Annual Public Lecture in Philosophy

Adam Morton
(University of Alberta)

Anguish, Despair, Acceptance

Thursday, April 8th at 3:30 pm

in Biological Sciences
(Microbiology Wing) M-145

Reception to follow

Abstract: We describe people in terms of emotions, moods, and virtues. In fact we often use the same word ambiguously for all three. A person may be overcome by an unexpected courage in response to a threat, she may spend a day in a courageous mood, and she may exhibit the virtue of courage as part of her character. Moods are different from emotions in that they do not have definite objects. They can be described as directed at the world at large: a person may take the world as fearful, or exciting, or sad. Moods colour everything but they are often fleeting while virtues are enduring traits of character. In this talk I want to focus on the states of anguish, despair, and acceptance as they have been described by existentialist and religious thinkers. The question I shall ask is whether there are virtues corresponding to these moods. What virtue, if any, would a person possess who had moods such as these as an abiding trait of character?

Adam Morton is Tier I Canada Research Chair in Epistemology and Decision Theory at the University of Alberta. His philosophical interests include epistemology, language, emotions and imagination, as well as the intersection between ethics and philosophy of mind. Professor Morton has published numerous articles and books, including *Disasters and Dilemmas: Strategies for Real-Life Decision-Making* (Blackwell, 1990), *Philosophy in Practice: An Introduction to the Main Problems* (Blackwell, 1996), *The Importance of Being Understood: Folk Psychology as Ethics* (Routledge, 2002) and *On Evil* (Routledge 2004). Professor Morton is also well-known outside of the academic world. He has been featured in a column by Scott McKeen in the *Edmonton Journal*, has been a discussant in a public forum on *Why Markets Fail?*, and has taken part in a round table discussion on Michael Haneke at *Metro* Cinema.

Alberta Foundation for the Arts

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