

ABSTRACTS

**Secularization and Religion:
The Perpetual Dialectic of Adaptation**
Joe Barnhart

Textbooks for philosophy of religion have offered numerous definitions of "religion." Rather than stipulate a definition or the so-called essence of religion, I develop a preliminary theory that promises to throw light on not only the early emergence of religions, but also the surviving practices and beliefs traditionally regarded as religious. This theory has the advantage of showing why religions tend to make cognitive claims, have an emotional dimension, develop special rituals and practices, and generate some version of theodicy. The theory both uses the neo-Darwinian model and contributes to it. The paper promises to throw light on the sacrifice-and-atonement motif so prevalent in religions. It not only raises anew the question of the line of demarcation between religion and magic, but also suggests that Plato's theory of forms and the role of the philosopher-king have deep roots in religion.



Philosophy of Religion and the Tragedies
Linda Kraeger

Philosophers have written profoundly about tragedy. Aristotle, preferring *Oedipus Rex*, focused on plot whereas Hegel, preferring *Antigone*, focused on character. Hegel obviously influenced A. C. Bradley's interpretations of Shakespeare's tragedies. Schopenhauer and then Nietzsche saw tragedy as mirroring life, a concept prevalent in Harold Goddard's interpretations of Shakespeare's tragedies.

Tragedies often presuppose an absolute, objective moral order. Antigone must choose between human order and divine order or the law of the city vs. the eternal law of the gods. Plato's eternal forms assume an order of values; and his dialogues draw from tragedy to explore justice, virtue, and theodicy.

Religious themes—theodicy, guilt, divine justice, sacrifice and atonement, and religious authority—played upon the Greek stage. Without denying the gods, tragedy fulfilled the social role of raising terrifying questions. Socrates played a similar role, creating doubt indirectly when he questioned, not the oracle's truth, but its *meaning*.

Plato argued that tragedies encouraged cowardice and unhappiness by portraying good people in ultimate defeat. Admittedly, Plato contributed a profound insight. An individual can create an artistic work of his life and enjoy

happiness and integrity by not *identifying with* the suffering that befalls them. Virtue is its own reward. However, the very ambition to transcend the lesser self, to master luck itself, can sometimes leave the individual more vulnerable to misfortune. Aeschylus and Sophocles dramatized this hard truth for their audiences. Aristotle learned from them what Plato perhaps could not.

Does Plato mean that virtue is its own reward at every point in the virtuous person's life? Immanuel Kant, profoundly influenced by Plato, argued that virtue must be the end and never the means. Both offered the promise of happiness in a hereafter, Plato in reincarnation, and Kant in immortality. Transmigration, thus, provided the eventual triumph of good over evil. Without this triumph, the universe itself might appear as strewn with blind chance and tragedy beyond all hope of redemption. Plato left little to the luck and chance that appeared in the tragedies. Individuals have made their own choices, and Clotho in charge of fate's spindle "ratified the choice and the fate to follow."



**The Epistemology of Hegel's Introduction to
The Phenomenology of Spirit
Eugene Marshall**

G.W.F. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a philosophical journey starting at an almost instinctual state of consciousness to an enlightened super-consciousness that combines total self-consciousness with an understanding of the nature of absolute knowledge. This paper analyzes his epistemological approach to this journey, with special attention to his use of a criterion of truth as a tool to aid him in his endeavor. He outlines this journey in the Introduction, providing a basis for understanding the rest of the work. I suggest that a proper study of Hegel's Introduction in this light is essential to understanding the *Phenomenology*.



**The Scientific Case for Reincarnation
John F. Miller, III**

If by "science" is meant the method of investigation which involves careful measurement, repeatable experiments, an open-minded skepticism toward claims regarding facts, and an insistence that such claims be carefully tested, then a "scientific" case may be offered for reincarnation. Philosophers of science describe science as a hypothetical-deductive system, which proceeds from hypothesis to predicted empirical phenomena, derives the hypothesis from a

theory, and places the theory within a system or conceptual framework. I show that reincarnation can be treated in the same manner. First, from the hypothesis of reincarnation, we predict what classes of empirical phenomena might expect a *deja vu*, memories retrieve under hypnosis or meditation, birthmarks from previous lifetimes. Second, upon finding such classes, we propose a theory which accounts for such phenomena: karma. And finally, we place that theory within the broadest conceptual framework of evolution of consciousness. This constitutes a "scientific" case for reincarnation.



**Star Trek As *Gedanken*
Lee Stauffer, Avery Christie, and Judy Wilmore**

This paper considers the validity of using popular culture media, such as *Star Trek*, as a departure point for philosophical discourse in an undergraduate philosophy or religious studies program. Such video text is compared to the use of *gedanken* in applied ethics or to Plato's use of *mythos*. It is further pointed out that in a university environment in which most students are unable to read a philosophical text, if philosophic instruction is to occur, it must find ways involving the students. It is proposed that if dialogue is to occur at all, the students must both understand the material under discussion and wish to participate. This is often not the case when using more customary approaches to the study of philosophy.

The development of a class based on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is described and the syllabus is provided. The success of the class to date is considered. It is concluded that the class has so far been a success and that it forms a reasonable part of an undergraduate philosophy or religious studies program.

CONTRIBUTORS

William Austin is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston. He works in the history and philosophy of science(s) and the history and philosophy of religion(s).

Joe Barnhart has published in several journals and is author of six books. He is Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, and his fields of specialization are metaphysics, Karl Popper, and the philosophy of religion.

Avery Christie is an undergraduate philosophy student at New Mexico Highlands University and participated in a class taught by Lee Stauffer based on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Gil Fulmer Born San Diego, CA, 9 June 1944; BA Rice University, 1966; Ph.D. Rice University, 1972; taught at Southwest Texas State University, 1972-. Married 1971, Christiana Lynne Wilkins Fulmer. Philosophical interests: philosophy of religion, ethics, ordinary language philosophy, Hume.

Paul Gyllenhammer, is a doctoral candidate at Marquette University. His dissertation, directed by Pol Vandavelde, is on *Ricoeur's Theory of Narrative as a Reformulation of Husserl's Notion of Intentionality*.

Glenn Joy is a Professor of Philosophy at Southwest Texas State University. He earned his B.A. from Seattle Pacific College, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin.

Linda Kraeger teaches in the Department of Literature and Languages at Grayson County College in Denison, Texas. Her areas of specialization are Dostoevsky, creative writing, and the philosophy of literature. She is the coauthor of *Dostoevsky on Evil and Atonement* and *In Search of First-Century Christianity*.

Eugene Marshall is an undergraduate philosophy major at the University of Missouri. He plans to pursue his Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

John F. Miller, III, is an independent philosophy scholar living in Tampa, Florida. He was formerly on the philosophy faculty of the University of North Texas.

Amber Ross is a senior philosophy major at Texas Christian University. She plans to enroll in the graduate program in philosophy at Tufts University after she graduates.

CONTRIBUTORS

F. Scott Scribner has recently completed his Ph.D. in philosophy at SUNY Binghamton. He specializes in 19th and 20th Century Continental Philosophy and has published numerous articles in this field. He is currently a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Connecticut/Waterbury.

Lee Stauffer is Associate Professor of Philosophy at New Mexico Highlands University. She earned her B.A. and M.A. in philosophy at the University of Oklahoma and her Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of New Mexico.

Andrew Ward is an Associate Professor in the School of Public Policy at Georgia Institute of Technology, the Director of the Georgia Institute of Technology's "Philosophy, Science and Technology Program", and a faculty member of Georgia Institute of Technology's Cognitive Science Program.

Judy Wilmore is an undergraduate philosophy student at New Mexico Highlands University and participated in a class taught by Lee Stauffer based on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Rui Zhu began studying philosophy at Beijing University before transferring to Tulane University in New Orleans in 1992. After receiving his doctorate at Tulane, he taught courses in logic, general logic, Chinese logic and ethics at Tulane for three years before moving to Southwest Texas State University, where he is now Assistant Professor of Philosophy.

NEW MEXICO AND WEST TEXAS PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
CONFERENCE PROGRAM FOR MARCH 31– APRIL 2, 2000
Host Institution — University of North Texas — Denton, TX
Conference Session — Harvey Hotel–DFW, Irving, TX

Friday, March 31 – Registration and Social Hour

Saturday, April 1

FIRST SESSION 8:30-10:15 A.M.

SESSION 1A: GARY CESARZ (Auburn University), Chair

RUI ZHU (Southwest Texas State University) 8:30-9:05 A.M.
To Kill or to Let Die: A Categorical Imperative?

JAMES SAUER (St. Mary's University) 9:05-9:40 A.M.
On the Forward Look of Value Judgments

MICHAEL MATTHIS (Lamar University) 9:40-10:15 A.M.
Enlightenment and the Present Age

SESSION 1B: LEE STAUFFER (NM Highlands University), Chair

ANDREI BUCKAREFF (Texas A&M University) 8:30-9:05 A.M.
Agency Theory Naturalized

JEFFERY GORDON (Southwest Texas State University) 9:05-9:40 A.M.
Is There an Answer to the Question of the Meaning of Life?

LYNNE FULMER (Southwest Texas State University) 9:40-10:15 A.M.
Spinoza: A Modern Analysis of Freedom

Coffee Break 10:15-10:30 A.M.

SECOND SESSION 10:30 A.M.-12:15 P.M.

SESSION 2A: GIL FULMER (Southwest Texas State University), Chair

PAUL GYLLENHAMMER (Marquette University) 10:30-11:05 A.M.
Finding a Place for the Universal in Hermeneutic Theory

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RICHARD OWSLEY (University of North Texas) 11:05-11:40 A.M.
Truth in Husserl and Heidegger

SCOTT SCRIBNER (University of Connecticut) 11:40-12:15 A.M.
*Walter Benjamin, Reproductive Media,
and the Crisis of Intersubjective Recognition*

SESSION 2B: ARTHUR STEWART (Lamar University), Chair

HOUGHTON DALRYMPLE (University of Texas at Arlington) 10:30-11:05 A.M.
Perceptual and Introspective Knowledge

ANDREW WARD (Georgia Tech) 11:05-11:40 A.M.
Epistemic Truth as Pragmatic Truth

GLENN JOY (Southwest Texas State University) 11:40 A.M.-12:15 P.M.
*Squaring the Circles:
Lewis Carroll's Diagrams vs. John Venn's Diagrams*

Lunch 12:15-1:30 P.M.

THIRD SESSION 1:30-3:15 P.M.

SESSION 3A: LYNNE FULMER (Southwest Texas State University), Chair

LINDA KRAEGER (Grayson College) 1:30-2:05 P.M.
Philosophy of Religion and the Tragedies

WILLIAM AUSTIN (University of Houston) 2:05-2:40 P.M.
Sociobiology and Post-Axial Religion

JOE BARNHART (University of North Texas) 2:40-3:13 P.M.
Secularization and Religion: The Perpetual Dialectic of Adaptation

SESSION 3B: KENNETH BUCKMAN (UT PanAm), Chair

THOMAS URBAN (Lamar University) 1:30-2:05 P.M.
Public and Private: The Pursuit of Freedom and Pleasure

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KENNETH SMITH (Dallas) 2:05-2:40 P.M.
Truths and Falsities in Their Modern Species

DONALD POCHIGIAN (University of North Dakota) 2:40-3:15 P.M.
Relative Ethics as a Value

SESSION 4A: GREG FRANZWA (Texas Christian University), Chair

KEVIN DODSON (Lamar University) 3:30-4:05 P.M.
Autonomy, Paternalism, and Drugs

VINCE LUIZZI (Southwest Texas State University) 4:05-4:40 P.M.
It Never Happened

ANTHONY PALASOTA (Texas Southern University) 4:40-5:15 P.M.
*Notes for an Experientialist Epistemology of Law:
The Importance of Context, Metaphor, and Imagination
in Legal Reasoning and Analysis*

SESSION 4B: RICHARD OWSLEY (University of North Texas), Chair

LEE STAUFFER (New Mexico Highlands University) 3:30-4:05 P.M.
Star Trek as Gedanken

JOHN MILLER (Tampa) 4:05-4:40 P.M.
A Scientific Case for Reincarnation

LAURA WILKERSON (Lamar University) 4:40-5:15 P.M.
*Love as Kalos: The Logic of Discovery in
Peirce's Neglected Argument*

SOCIETY BUSINESS MEETING, 5:30-6:30 P.M.

GIL FULMER (Southwest Texas State University), President, NMWTPS, presiding
C. LYNNE FULMER (Southwest Texas State University), Vice President
GARY CESARZ (Auburn University), Secretary/Treasurer
ARTHUR STEWART (Lamar University), General Editor, SPS

NEW MEXICO AND WEST TEXAS PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
CONFERENCE PROGRAM FOR MARCH 31- APRIL 2, 2000

ANNUAL BANQUET
Saturday, April 1, 7:00 P.M.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: GIL FULMER (Southwest Texas State University)
*Bullets, Bugs and Bears: Anthropomorphism,
Anthropocentrism, and the Anthropic Principle*

Sunday, April 2

FIFTH SESSION

8:30-10:15 A.M.

SESSION 5: JOE BARNHART (University of North Texas), Chair

SPENCER WERTZ (Texas Christian University) 8:30-9:05 A.M.
*Origin of the Justification of the Two-Wrongs Argument:
A Conjecture*

AMBER ROSS (Texas Christian University) 9:05-9:40 A.M.
Art Forgeries and Attributed Aesthetic Value

EUGENE MARSHALL, JR. (University of Missouri) 9:40-10:15 A.M.
The Epistemology of Hegel's Introduction to the Phenomenology of Spirit

GARY CESARZ (Auburn University) 10:15-10:50 A.M.
Kant's Contributions on Inductive Inference