

Michigan Philosophy News

for friends, alumni, and alumnae of the Department of Philosophy,
The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Fall, 1991

Dear Friends of the Department,

This past fall, I was fortunate to be present at a reunion between Marshall Weinberg, who graduated with a B.A. in philosophy in 1950, and Bill Frankena, much-loved member of our faculty from 1937 until his retirement in 1978. I wish I could accurately describe, or, better, help you to feel, the wellspring of warmth and affection that passed between former teacher and pupil. We tend to think of the Department in terms of programs and curricula, but there could have been no more convincing "argument" that, in the end, it is the humanity of those who pass through the Department that nourishes our common pursuits.

This spring we were delighted to learn that Marshall Weinberg has established the Marshall K. Weinberg Endowment for the William K. Frankena and Charles S. Stevenson Prizes, which will honor deserving undergraduate and graduate students. This generous gift will help us to insure that future Michigan philosophers partake of the same traditions we have been privileged to share.

Another reminder of the affectionate memories so many have for their time in Angell Hall came in a response to the annual Departmental appeal letter I wrote this past fall. I mentioned there that *The Philosophers' Index*, the authoritative annotated bibliography of philosophical literature, was about to become available on CD-ROM (so that it can be searched electronically from a computer terminal), and that this would be a valuable resource for students and faculty. No sooner, it seemed, than that letter was mailed, I received a check from Thomas T. Skrentny, M.D. (B.A., 1954), which will fully fund this project for the Tanner Library, along with a wonderful letter expressing appreciation for the experiences of three generations of Skrentny's at Michigan.

These are but two examples. I could as well mention many of the notes dozens of you have thoughtfully sent back to us on forms from earlier editions of *Michigan Philosophy News*. These are a constant source of encouragement. In the spirit of further confirming this connection, let me bring you up to date on what has been happening around here in the last year. As usual, things have been busy.

At midyear we welcomed the newest member of our senior faculty, Alan Code. Professor Code is a specialist in Aristotle's metaphysics who taught for many years at the University of California, Berkeley. You will have an opportunity to sample some of his ideas in the essay just following. Code's teaching and research nicely complement those of Professor Nicholas White, who also works in ancient philosophy. Together, they will make Michigan a very attractive place to study the philosophy of the ancient Greeks.

This year we welcome two new junior faculty members—Eric Lormand and James Joyce—and say goodbye to another—William Taschek. Lormand, who comes to us from the graduate program at M.I.T., is primarily interested in philosophy of mind

and philosophy of cognitive science. Joyce is a product of our own graduate program, and his research focuses on the theory of rational choice, although he also has interests in philosophy of science. Recent graduates will recall William Taschek's contributions to the Department, mainly in philosophy of language and mind, and as an advisor both to undergraduate and to graduate students. Taschek will be taking a position at Ohio State; we will miss him.

Members of the faculty continued to bring distinction to the Department during the past year with their research. Professor Kendall Walton gave the Hempel Lectures at Princeton and also participated in two symposia on *Mimesis as Make Believe* (his major work on aesthetics, published in 1990): one at the Central Division meetings of the American Philosophical Association, the other at meetings of the American Society for Aesthetics. This summer, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* is publishing a symposium on *Mimesis*, and yet another symposium will take place at the Eastern Division meetings of the A.P.A. this coming winter.

Rave reviews continue to come in for Allan Gibbard's *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, also published in 1990, which bids to become widely acknowledged as the authoritative statement of metaethical non-cognitivism since, at least, the work of Charles Stevenson in the earlier part of this century. Peter Railton's article, "Explanation and Metaphysical Controversy," was reprinted last year in *The Philosopher's Annual* as "one of the ten best articles to appear in philosophy in 1989," marking the third time an essay by Railton has been so honored in the last six years. Railton was also elected to the Council for Philosophical Studies. Paul Boghossian and Louis Loeb each authored lead articles in issues of *The Philosophical Review*, one of philosophy's most highly respected journals. Finally, Professor Crispin Wright delivered the Waynflete Lectures at Oxford University this past spring. I say, "finally," but really this is all only a sampling from the past year.

The undergraduate concentration continues in good health. We are still attracting a large number of talented and highly motivated students. It is my impression that, with improving prospects for academic employment, more of our undergraduates are thinking seriously about pursuing their study of philosophy beyond the B.A. Nonetheless, while we now require at least one course that treats philosophical issues in a depth that approaches graduate-level, our concentration remains primarily geared to providing students a serious engagement with philosophy in the context of a broad liberal arts education, appropriate for a wide range of professions, and for the "examined life" more generally.

The Undergraduate Philosophy Club continued their successful program of recent years of lunches with faculty, and instituted a new series of philosophical talks by faculty followed by spirited discussion. It has been very gratifying to see how the enthusiasm of the Club renews itself each year. Last year's

President, Stephen Webb, graduated last May, and is currently a first year student in the graduate philosophy program at Rutgers. And Eric Lai is assuming responsibility for reorganizing the Club this fall.

At the graduate level, we continue to see marked improvement in the number of students completing their degrees each year. Last year, five students defended their dissertations, and two more are defending in early fall. Over the past four years, some twenty students have earned the Ph.D. in philosophy at Michigan. This is double the number for the four year period just preceding.

Our recent (and soon-to-be) graduates were also highly successful in the stiff (if improving) competition for academic positions. Last year's group received tenure-track offers from Bowling Green, Brown, California Institute of Technology, California State at Chico, Georgetown School of Business, Harvey Mudd, Ithaca College, Michigan, Michigan Law School, Ohio State, Vermont, and the University of Sheffield in England.

And we continued our recent string of successes in the competition for Charlotte Newcombe Fellowships. These are national awards which support dissertations relating to ethics and values in a wide range of disciplines. No more than a handful go to graduate students in philosophy around the nation, but for the fifth year in a row a Michigan moral philosopher won the Newcombe. This year's Newcombe Fellow is Ted Hinchman. Our graduate students have now won seven Newcombe Fellowships in the past five years.

We usually have a full and diverse schedule of philosophical events, and last year was certainly no exception. Our Nelson-Philosophers-in-Residence were Robert Brandom, of the University of Pittsburgh, and Charles Taylor, of McGill University. Both visited for a week, delivered a public lecture, gave two seminars, and had numerous meetings with students and faculty. Other speakers throughout the year included Lynne Rudder Baker, Arthur Fine, Harry Frankfurt, Hannah Ginzborg, and Kuong Loi Shun.

Our emeritus professors Dick Brandt, Art Burks, and Bill Frankena are all still in fine fettle. The annual colloquium was held in honor of Bill Frankena last spring on the subject of moral philosophy and moral psychology. The lead paper was a recent essay of Frankena's own on Henry Sidgwick's account of the differences between ancient and modern ethical philosophy. It was a joy to see Bill so much in his element in the give and take of philosophical discussion. The other participants were Michael Stocker of Syracuse University and Christine Korsgaard of Harvard. In addition to providing extremely interesting philosophical presentations, both made poignant remarks about the importance of Frankena and his work for their own philosophical careers.

As many of you know, we are fortunate to be one of nine institutions around the world where a Tanner Lecture on Human Values is presented annually. This past year's Tanner Lecture, delivered by Richard Rorty of the University of Virginia, was on the topic of "Feminism and Pragmatism." According to one speaker at the next morning's Symposium, Rorty's lecture was historic in that it marked the first time a major male philosopher

engaged feminism in a philosophically serious way. Whether or not that is true, Rorty's Lecture was very interesting and thoughtful, and it stimulated a fascinating Symposium. The other participants were Nancy Fraser of Northwestern University, Marion Smiley of the University of Wisconsin, and Joshua Cohen of M.I.T.

That about brings you up to date on what's been going on this past year in Ann Arbor. I hope you will enjoy the piece just following by our newest senior member, Alan Code. Before I close, however, let me say again how very much we all appreciate your support.

Sincerely,



Stephen L. Darwall
Chair

SOME BASIC ELEMENTS OF ARISTOTLE'S METAPHYSICAL ESSENTIALISM

INTRODUCTION.

The collection of Aristotle's treatises that constitute the book we now call the *Metaphysics* presents, develops and pursues a conception of wisdom, or first philosophy as a general understanding of the causes and principles of being, reality, or what there is. He begins by first surveying the multifarious views of both his predecessors and contemporaries, and then developing a series of puzzles (*aporiai*) concerning those views. Basically, these puzzles consist of compelling arguments on both sides of some ontological issue. By solving these puzzles and hence removing confusion Aristotle thinks that we move from ignorance to knowledge or understanding. The chief goal of ontological inquiry is to arrive at an understanding of a perfect and unqualified, and hence thoroughly unproblematic instance of being or reality. As it turns out, it is god, or the unmoved mover of the heavenly spheres, that plays this role in Aristotle's ontology. God enjoys a perfect mode of being such that once we grasp this mode of being, we are able to relate to it, and hence understand in terms of it, all other modes of being.

In this brief article I can hardly do justice to the complexity and richness of Aristotle's program. What I hope to accomplish is the much more modest task of bringing to the foreground three of the critical moments of his investigation. In order to see how first philosophy can be both theology as well as general ontology, in Section I we examine the conditions a primary being must satisfy if other modes of being are to be understood in relation to it. Further, since Aristotle presents us with an ontological inquiry

that proceeds in stages from the perceptible beings that are initially most familiar to us to an understanding of non-perceptible primary being, Section II discusses the preliminary views about what is real from which the inquiry proceeds, and Section III discusses god's nature as a mode of being that satisfies preeminently the theoretical conditions he imposes upon a theory of substantial being.

(I) SUBSTANCE AS FOCALLY PRIMARY BEING:
WHAT ONTOLOGICAL INQUIRY IS ABOUT.

The chief task of books VII-IX, the so-called middle books, of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is to investigate the question "What is substance?," searching for an answer that will also answer the question "What is being?." He attempts to give a general theory of (perceptible) substance such that the resulting concept of substance satisfies various conditions of adequacy for being the focal point in a general account of being. Everything has a mode of being that is ultimately either a kind of substantial being or is dependent upon some kind of substantial being. That is, a substance must be a focally primary being.

This is the most fundamental idea in Aristotle's ontology, and may be explicated as follows. The term "being" applies to some things, to substances, primarily and without qualification, and applies to everything else derivatively. Aristotle begins books VII-IX of his *Metaphysics* by asserting that being, or that which is, is spoken of in a plurality of ways, and he elaborates upon this by correlating the various modes of being with a list of ways in which a term can signify some kind of being. Being, we are told, signifies on the one hand what Aristotle calls the *what it is* (this is the content of a definition of essence) and the *this* (the determinate substratum), and on the other hand it signifies either what something is like, or how much it is, or each of the other kinds of things that are predicable of a subject in the way that these latter are.

Aristotle assumes that it is clear both that of the various modes of being, what is primary is the *what it is* that signifies substance, and also that the other modes of being are derivative in the sense that anything that is a being, but not in the primary way, is correctly called a 'being' (or, a 'thing that is') in virtue of standing in some appropriate dependency relation to something that is a being in the primary mode. The phrase '*what it is*' is here used as a variable, or place-holder, for such items as 'man', 'horse' and so on. A particular substance, like an individual man or a horse, is a being about which a "What is it?" question is asked, and as such is endowed with an essential nature that is specified by the definition that answers that "What is it?" question. A primary substance is something essentially and in its own right, capable of separate and independent existence. A quality, on the other hand, although it is a being, is not a separate, independently existing being in the primary way that particular substances are beings, but rather is a being by virtue of the fact that there are particular primary substances that have that quality; similarly, a quantity is a being just in case, and because, it is the size or magnitude, or quantity of some substance or other.

There is no single explanation for the application of the term

"being" to non-substances, for although each non-substantial being is a being by virtue of standing in some appropriate relation R to a substance, the relation R will vary from one type of case of non-substantial being to the next. As the first sentence of *Metaph.* IV.2 declares, being, although spoken of in a plurality of ways, nonetheless is always spoken of in relation to a single thing—i.e., a single nature. That single starting point is substance. At this stage in the inquiry we have not been told what it is to be a substance, but have been told that every non-substance is a being simply because it stands in some relation of dependency to something else—in each case, some substance. This idea puts an important theoretical constraint on whatever answer we try to give to the question what it is to be a substance—namely, that we should be able to account for all being in terms of (i) the being of substances, and (ii) dependency relations to things endowed with that kind of substantial being. In order for an account meeting this constraint to be possible, it is mandatory that the account we are prepared to give of items within the class of substances must not explain the being of items within that class by appeal to any explanatory factors external to the class of substances. Substances are beings because they are substances, and not because they stand in some dependency relation to something else. A substance must be a being in its own right—what we might call a '*per se* being'.

Since a substance is a being *because* it is a substance, we must try to say what is involved in being a substance if we are to account for all being in terms of the being of substances. For this reason, our answer to the general question "What is being?" depends upon an answer to the question "What is substance?." Aristotle, in fact, identifies the two questions, and although initially this identification may seem to be an overstatement, it is not at all implausible to suppose that a full answer to the question about substantial being will require a full treatment of the various modes of non-substantial being that are dependent upon this kind of being. The reason for this is that the focal primacy of substantial being involves the various dependencies of non-substantial being upon it. For something to be a substance is for it to be primary, and for it to be primary just is for other things to be posterior to it. Consequently, a treatment of substantial being must deal with its primacy and hence must, *ipso facto*, deal with the ways in which other types of being are dependent upon it. As Aristotle tells us in *Metaph.* VI.1, the theoretical science that studies the first, or primary, mode of being will, by virtue of that very primacy, also be a universal science dealing with all being. In this way first philosophy is simultaneously both the general ontology of *Metaph.* IV and the study of the primary instance of being (as it later turns out, the divine being of the unmoved mover) as required by *Metaph.* VI.

At this stage of his inquiry, Aristotle is intentionally not assuming any particular view as to what kinds of things are substances, nor is he assuming any particular view as to what it is about a substantial being that makes it a substance. When he says that (i) the primary mode of being is the *what it is* which signifies substance, or (ii) all of the other things depend upon substance for their kind of non-substantial being, or (iii) substance is primary in all of the senses of the word "primary," we

should not at this stage of his investigation read these statements against the background of some specific, antecedently given theory of substance. In particular, we should not simply assume that he is merely presupposing views about what things are substances, or what it is to be a substance, that find expression, either explicitly or implicitly, in his presumably earlier work, the *Categories*. Rather, we should read him as stating that an adequate account of substance, whatever it turns out to be, must satisfy certain conditions of adequacy. An adequate answer to the question "What is substance?" must enable us to specify a class of entities that (among other things) (i) are signified by a *what it is*, or an account of essential being; (ii) are sources, or principles of being for items external to that class; and (iii) are prior to items external to that class in that (a) only items in that class have separate, independent existence, (b) the account of the being of each non-substantial item must incorporate an account of the being of some substantial item from which that non-substantial item cannot be separated, and upon which its being depends, and (c) understanding or knowledge of things proceeds from an understanding of the substantial beings that are signified by a *what it is*, or definition of essence. A substance must be a focally primary being, and hence our general theory of substances should honor the constraints just listed.

All of the previously mentioned conditions of adequacy for an account of substance can be traced back to the idea that substances are the focally primary instances of being. At this early, preliminary stage in the investigation the constraints are not, and are not intended to be, all that clear. However, as one attempts to forge a concept of substance that fits them as closely as possible, they are both clarified and modified. It is crucial to see that all of these conditions imposed upon the analysis of substance stem from the single idea that substances are the (focally) primary beings, and not from some particular theory of substance that he is presupposing. Let us briefly consider each of the five conditions just listed.

First, the '*what it is*' requirement. We may start by observing that if a substance is to be a focally primary being, then it is a being *because* it is a substance, and not because of its relation to something else. If, for example, on our theory of substance Socrates (a particular member of a natural kind) turns out to be a substance, then he will count as a being not by virtue of anything external to himself, but rather solely in virtue of the fact that he is the very substance that he is. In other words, he will be a being in virtue of *what he is in his own right*. Consequently, the '*what it is*' of Socrates (=what he is) will be that in virtue of which he is a being, and his being will be being *what he is*. If *what he is* is (a) man, then *man* will be his '*what it is*'. Hence, being for Socrates is no other than his being a man. Socrates, we may say, is a substantial, *per se*, being. *Man* is what his *per se* being is.

If Socrates is a primary being, then he must be a being in virtue of himself, and this just is to be a being in virtue of what he is, in virtue of his '*what it is*'. To say that a 'primary being' is the *what it is* which signifies substance involves two ideas. First, it tells us that the primary being is the *what it is*—i.e., the man, the horse. This is simply a generalization of such statements as 'This is (a) man', 'This is a horse', and so on. In general, any primary

being is some *what it is* (a man, a horse, etc.). Secondly, there is a restriction to the strict application of the phrase "*what it is*." Aristotle argues in VII.4 that just as the term "is" belongs in a strict sense to substances, and in a derivative sense to other things, so "*what it is*" applies without qualification to substance, and in a qualified way to what-something-is like, how-much-something-is, etc. So, in saying that the primary being is the *what it is* which signifies substance, the addition of the phrase "which signifies substance" indicates that it is only the *what it is* in the strict sense that is what a primary being is. Consequently, to say that primary being is the *what it is* which signifies substance is just another way of saying that substances are the focally primary beings. The *what it is* requirement can in this way be traced back to the idea that substances are the focally primary beings.

Second, other beings are ontologically dependent upon substance in the sense that only the focally primary beings, and hence only the substances, are those beings to which the term "being" applies primarily and without qualification. They are the *only* things that are, strictly speaking, beings in their own right. Since anything that is not a being in its own right must be such that its being is dependent upon something that is a being in its own right, the substances will be those primary beings by virtue of which the other beings are called 'beings'. This too turns out to be a condition on our analysis of substance simply because substances are the focally primary beings.

Third, anything that is a primary being must be capable of separate existence in that its being is not ontologically dependent upon the being of anything distinct from it. If its being were dependent upon some distinct item, then it would not be a being simply in virtue of itself, but rather would be a being by virtue of its dependency relation to something else. Hence it would not be focally primary. Thus we must further require that substance is separate, since substances must be focally primary.

Fourth, the *account* (or definition) of the being of a non-substantial item must not treat that item as a being in its own right (at any rate, not in the strict, unqualified sense). Instead the account must exhibit its manner of dependency upon some primary being (again, assuming that the primary beings are those things by virtue of which all other beings are called 'beings'). Since a correct account or definition should be fully-analyzed, the definition of the type of substantial being upon which the being of our non-substance depends must be included in the account of its being. Thus, the claim that substance is prior in definition is still another consequence of the single idea that substance is the focally primary instance of being.

Fifth, and finally, Aristotle assumes that we know a thing best when we know what it is—i.e., when he know its *what it is*. The items to which the term "being" applies primarily (i.e., the focally primary beings) are each known in a primary way because to know a thing just is to know its very being. The being of such a thing is primary, and hence its grasp does not involve the grasp of any other being. However, since the being of a non-substance is itself derivative, one must know the being of some substance (i.e., something other than the non-substance) in order to know the being of that non-substance. Hence, we also derive the idea that knowledge of substance is prior to knowledge of non-

substance from the idea that substances are the focally primary beings.

(II) EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF THINGS THOUGHT TO BE SUBSTANCES: WHERE THE INQUIRY STARTS.

Now that we know both what it means to say that substances are focally primary beings, and what theoretical constraints this idea puts on Aristotle's investigation into the question "What is substance?," it is time to look at some of the candidates for substance that Aristotle initially considers. According to Metaph. VII.2, the items that are thought to be the clearest examples of substance are *bodies*. The term "bodies" is here used to cover at least the following cases:

- (a) living things, both plants and animals,
- (b) the parts of these living things,
- (c) the four basic physical elements: earth, water, air and fire, and
- (d) anything that is either a part of some body, or is composed of bodies.

It is worth noting that *souls* are not included on this list. This shows that in VII.2 Aristotle is not presupposing the view that he is working towards. The position that eventually emerges in the middle books of the *Metaphysics* is that in the case of living things, the substance of that thing is its soul, and thus the soul is a 'what it is', and hence a primary substance. Furthermore, it is important to note that the term "bodies" is being used to cover both (what his hylomorphic analysis of substance calls) matter and the composite of matter and form. Not only does VII.2 not presuppose the view that the soul is a substance, it does not even presuppose hylomorphic analysis.

Aristotle's entry on substance in V.8 lists a number of types of case to which people apply the term "substance." His first entry is basically the same as the VII.2 passage just discussed, but with an important difference. V.8, unlike VII.2, purports to *explain* why bodies are called substances. It is because they are not predicable of a subject, but the other things are predicable of them that bodies are called substances. This is, according to his Categories, the condition by virtue of which a primary substance is a primary substance. What makes something a primary substance in that work is that it satisfies this very condition (the 'logical subject' condition). By way of contrast, Metaph. VII.2 simply lists things thought to be substances, but does not attempt to say what it is that makes, or is thought to make, them substances. When in the next chapter, VII.3, he sketches out a preliminary answer to the question "What is substance?," we find the same answer as that given in both the Categories and the V.8 passage just discussed. However, VII.3 also introduces for the first time in Book VII the idea that a perceptible object is a *composite* of matter and form. Since each of these items (the matter and the form) can correctly be called subjects, it turns out that the logical subject condition does not provide an adequate account of what it is about a substance that makes it the case that it is a substance.

Furthermore, VII.2 is completely agnostic as to whether *any* bodies are, in fact, substances. He goes on to say:

...but whether these [i.e., bodies] are the only substances, or there are also some others, or some of these, or [some of these] and also others, or none of these, but some others, must be considered.

Thus we can see that in VII.2 he is not assuming the view given in the Categories as to what things are substances, for although bodies do satisfy the Categories' criterion for primary substance, in VII.2 he is willing to consider the possibility that *none* of them are substances. Later, in VII.16, he says that the parts of animals are not substances because they fail the separability condition, and the four elements are not substances because rather than being genuine unities, they are more like heaps. In general, most of the things initially thought to be the clearest examples of substance, and many of the items treated in the Categories as primary substances, turn out in Metaph. VII to be what he calls potentialities, and not actual substances.

After listing further items thought by some to be substances, including Platonic Forms as well as various mathematical entities, VII.2 poses some additional questions, occasioned by the list, and then concludes by saying that we must first, before answering these questions (including the question "What things are substances?"), sketch out an answer to the question "What is substance?." This is the question "What is it to be a substance?," or "What is it about a substance that makes it a substance?." An answer to this question would *explain* why some particular substance is the very substance that it is. To engage in this task is to move from a survey of beliefs about what kinds of things are most substantial, or most real, to an understanding of a set of explanatory first principles in terms of which we can both account for and correct these initial ontological beliefs.

Aristotle's methodology is aporetic, and to engage in this task is to develop and attempt to solve puzzles that arise from these ontological beliefs. In this article I skip over this important aspect of his program, and move directly to a consideration of the way in which the investigation terminates with an understanding of god.

(III) GOD AS THE FOCALLY PRIMARY INSTANCE OF BEING: WHERE THE INQUIRY ENDS.

Aristotle thinks that one should begin an investigation with what is known, or familiar, to the investigator. Since Aristotle takes it that there is widespread agreement that at least some perceptible bodies are substances, one ought to begin an inquiry into substance with them. The eventual goal is to acquire an understanding of what is most knowable by nature. Even at the outset of his investigation, he takes it that there is reason to believe that there are separate, non-perceptible substances, and perhaps some non-perceptible substances are those things that are entirely knowable by nature.

In VII.11 he says that we are making our determinations about perceptible substances in order to consider later such questions as (i) whether there is, in addition to the material of sensible substances, another kind of matter, and (ii) whether we ought to investigate some other kind of substance—numbers, for instance, or something of that sort. Furthermore, in VII.17, just

before proposing a fresh start, and addressing the question "What is substance?" anew, he tells us that perhaps this new approach to substance (still, in that chapter, confined to perceptible substance) will help us to get clear about the substance that exists separately from the perceptible substances. Here he does not actually commit himself to the existence of non-perceptible substances, and the remark in VII.17 is admittedly tentative—he tells us that *perhaps* the fresh start will help us to understand separate substance. However, the tentativeness is not because he does not believe that there are non-perceptible substances, but is simply a reflection of the fact that at this stage of the inquiry their existence has not yet been considered. He does not believe in the existence of separable Platonic Forms, nor does he grant mathematical entities separate or independent existence, though the latter do have some kind of being. However, he does, in *Metaph.* XII, argue for the eternal and unchangeable being of god. God is incapable of being other than it is, and as such has no matter of any kind. God's substance is activity (*energeia*) of the very best kind, and this activity is a form of thinking in which both thought and its object are the best possible being, and hence must be the same. That is, god is an activity of thinking that is thinking itself.

A general understanding of the causes and principles of perceptible substances is a necessary preliminary to the understanding of divine substance because we move towards an understanding of divine substance by starting with the causes of the things that are most familiar to us. *Metaph.* VII.17 provides us with a certain way of looking at the substance of a perceptible substance. The substance of a perceptible substance is the primary cause of its *per se* being, and this primary cause is the formal component of a hylomorphic composite. The form is the substance of the thing in the sense that it is that entity the presence of which to the matter makes it the case that the matter constitutes that very substance. *Metaph.* IX explains that this is one way of being an *energeia* (activity). Being the primary cause of the being of a perceptible substance is the way in which its form is an activity. Activity, more than anything else, satisfies the various conditions for substantial being. Activity, what things do and what they are for, is the intelligible *whatness* (the *what it is*) the being of which is exhausted by the content of a definition of essence, and appeal to which enables us to explain and hence render intelligible everything else in reality. In the case of living things, it is their characteristic activity that constitutes their being. Human being, for instance, is a complex set of enlivening, interlocking and interdependent activities that collectively make each one of us the very thing that we are. However, our activity does not have an existence that is separate from our bodies, since (with the exception of pure thought) all of our activities just are operations of physical organ systems. Hence, human being does not fully and without qualification satisfy the separability constraint on primary being.

To understand what an activity is, Aristotle thinks that one must begin by discussing the kind of potentiality that is correlated with change, this being the most basic and most familiar kind of potentiality. In *Metaph.* IX.6 he explains the concept of an activity by means of a set of analogies. The basic idea is that

an activity is something X that stands to something else Y in the way that a change stands to its correlative potentiality. Both a substantial form and a change can be called activities (although the form is a more complete, or perfect, activity) since as a change stands to its potentiality, so too the substantial form stands with respect to some matter. However, the substantial forms of perceptible things, despite the fact that they can be defined without reference to the matter in which they are instantiated (and hence are *definitionally* separate), nonetheless cannot exist without their matter. Thus, contrary to the Platonist position, the forms of perceptible things are not capable of separable existence.

The most important fact about god is that god is unqualified activity, and being active eternally and without qualification, god can have no matter, for matter invariably involves a potentiality for change, and from this god's nature is exempt. Being an activity without matter, and in this way an unqualifiedly separate being, god is non-perceptible as well, for without matter, god can have no potentiality to interact with our sensory apparatus. Because god is a separately existing form, god cannot be an activity in the same way that the form of a perceptible object is. Nonetheless, the word "activity" applies to both by way of analogy. For instance, god's perfect activity, although itself unchangeable, is a source or principle of change in the outermost heavenly sphere, being the final cause of that motion in a way analogous to the way in which the formal nature of some kind of animal is the final cause of the generation of animals of that type. Furthermore, the eternal, continuous activity that is god's nature stands to the potentiality of each species to perpetuate itself without limit as the more perfect mode of being to the less. Of all things, god is the most perfect instance of being, and the object of the very best form of intellectual activity. As such god is that being which is superlatively knowable by nature, and the understanding of this first principle is the ultimate goal of the metaphysician's journey.

Alan Code

1991

Alan Code holds a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. (with Philosophy as his Major Field, and Ancient Greek as his Minor Field) from the University of Wisconsin. After holding a regular appointment in the Department of Philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, since 1977, he came to Michigan last January with a joint appointment in the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Classical Studies. Professor Code is well-known for a number of important articles on Aristotle's metaphysics, and is currently working on a book on this topic. He has been a visiting professor at the University of British Columbia, the University of California, Los Angeles, and Stanford University. He has been a Guggenheim Foundation Fellow, a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow, and a Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Department acknowledges with gratitude the following contributors during the period July 1, 1990 through June 30, 1991.

Endowment Contributions

Malcom L. Denise, B.A. '35, J.D. '37, for the enhancement of the Denise Philosophy Endowment, honoring Theodore C. Denise, B.A. '42, Ph.D. '55.

Marshall M. Weinberg, B.A., '50, for the establishment of the Marshall M. Weinberg Endowment for the William K. Frankena and Charles L. Stevenson Prizes.

Annual Fund Contributions

Michael Paul Adams, Ph.D., '88
 Hugh Barry Anderson, J.D., '58
 Robert Nemir Audi, Ph.D., '67
 Jeffrey Dean Barnett, B.A., '81
 Fred Lester Bartman, Ph.D., '67
 Mark David Basile, B.A., '84
 Kenneth Deano Benne, M.A., '36
 Graham Glas Bergh, B.A., '89
 Joan A. Binkow, B.A., '64
 Dennis R. Braddock, B.A., '67
 J. Noah Brown, B.A., '81
 James Allen Brown, M.A., '75
 Lee Miller Brown, Ph.D., '86
 Richard L. Buckles, B.A., '67
 Lindsay D. Chaney, B.A., '73
 Roger Bruce Cole, B.A., '53
 Kendall B. Cox, Ph.D., '63
 Michael S. Davis, Ph.D., '72
 Daniel E. Deview, B.A., '80
 Richard B. Drubel, J.D., '77
 Judith Eaton, M.A., '66
 Thomas David Eisele, Ph.D., '84
 Susan Elliott, B.A., '72
 Jonathan Feiger, B.A., '82
 Sally Claire Fink, B.A., '64
 Scott Lee Fogo, B.A., '71
 Samuel Denis Fohr, Ph.D., '68
 Robert George Foster, B.A., '66
 John F. Gajewski, M.B.A., '81
 John Calvin Garrett, B.A., '64
 Seth Isaac Gold, B.A., '77
 John Thomas Granrose, Ph.D., '66
 Andrew Evan Green, B.A., '79
 Sarah Griffith, B.A., '77
 Lawrence A. Gross, J.D., '79
 Helen Wixson Hall, M.S., '78
 Randall Ross Hall, J.D., '78

Peter V. Hamill, M.D., '53
 Peter John Harvey, Ph.D., '75
 Thomas Haw, B.A., '67
 Leonard W. Hersh, B.A., '82
 Timothy Jon Howard, B.A., '74
 Mark Alan Jarboe, B.A., '72
 David Alan Karns, Ph.D., '73
 Gregory S. Kavka, Ph.D., '73
 Stanley B. Kay, M.A., '58
 William L. Kime, M.A., '63
 Michael J. Kump, J.D., '81
 James Edward Labes, B.A., '54
 Albert S. Lacy, B.A., '79
 Roger Allan Lane, B.A., '84
 Jerold Lax, B.A., '63
 Joan Bryan Lerner, B.A., '56
 Mark Alan Levensky, Ph.D., '66
 Margaret J. Livingston, B.A., '75
 Martha R. Lockwood, B.A., '81
 Lynne D. Mapes-Riordan, B.A., '85
 C. Jeffrey McLean, B.A., '71
 Gary Joseph Miller, M.B.A., '80
 Harlan B. Miller, M.A., '63
 Alexander R. Modelski, J.D., '82
 Frank Aaron Morrow, Ph.D., '64
 Kevin Glenn Nealer, B.A., '75
 Francis G. Nelson, M.A., '50
 Larry M. Nemer, M.A., '79
 Orville W. Nyblade, B.A., '50
 Angelina G. Overvold, M.A., '74
 William A. Paton, Ph.D., '54
 Richard Mark Perloff, B.A., '72
 Michael D. G. Phillips, B.A., '89
 Robert Bert Ransom, B.A., '85
 Donald H. Regan, Ph.D., '80
 James L. Reus, M.D., '77
 John Giles Roberts, B.A., '49
 Craig A. Rowley, B.A., '76
 Michelene T. Sager, B.A., '88
 Dion James Scott-Kakures, Ph.D., '88
 Mark Jay Shaw, B.A., '78
 Steven Joel Shaw, B.A., '63
 Thomas Tyler Skrentny, M.D., '58
 David Craig Slawson, M.D., '81
 Thomas Wayne Smythe, Ph.D., '71
 Keith A. Sotiroff, B.A., '86
 Lance Keith Stell, Ph.D., '74
 Daniel Joseph Sullivan, M.A., '83
 Terrence N. Tice, Ph.D., '70
 Stephen George Van Meter, B.A., '83
 Nicholas A. Vick, B.A., '61
 Steven Alan Wagner, M.A., '73
 David L. Westin, J.D., '77
 Paul Yin Hwa Yu, Ph.D., '73
 Michael A. Zimmerman, B.A., '

Matching Gifts

Bankamerica Foundation, San Francisco, CA
 Captive Audience Advertising, Cleveland, OH
 Ford Motor Company Foundation, Dearborn MI
 Shell Oil Company Foundation, Houston, TX

In Kind Contributions to the Tanner
Philosophical Library

Anonymous
 Arthur Burks
 Stephan Burton
 Daniel Cohen
 William Frankena
 Louis Loeb
 Greg Sax
 Lawrence Sklar
 William Taschek
 Nicholas White

Allan F. Gibbard*; Professor; Ethics, Social Choice Theory,
 Decision Theory, and Metaphysics

Christopher Hill; Visiting Professor; Philosophy of Language,
 Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics, Epistemology

David J. Hills; Visiting Assistant Professor; Aesthetics, Kant

John Immerwahr; Visiting Professor; Modern Philosophy

James Joyce; Assistant Professor; Decision Theory, Philosophy
 of Science

Louis E. Loeb; Professor; History of Modern Philosophy

Eric Lormand; Assistant Professor; Philosophy of Mind, Phi-
 losophy of Cognitive Science, Epistemology

George I. Mavrodes; Professor; Philosophy of Religion, Social
 Philosophy

Jack W. Meiland; Professor and Associate Dean (LSA); Meta-
 physics, Philosophy of Mind, Continental Philosophy, Philoso-
 phy of History and Social Science

Donald J. Munro; Professor; Oriental Philosophy

Peter A. Railton; Professor; Ethics, Philosophy of Science,
 Political Philosophy

Donald H. Regan; Professor and Professor of Law; Moral and
 Political Philosophy

Gideon Rosen; Instructor; Metaphysics; Epistemology, Phi-
 losophy of Mathematics

Lawrence Sklar; Professor; Philosophy of Physics, Philosophy
 of Science, Epistemology

J. David Velleman; Associate Professor of Philosophy; Ethics,
 Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Action, Pragmatism

Kendall L. Walton; Professor; Aesthetics, Epistemology, Meta-
 physics, Philosophy of Mind,

Nicholas P. White*; Professor; Ancient Philosophy, Metaphysics

Crispin Wright*; Professor; Philosophy of Language,
 Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mathematics, Wittgenstein,
 Epistemology

Stephen Yablo*; Assistant Professor; Metaphysics, Epistemol-
 ogy, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophical Logic

*on leave all or part of year

FACULTY, 1991-92

Elizabeth Anderson; Assistant Professor; Ethics, Political Phi-
 losophy, Philosophy of Economics and the Social Sciences

Frithjof H. Bergmann; Professor; Existentialism, Nineteenth
 Century Philosophy, Social Philosophy, Philosophy in Litera-
 ture, Philosophy of Mind

Paul A. Boghossian*; Associate Professor; Philosophy of Lan-
 guage, Philosophy of Mind, Foundations of Cognitive Science

Richard B. Brandt; Professor Emeritus; Ethics, Epistemology,
 Philosophy of Mind

Charlotte Brown; Visiting Assistant Professor; Ethics, History
 of Ethics, Hume

Arthur W. Burks; Professor Emeritus; Philosophy of Science,
 Logic, Automata Theory

Alan Code; Professor; Classical Philosophy

James Conant; Assistant Professor; Michigan Society of Fel-
 lows; Continental Philosophy

Stephen L. Darwall; Professor; Moral and Political Philosophy,
 History of Ethics

William K. Frankena; Professor Emeritus; History of Ethics,
 Ethics, Moral Philosophy