is "Revising the Philosophical Foundation for Informed Consent Guidelines for International Research on Human Subjects". She is a lecturer at CU for 2011-12.

Barrett Emerick defended his PhD dissertation on May 2, 2011. His dissertation, "Apology as an Indispensable Practice of Moral Repair," was directed by Alison Jaggar, with committee members David Boonin, Claudia Mills, Robert Hanna, and Benjamin Hale. Barrett will be

starting as an assistant professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland, a four-year liberal arts college.

Jay Lynch defended his PhD dissertation on February 16, 2011. His dissertation, "Liberal-Democratic Education and the Challenge of Religion," was directed by Claudia Mills, with committee members Alison Jaggar, Alastair Norcross, Michelle Moses (Education), and Ken Howe (Education). He did not seek academic employment, and is now working as an editor at an academic publishing company.

Amandine Catala defended her PhD dissertation on February 25, 2011. Her dissertation, "Beyond Political Legitimacy: Reframing the Normative Question of Secession," was directed by Alison Jaggar, with committee members Claudia Mills, David Boonin, Ajume Wingo, and Steven Vanderheiden (Political Science). Amandine will be a Fellow at the Philosophy Department, London School of Economics and Political Science this coming year.

Ben Pageler defended his PhD dissertation on March 14, 2011. His dissertation, "The Explanatory Value of the Cognitive Unconscious," was directed by Rob Rupert, with committee members Carol Cleland, Bradley Monton, Tim Curran (Psychology), and Mike Mozer (Computer Science). Ben accepted a lecturer position at the University of California, Merced, where he is teaching a course entitled "The Brain's Self: Mind, Brain, and 'Identity'".

Tyler Hildebrand defended his PhD dissertation on Monday, July 25, 2011. His dissertation, "Empiricism, Natural Regularity, and Necessity," was directed by Michael Tooley, with committee members Graeme Forbes, Graham Oddie, Robert Hanna, and Ben Hale (ENVS). He is a lecturer at CU for 2011-12.

Rebecca Chan defended her MA thesis, "A New Model for Libertarian Free Will in an Eternalist Theory of Time," which was directed by Bradley Monton with committee members David Barnett and Kathrin Koslicki. She was accepted to the PhD program for Fall 2011.

Joey Stenberg defended his MA thesis, "Being and Goodness: A Medieval Metaethical Thesis," which was directed by Robert Pasnau with committee members Chris Heathwood and Mitzi

Australian National University (for Spring 2012). He published two book reviews and a contribution to a book symposium. He taught philosophy of mind, logic, and a graduate seminar on the epistemology of philosophy. His first Ph.D. advisee graduated.

**Michael Tooley**, in addition to serving as President of the Pacific APA, published "Farewell to McTaggart's Argument?" in the journal *Philosophia*, "Michael Tooley" in *Metaphysics: Five Questions*, "Hume and the Problem of Evil" in *Philosophy of Religion: The Key Thinkers*, and "Naturalism, Science, and Religion," in *The Nature of Nature*. He spoke on Hume and Berkeley's skeptical challenges at the Pacific APA meeting and discussed abortion with Don Marquis on Philosophy TV ([www.philostv.com/don-marquis-and-michael-tooley](http://www.philostv.com/don-marquis-and-michael-tooley)).

**Michael Zimmerman** published papers on "Sustainability" in *Sustainability Ethics: 5 Questions*, "The Final Cause of Cosmic Development: Divine Spirit, or the Second Law of Thermodynamics?" in *Integral Theory in Action*, and "Including and Differentiating among Perspectives: An Integral Approach to Climate Change," in the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*. He spoke at the Integral Theory Conference at JFK University and the After Humanism conference at Williams College. □



What if things are pretending to be what they really are...?



Lee. He was accepted to the PhD program for Fall 2011.

#### *News about Past Graduates*

Kendy Hess's (PhD '09) paper, "Collateral Responsibility: Accounting for the Moral Responsibility of Members of Collectives," was presented at the Conference on Value Inquiry in Carbondale, Ill. and accepted at the 7th Conference on Collective Intentionality in Basel, Switzerland, and as a poster at RoME in Boulder. She was also invited to give a two-day series of presentations to the philosophy department at Davidson College and to attend the Kroc Summer Institute for Peace Studies at Notre Dame, on an environmental justice theme.

Michelle Maiese (PhD 2005)'s book, *Embodiment, Emotion, and Cognition*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2011.

Ryan Mott (PhD '09) accepted a position as a

visiting professor at Marquette University.

Jason Wyckoff (PhD '09) accepted a position as visiting professor at Marquette University.

Mike Austin (PhD '04) co-edited *Cycling: A Philosophical Tour de Force*, published in 2010 by Wiley-Blackwell as part of the new *Philosophy for Everyone* series. It includes a chapter from CU alumnus John Harris.

Gail Linsenbard (PhD '96, current instructor) authored a new book, *Starting with Sartre*, which was published in 2010 by Continuum. Gail accepted a tenure-track position at Indian River State College in Fort Pierce, Florida.

Mary Krizan (PhD 2010) accepted a tenure-track offer from Spring Hill College, in Mobile, Alabama.

Former CU PhD student Nat Stein (who transferred to Oxford) accepted a tenure-track job at Florida State University. □

## Prizes & Awards

### Jentzsch Prize

Philosophy PhD student Christian Lee was awarded last year's Jentzsch Prize for his paper, "Vague Intuitions and Knowledge". It is vague how much money you need to be rich. Does this mean that no one can know how much money you need to be rich? Mr. Lee argues that it does. He claims that some putative evidence to the contrary relies upon an implausible account of the way in which vagueness presents itself in intuition. The Jentzsch Prize is given once a year for the best graduate student paper. It includes a cash award and an invitation to present the paper as part of the next year's colloquium series.

### Stahl Prize

Martin Chamorro was the winner of this year's Stahl Prize, a prize awarded by the Department to a graduate student for combining scholarship in philosophy with community leadership. Martin has been working closely with the Boulder community and beyond to bring awareness to the issue of immigration rights, particularly rights of the children of immigrants. He is a member of Boulder VOICE (Voices Of Immigrant Children for Education and Equity), the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, and our very own CU group Eye-Resist. With Boulder VOICE he visits places in the community such as high

schools, churches, and synagogues that request information about the rights of immigrant children. Martin was heavily involved in efforts to get the DREAM Act passed last year, making phone calls to senators from many different states to solicit their votes. He has gone to rallies in support of immigrant rights and regularly worked with students to fight for Colorado ASSET, which would give undocumented high school graduates in-state tuition in Colorado universities.

### Teaching Awards

Tyler Hildebrand (PhD 2011) and Corwin Aragon each won a 2010-2011 Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award. The honor includes an award of \$500. The Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award is the university's highest teaching honor for graduate students. The award is made to only 12 graduate students per year, by a committee composed of faculty members who visit each nominee multiple times throughout the semester. Congratulations Tyler and Cory!

### Lamont Scholarship

Kelly Vincent (3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD student) was awarded the Katherine Lamont Scholarship (\$1K) by the CU Philosophy Department faculty, for her academic work and for being a good department citizen (2011). □

## Talks You Might Have Missed

From the philosophy department's THINK! public lecture series, here are some talks you could have attended last year:

November 9, 2010

Michael Huemer, "Report on the Search for the Worst Thing in the World":

What is the world's worst problem? World poverty, global warming, cancer, the threat of nuclear war...?



December 7, 2010

Bradley Monton, "Time Travel":

Is time travel possible? Could someone be their own father and mother?

February 1, 2011

John Corvino (Wayne State University), "What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?":

Is homosexuality wrong? Does gay marriage threaten society?

March 10, 2011

Charles Mills (Northwestern University), "Philosophy and Race: The Whiteness of Being":

Discussed racial bias in the philosophy profession and what to do about it.

April 27, 2011

Ajume Wingo,

"The Paths for the Perplexed: The Perils of Leadership in Modern Africa":

Discussed the problem of leadercentrism (cf. his interview, this issue).

All Think! talks are free and open to the public. The series is funded through the generosity of the Collins Foundation. To learn more, email Alastair Norcross (Alastair.Norcross@colorado.edu). □

# Philosophy Graduation, 2011

The spring graduation ceremony was held on May 6, 2011. The department honored six students receiving Doctorates, three receiving Masters of Arts, and sixty-three receiving Bachelor of Arts degrees. The department acknowledged six BA students who graduated with honors and thirteen who graduated with distinction. Department Chair Graeme Forbes presided over the ceremony.

The graduation address was given by Professor Robert Pasnau. Prof. Pasnau grew up in Minnesota before attending college at the University of Pennsylvania (1985–1989). He received his PhD at Cornell University (1994) and then began teaching at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. In 1999, he moved to the University of Colorado, serving as Department Chair from 2004–2006. His teaching and research concentrates on the history of philosophy. He has published eight books in the area of medieval philosophy, and dozens of articles ranging from ancient philosophy into the modern era. Most recently, he has become interested in philosophical debates over the ethics of belief and the value of faith. In 2010, he spent the year with his wife and two children in Morocco, studying Arabic.

Graeme Forbes and Sheralee Brindell presented the undergraduate degrees. Claudia Mills presented the graduate degrees. Awards were presented to the winners of departmental prizes. Martin Chamorro received the Stahl Prize for Community Service, and Christian Lee received the Jentzsch Prize for the outstanding graduate student paper. □



President Kennedy did not speak at the ceremony this year

## Philosophy Department Graduates

### Bachelor of Arts

Kylee Adams  
Jacob Ainciart  
Trevor Anderson  
Alexander Beal\*  
Clark Becker\*  
Katharine Brown  
Molly Brown  
Steve Byerly, *cum laude*  
Kenneth Choi  
Lindsey Clark  
Peter Colis  
Levi Cooper  
Sarah Cowart  
Ken Crossman\*  
Matthew Cucchiaro\*, *summa cum laude*  
Hana Dansky\*  
Bradley Dunlap  
Elliot Easterly  
Rena Goldstein  
Carson Grass  
Erik Grigsby  
Julian Hirschbaum  
Casey Hudson  
Brian Jacobsmeyer  
Brenden Jendersee

Samuel John\*  
Erin Kane\*  
Ananda Kaplan  
Jacob Kidd  
John Knapp  
Chelsea Komlo\*  
Justin Kuster\*, *summa cum laude*  
Luke Levulis  
Michael Lind\*, *summa cum laude*  
Lauren Makowski  
Paulo Martinez  
Michael Martis  
Evan McCune  
Meaghan Millan  
Norman Moore  
Molly Morrison, *magna cum laude*  
Dustin Nirschl  
Danielle Peck  
Michael Pleasonton\*  
Eric Prinzing\*  
Michael Salazar  
Douglas Schmidt  
Jonathan Shapiro, *magna cum laude*  
Brendan Shea  
Spencer Sinclair  
Nicholas Smiley–Kallas

Christopher Spurr  
Kirsten Suddath  
Derick Teng  
Daniel Tholen  
Ian Tolar  
Brittany Uris  
Joseph Vandeven  
Serena Watman  
Samuel Wilson  
Alexander Wojcik  
Daniel Wolt\*  
Evan Yarus

### Master of Arts

Rebecca Chan  
Dan Lowe  
Joseph Stenberg

### Doctorate of Philosophy

Amandine Catala  
Barrett Emerick  
Pamela Lomelino  
Jay Lynch  
Ben Pageler  
Michael Zerella

## Support the Philosophy Department

*Philosophy is one of the most vibrant and engaged departments in the university. Help us continue with these efforts by making a tax-deductible donation. The items mentioned here are just a few of the many possibilities. For more information, contact the Department Chair, Graeme Forbes, at 303-492-7120 or [Graeme.Forbes@colorado.edu](mailto:Graeme.Forbes@colorado.edu).*

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- \$400,000 Endow Center for History & Phil. of Science
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