PROJECT MUSE®

Farewell/See You Soon

Arindam Chakrabarti

Philosophy East and West, Volume 70, Number 4, October 2020, pp.
856-857 (Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2020.0058>

Philosophy East and West

A Quarterly of
Comparative Philosophy
Volume 70 - Number 4

University of Hawai'i Press

➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/770851>

As soon as I finished reading my little text in praise of Eliot's *hilaritas mentis*, he came straight up to me with a bright face and said, "I never knew about that virtue!" He looked genuinely happy and, of course, cheerful. He may not have known the term, but he doubtlessly embodied it.

What makes Eliot memorable is not our memories of him but the personality that imprinted these on us. Eliot belongs to a rare type of human being one enjoys remembering. Even after his departure, the recollection of our encounters with him helps us improve ourselves on a scholarly and, possibly more so, personal level. As we scholars who work in multiple philosophical traditions know, that is the mark of a true sage. They teach you whether they are present or absent.

Eliot will remain present.

Farewell/See You Soon

Arindam Chakrabarti

Philosophy Department, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
uهارindam@gmail.com

Long—at least 15 years—before he launched me in the University of Hawai'i Department of Philosophy, I happened to meet Eliot Deutsch very briefly when I was a doctoral student at Oxford. With his deceptive nonchalance, he abruptly wanted to look at a paper of mine. I sent him a hand-written paper which, with unconcealed irritation, he got typed with some suggested edits, and surprised me within a year by my first refereed publication in *PEW*!

Like my Indian and British professors, he never praised my work in front of me, but for the 15 years we were colleagues, knocked at my door regularly and demanded to read my current research. And of course, dinner at his place was the most congenial cultural high point, gawk as I would at an original Picasso "Minotaur" drawing hanging on his bedroom wall, on my way to the restroom, as Indian classical music and Johann Sebastian Bach would be playing in a low volume, while drinks were served outside! Even when he walked with a walker and came only once a week to the department, and was writing those beautiful Zen Koan style poems, he afforded me the honor of sharing my philosophically unkempt over-enthusiasm with the living legend of a world-philosopher that he was. Not just his incomparably canonical monograph called *Advaita Vedanta*, which generations of teachers have taught and will keep teaching, but his early work on *Truth*, and late work on *Aesthetics*, *Creativity*, and *Friendship* will

keep him alive in what I learned from him to call comparative philosophy without borders.

Like the other Eliot (T.S.), our Eliot kept returning to the *Bhagavadgita*. In his *Four Quartets*, the other Eliot “wondered if this is what Krishna meant” when he talked about time past, time future, and the intervening moment of death. If we trust Krishna, Eliot has gone for a change of dress for the next leg of his spiritual/aesthetic/philosophical journey. So we should say to him, in the words of *The Dry Salvages*: “Not fare well/But fare forward” voyager!

Eloquent Silences: After Eliot

Rohit Dalvi

Philosophy Department, Brock University
rdalvi@brocku.ca

It was shortly after I arrived in Hawai‘i as a graduate student that I met Eliot Deutsch at his lovely home. The warmth of his welcome and his hospitality was genuine. His *joie de vivre*, untouched by cynicism, was something I had not seen too often among the professorial class. In my case, Eliot took on the unenviable task of mentoring a somewhat confused and somewhat cocky graduate student. As I got to know him better, I realized that Eliot’s mentorship was not mere lip service to the *dharma* of a teacher. It was an active solicitude, that pushed and challenged students on philosophical matters and offered sage words of advice on mundane problems. From helping resolve institutional problems to making phone calls to his acquaintances to secure an affordable apartment for me, Eliot gave unselfishly of his time, not just to me but to many others who sought his help. This paternal attitude was thankfully coupled with a low tolerance for self-indulgence and other common pitfalls of the Philosophy graduate student.

In trying times, as Chair and guiding spirit of the Philosophy program at UH Manoa, Eliot proved time and again to be a sympathetic interlocutor and astute mentor. As an example, I recall the confusion and frustration among students and faculty that followed in the week that the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. Eliot organized a meeting for faculty and students to have a public conversation about that war. In that meeting folks vented, vituperated, and found a brief release from the impotence of lonely moral anguish.

Eliot was a maven of Comparative Philosophy who sought to imbue his students with a sensibility for philosophical thinking, that was not burdened with artificial boundaries of time and space or the sterile dogmas of