Call for Papers

COMMUNITY, REASON, TRAGEDY
A Graduate Student Conference at the University of Chicago
Hosted by the University of Chicago Literature & Philosophy Workshop
November 5th and 6th, 2015

"But what differences are there which cannot be thus decided, and which therefore make us angry and set us at enmity with one another? . . . When the matters of difference are the just and unjust, good and evil, honourable and dishonourable: are not these the points about which men differ, and about which when we are unable satisfactorily to decide our differences, you and I and all of us quarrel, when we do quarrel?"
– Socrates, in Plato's Euthyphro

"What can reason do? Passion, passion rules"
– Phaedra, in Seneca's Phaedra

"Now see that noble and most sovereign reason, Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh"
– Ophelia, in Shakespeare's Hamlet

"This is the most immediate effect of the Dionysian tragedy, that the state and society, and, in general, the gaps between man and man give way to an overwhelming feeling of oneness, which leads back to the heart of nature"
– Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy

TOPIC: Communities sometimes come into being or are maintained through reasons offered and accepted; communities sometimes fall apart or are compromised through reasons refused and denied. Tragedy often portrays the latter, and in so doing invites the former. Why is this? The place of reason in tragedy is famously fraught, yet philosophy, reason's champion, repeatedly looks to tragedy to make sense of itself. What forms of reason, if any, are expressed in tragedy? Through tragedy? Is reason fundamentally singular or plural? Simple or complex? Solitary or social? Do communities derive their legitimacy from reason? Or is reason produced by communities? How do community, reason, and tragedy relate to one another? And how do they relate to their conceptual others: isolation, madness, and comedy?

SUBMISSIONS: We invite graduate student papers that address these and related questions through thoughtful engagement with literature and/or philosophy. **Please submit abstracts of no more than 350 words to community.reason.tragedy@gmail.com by July 10th, 2015.** We will accept twelve to fifteen papers for the conference.

KEYNOTE: We are honored to have **Sarah Beckwith**, Professor of English at Duke University, as our keynote speaker. Beckwith studies late medieval religious writing, medieval and early modern drama, and ordinary language philosophy. She is the author, most recently, of *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (2011), and is currently writing a book about Shakespearean tragedy and philosophy's love affair with the genre of tragedy.

FORMAT: Presenters will be asked to send complete papers of 1500-3500 words to the conference organizers by **September 10th, 2015**. The organizers will circulate these as a booklet to all registered attendees. Participants are encouraged to read the booklet beforehand to allow for greater depth of discussion. At the conference, presentations will be limited to 10 minutes (~1200 words). We suggest that, rather than reading an abbreviated version of their paper, presenters prepare a brief account of the questions, arguments, ideas, and themes their paper addresses and raises.

More information available at communityreasontragedy.wordpress.com