

EDITOR'S COMMENT

ὦ θεοὶ νεώτεροι, παλαιούς
νόμους καθιππάσασθε

Oh you young gods, how you have
trampled the time-honored tradition!
--Aeschylus, Eumenides

Philosophers would be in danger were we to take as a dictum that Athena's owl flies only at the falling of dusk, that it is somehow untimely to wax critical before issues are well-defined and institutions ensconced. Dawning pursues dusk with some measure of regularity; the owl makes its flight not once but many times in its life. If the unexamined journal is not worth publishing, let us mark this occasion--AUSLEGUNG's fifth anniversary--by turning the critical eye of this fledgling journal upon itself.

In the November, 1977, issue of the APA's Proceedings and Addresses, Richard Sharvy makes the ominous declaration: "And anyone who reads philosophy journals can easily see that 90% of what is published is just trash." The sentiment is ancient; Plato, with more stylistic acumen than Sharvy, laments at Phaedrus 275d-e:

You might believe written words speak intelligently; but if you interrogate them, wanting to know what they are saying, they just go on repeating the same one thing. And each word--when it is written--is tossed about, the same to those who do and those who do not understand, not knowing to whom it should or should not speak. When abused or treated unjustly, it always wants to be rescued by its father since it is incapable of defending or rescuing itself.

We may disparage the written word but we may not abandon it; nor does Plato, nor Sharvy. Perhaps there is appropriate solace to be taken in the knowledge that even the most captious among us would never agree on which 10% is worthwhile.

AUSLEGUNG was brought to birth in the belief that much good philosophy is written that does not find a forum. Specifically, the journal's founders felt that winners of the annual Edward S. Robinson Essay Contest

at the University of Kansas ought to have a regular medium for making their essays widely available. But AUSLEGUNG grew from an "in-house" mimeographed publication to its present format in just two years, purposefully seeking to publish the work of new PhD's and those pursuing the PhD; it is unique among journals in this respect.

The past three years of growth have seen both success and failure. The Graduate Association of Students in Philosophy at the University of Kansas, parent organization to AUSLEGUNG, continues to carry the aegis behind which the journal's editors make policy decisions independently; this arrangement ought not to be altered. Yet the workload for publishing an internationally circulated journal has proved great enough to recommend incorporating the efforts of numerous other persons. Especially important are editors outside the University of Kansas who considerably broaden the perspective of AUSLEGUNG.

The journal has failed thus far in its efforts to obtain a permanent source of external funding and remains appreciative of and dependent upon the substantial support provided by the Department of Philosophy, the Graduate Student Council, and the Student Senate of the University of Kansas, and by the several professional philosophy journals who have so kindly contributed or exchanged advertising space. Yet much good is tied to fiscal autonomy. An enlarged format--which could be made possible by additional funding--would decrease the number of good articles which must be rejected, would allow features such as book reviews and announcements, which have been discouraged in the past because of spatial considerations. Financial independence should remain an immediate goal of AUSLEGUNG.

Blind reviewing and the sending of referees' comments to contributors are two recently instituted policies of which AUSLEGUNG may be justifiably proud. It can be enormously inconvenient to employ blind reviewing when contributors insistently christen every page of their articles, or bury their names and academic institutions in footnotes.

AUSLEGUNG is young, as journals go. Its raison d'être is not lost to the generation which conceived and developed its possibilities. Those associated with AUSLEGUNG have remained convinced that much worthwhile philosophy goes unpublished, that many of the best journals really are turning away what they determine to be excellent articles, and that too many editors--bending indefensibly to ill winds--prefer to publish the work

of "big name" philosophers. On this last point, I cannot help but wonder, who among us is the Socrates in the crowd gathered to hear the great Protagoras; who the youthful Plato, always silent in the dialogues? I would fairly shout with Aeschylus: Oh you young philosophers, how you have ridden down the obsolete conventions!

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