

Philosophy Speaker Series-Spring 2020

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Canisius College
March 19, 2020 at 4pm
Clark Hall, room 206



Baldwin's Practices of Truth-telling: Parrhesia as an Ethics of Refusal

What is at stake when one engages in practices of truth-telling? How might truth-telling be affected by the social-political location of the one speaking? What practices might provoke consideration of truths we find inconvenient?

This talk explores how author James Baldwin provokes consideration of discomfiting racial truths. He does so by engaging his reader-listeners in a particular form of truth-telling that, while conveying a truth, has the primary function of putting forth criticisms that foreground ongoing injustices. Baldwin's practices of truth-telling offer a way of registering the innovative modes historically subjugated peoples have utilized to "refuse" existing conditions. Examining Baldwin, as well as Blues and Jazz practices, provides a way of understanding the ethical refusals made by those deemed powerless as expressions of power. This talk is part of a larger project that takes up Black Ancestral Discourses and their philosophical contributions.

Dr. Havis is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Canisius College. Her scholarly engagements utilize insights from Michel Foucault as a means of exploring issues in critical philosophy of race, critical disability studies, and phenomenology. Her articles have appeared in *Hypatia*, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, and other journals and collections; she has a forthcoming book and it is titled *Creating a Black Vernacular Philosophy*.