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Priority: Normal
TO: Stephan Kinsella at SHSL-PH2
Subject: The Transcendental Foundation of Ethics - Lecture Series in
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Durham Postgraduate Philosophy Group

PRESENTS THE FIRST EIDOS LECTURE SERIES:

*** THE TRANSCENDENTAL FOUNDATION OF ETHICS ***

by Dr. Kim Davies - PhD Durham 1984

All Welcome!

Having whet our appetite last term, Kim Davies has kindly agreed to expose his PhD thesis to critical scrutiny by giving a series of nine lectures covering his ambitious and wide-ranging project. What he has to say will engage with the most fundamental questions in philosophy so will be of interest to philosophers of all persuasions. The sessions will be informal, frequently controversial, and educational throughout and are suitable for postgraduates, staff and interested undergraduates alike. The sessions take place fortnightly on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Philosophy Department Common Room, 50 Old Elvet, Durham. They will last between 1= and 2 hours, which includes a short summary of the argument to that point, and time for questions. Written material will be available in advance from the Department Office.

Summary:

To develop a sustained transcendental argument which establishes the existence of non-relative categorical moral principles. In pursuit of this end the sessions will engage with key issues in philosophy. The argument will provide an innovative and radical approach to understanding and resolving these and other philosophical issues.

The argument is dense and builds its power sequentially. Sessions 1-3 will introduce the project and deal with the radical empiricist sceptical tradition which derives from Descartes through Hume to Russell and Ayer. Sessions 4-5 will deal with the problem of how to begin philosophy, and will show how the existence of the external world is a necessary condition of the possibility of any critical philosophy. Sessions 6-7 will develop the argument further to show that the necessary conditions of any critical philosophy include the existence of thinking subjects in communication with each other. Sessions 8-9 will establish communication as a non-relative value, and show that it can serve as a foundation for a non-relativistic ethics.

EPIPHANY TERM

1. Why Refutations of Empiricist Scepticism Fail: Strawson, Wittgenstein, Davidson and McGinn. 22nd January.

2. The Necessary Concept of Experience: the Kantian and the Sense-Datum Theorist. 5th February.

3. The Refutation of Empiricist Scepticism, and how to move on. 19th

February.

4. Philosophical Starting Points: Descartes, Kant, Husserl and Heidegger. The necessary concept of thought. 5th March.

EASTER TERM (Provisional Dates)

5. The Refutation of Scepticism: the existence of an external world (and things within it). 30th April.

6. Subject Thought and Language: the essential relationships. 14th May.

7. The Necessary Structure of Communication. 28th May.

8. Communication and the Refutation of Moral Scepticism. 11th June.

9. Moral Motives and Ethical Principles. 25th June.

For further information, please contact Bill Pollard -
W.J.Pollard@durham.ac.uk.

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