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BRAVO RUBINOFF

Rubinoff was the toast of the philosophers of UPEI: he came, he spoke, he conquered! And not only philosophers were excited with him, physics and psychology professors also received him with warm enthusiasm. Just who is this Rubino-ff and whence did he come?

Lionel Rubinoff hails from Toronto; he has taught at the universities of Toronto, York and Trent. Along with his philosophical groundings he also excels as an actor, as an amateur classicist and as an historian. Such a wide range of knowledge and ability contributes a great deal to his overall deliverance as a scholar and public speaker.

On Wednesday, Nov. 14, in the Faculty Lounge, Rubinoff began his philosophical thrust on P.E.I. He brought news of the rebirth and the re-entry of metaphysics into the mainstream of the discipline known as philosophy! Since the turn of the nineteenth century philosophy and philosophers have gone through a crisis; "What is philosophy, what could one really make assertions about, what did the use of techne as the mode of the western forces of production mean as far as the relevancy of philosophy to the technical world?"

Rubinoff proclaimed the new message of philosophy in an attempt to answer & put an end to the afore-said questions and crisis. "Without metaphysics we are barbarians," he cried. "But just what is metaphysics and its exact role? According to Rubinoff it is the study of societies' pre-suppositions from which that society derives its coherent meanings which in turn describe the goals of that society. It is the method by which man views himself in his con-

dition and can, if desired, be the method by which man lifts himself out of that condition in a transcend-

dental moment to move on to new meanings and goals. (A pre-supposition is an opinion, belief or perspective by which the person/society is guiding his/her existence.)

This view of metaphysics is taken, according to Lionel Rubinoff, from the philosopher (British) R.G. Collingwood, and himself! It is a view, he noted, that does not offend the scientific mind. In fact it is the method alas by which even the scientist can be more "scientific" in approaching the universe. The scientist, by analysing his/her pre-suppositions can actually determine conclusions that will be reached in a scientific endeavour. i.e. if a scientist views or pre-supposes the mind to be the resultant of a mechanistic, material universe, he will in turn find that the brain is a physico-chemical organ which holds and produces "mind", the conclusion is essentially contained in the pre-supposition. The role of metaphysics then, is to lay bare these types of pre-suppositions in order that they may be analyzed and possibly transcended.

Following Wednesday evening's introductory lecture came Thursday afternoon's discourse on the problem of the Myth of the Devil. Here Rubinoff developed the idea that the phenomenon of evil, exemplified in man's myth of the devil, is a condition of every man (evil being compulsion, or acting as if one is controlled or possessed by an external force; namely one's job, one's god or idol) that must be accepted in the struggle of humanizing the world. It must

also be surpassed in this acceptance in a Sartrean mode of accepting the responsibility of this condition; transcending it to the realization that man is in fact responsible for the world as it is, and this foisting of responsibility onto an external compulsion is in "bad-faith" or insincerity resulting in a counterfeit dimension. (As when Eichman proclaims at his trial that he was following outside orders thereby excusing him of responsibility

of the extermination of the Jews, all conscience is lost in this "demonic counterfeit dimension".

Thus the devil, is in fact the foisting of human responsibility onto an outside or non-human element such as one's job, the devil, etc.....

In explaining this position, Rubinoff made many references to Greek drama in which the problem of evil is dramatized as a myth of the human ability to transfer or escape responsibility or conscience.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend his Thur. evening lecture concerning the problem of man in a society which appears to have little or no conscience. However, I did manage to talk with Rubinoff in a relatively informal way on Fri. before he left for home. Again the man appeared resourceful and dynamic.

At this point I would like to thank Chuck Holmes and the rest of the dept. of philosophy for bringing a man to this campus who has the communicative abilities of articulating the problems, and giving a sense of direction to those who heard and talked to him.