

Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy La société canadienne de philosophie continentale

King's University College, October 15 – 17, 2009

Conference Program and Abstracts

Thursday October 15—*Opening session at Windermere Manor*

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.: Registration, Windermere Manor, 200 Collip Circle, London

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.:

Welcome, Diane Enns, CSCP President
Greetings, Dr. David Sylvester, Principal, King's University College

Linda Martín Alcoff, *CUNY Graduate Center and Hunter College*

“Adorno's Political Epistemology”

Moderator: Antonio Calcagno, King's University College, University of Western Ontario

[We are grateful to our co-sponsors for their support of this event/ Pour leur soutien de cet événement nous tenons à remercier : The Centre for Advanced Research in European Philosophy, The Offices of the Dean and Principal at King's University College, The Centre for Theory and Criticism, and the Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research at The University of Western Ontario.]

Followed by KUC Principal's reception

Friday October 16—*All sessions will be at King's University College*

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.: Coffee and Registration, Dante Lenardon Hall

9:00 – 9:40 a.m.

1. **David Vessey**, *Grand Valley State University*
The Medieval Roots of Gadamer's Claim for
Hermeneutic Universality
Moderator: Catherine Carriere, McGill University
(Labatt Hall 105A)

2. **Clancy Smith**, *Duquesne University*

The Present Time of Things Past: A Proustian
Reading of Augustine's Conception of Memory
Moderator: Patrick Ryan, King's University College
(Labatt Hall 105B)

9:45 – 10:25 a.m.

1. **Razvan Amironesei**, *Université Laval*
La déprise de soi dans la pensée de Michel
Foucault
Moderator: Iain Macdonald, Université de Montréal
(Labatt Hall 105A)

2. **Katharine Wolf**, *SUNY Stony Brook*
Covering the Face with the Hands: A Study of
Shame
Moderator: Alexia Hannis, European Graduate School
(Labatt Hall 105B)

10:30 – 10:45 a.m.: Coffee Break, Labatt Hall–Foyer

10:45 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.

1. **Mark Green**, *SUNY Stony Brook*
What Does One Second Feel Like? How
 Durations Become Objects of Perception
Moderator: *Jaquetta Newman, King's University
 College*
(*Labatt Hall 105A*)

2. **Marguerite La Caze**, *University of
 Queensland*
The Miraculous Power of Forgiveness
 and the Promise
Moderator: *James Kow, King's University
 College*
(*Labatt Hall 105B*)

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Steve Lofts, *King's University College at UWO*
Cassirer and Heidegger: Mythical *Dasein* and Average Everydayness
Moderator: *Antonio Calcagno, King's University College*
(*Labatt Hall 105A*)

12:30 – 2:00 p.m.: Lunch

Business Meeting
All are welcome! (Dante Lenardon Hall 112)

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Dawne McCance, *University of Manitoba*
Le partage des voix
Moderator: *Lorraine Markotic, University of Calgary*
(*Labatt Hall 105B*)

3:10 – 4:10 p.m.

Jeff Mitscherling, *University of Guelph*
The Negative Lexicon: A Critical Look at Nine Central Prejudices of Modernity
Moderator: *John Snyder, King's University College*
(*Labatt Hall 105B*)

4:10 – 4:30 p.m.: Coffee Break, Labatt Hall–Foyer

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Panel: The CompostModern Condition: Trans-Individuation, Technology and Politics

Dan Mellamphy *UWO*
Nandita Biswas-Mellamphy *UWO*
Emanuele Leonardi, *UWO*
Moderator: *Claudia Clausius, King's University College*
(*Labatt Hall 105B*)

**6:30–8:00 p.m.: Reception and Launch: Centre for Advanced Research in European
 Philosophy, Dante Lenardon Hall 112 and 114**

Saturday October 17—All sessions will be at King's University College

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.: Coffee and Registration, Dante Lenardon Hall

9:00 – 9:40 a.m.

1. **Tyler Klaskow**, *University of Kentucky*
Looking for Intentionality with Heidegger
Moderator: Richard Matthews, King's University College
(Labatt Hall 105A)

2. **Cam Clayton**, *University of Guelph*
Nietzsche and Lamarck: Language, Effective-History and Physiology
Moderator: Kristin Lozanski, King's University College
(Labatt Hall 105B)

9:45 – 10:25 a.m.

1. **Dan Harris**, *University of Guelph*
Giving Subjects: Heidegger and Derrida on Ethics, Organs and Embodiment
Moderator: Lawrence Burns, King's University College and UWO
(Labatt Hall 105A)

2. **Kieran Aarons**, *De Paul University*
Unliveable Milieux
Moderator: Jonathan Geen, King's University College
(Labatt Hall 105B)

10:30 – 10:45 a.m. Coffee Break, Labatt Hall–Foyer

10:45 – 11:25 a.m.

1. **Elvira Roncalli**, *Carroll College*
Arendt and De Beauvoir: An Unlikely Convergence?
Moderator: Grant Yocom, Oakland University
(Labatt Hall 105A)

2. **Iain Macdonald**, *Université de Montréal*
When Yes Means No: Possibility and Non-Being in Adorno and Heidegger
Moderator: Marie-Eve Morin, University of Alberta
(Labatt Hall 105B)

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Helen Fielding, *University of Western Ontario*
The Phenomenological Space of the Polis: Arendt and Merleau-Ponty
Moderator: Christine Daigle, Brock University
(Labatt Hall 105A)

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. – Lunch, All welcome, provided by King's University College, Labatt Hall–Foyer

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Panel: Encountering Italian Philosophy: The Thought of Ugo Perone
Ugo Perone, *Università del Piemonte Orientale*
Silvia Benso, *Rochester Institute of Technology*
Robert Valgenti, *Lebanon Valley College*

Moderator: Kimberly Baltzer-Jaray, Wilfrid Laurier University/University of Guelph (Labatt Hall 103)

4:00 – 4:15 p.m.: Coffee Break, Labatt Hall Foyer

4:15 – 4:55 p.m.

1. **Alistair Welchman**, *University of Texas at San Antonio*
Biopolitics, Sovereignty and the US-Mexico Border Wall
Moderator: Christine Lavrence, King's University College
(Labatt Hall 105A)

2. **Peter Gratton**, *University of San Diego*
Absolute Relations: The Speculative Challenge and Nancy's Post-Deconstructive Realism
Moderator: Laura Beres, King's University College
(Labatt Hall 105B)

5:00 – 5:40 p.m.

1. **Christian Lotz**, *Michigan State University*
The Loss of the Everyday: Celan's Poetics
Moderator: Allan Irving, King's University College
(Labatt Hall 105A)

2. **Shannon Hoff**, *Institute for Christian Studies*
The Colonization of Significance and the Future of Identity: Fanon, Derrida and Democracy-to-Come
Moderator: Babak Bakhtiarynia, University of Toronto
(Labatt Hall 105B)

5:45 – 6:00 p.m.: Wine and Cheese "Pick-Me-Up", Labatt Hall-Foyer

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Symposium Book Prize Award Winner

Dana Hollander, *McMaster University*, will speak on her book: *Exemplarity and Chosenness: Rosenzweig and Derrida on the Nation of Philosophy*
Moderator: Diane Enns, McMaster University
(Labatt Hall 103)

7:30 p.m.: Pub: All invited to Chaucer's Pub: 122 Carling Street

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Centre for Advanced Research in European Philosophy, Office of the Academic Dean, Office of the Principal, Office of the Registrar, Cardinal Carter Library, Information Technology Services, Conference Services, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies: King's University College

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ABSTRACTS
Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

King's University College at UWO, October 15–17, 2009

Linda MARTIN-ALCOFF: "Adorno's Political Epistemology"

Adorno's arguments throughout his writings tightly combine epistemological, metaphysical, moral and political considerations. For example, he gives political reasons to reject idealism (because it makes knowledge the prerogative of experts) and develops a metaphysical explanation of how suffering is rendered invisible (because identitarian thinking produces a "false whole" beyond which we think there is nothing to be seen). By combining such disparate types of reasoning Adorno disregards the practice of segregating philosophical projects as well as reasons and methods, requiring an approach we might today call transdisciplinary and intersectional. As Geuss puts it, he "consistently denied the possibility of a completely free-standing theory of knowledge," or metaphysics or ethics, we might add. This paper traces Adorno's account of "dialectical realism" as a politically reflexive approach to knowledge that attempts to retain an awareness of philosophy's cultural embeddedness.

Kieran AARONS: "Unliveable Milieux"

I propose to investigate the concept of the 'intolerable' in its relation to the question of different types of 'worlds' in Deleuze's work, and the distinct types of regimes of possibility they imply. The goal of these reflections is to attempt to think through a quite specific problem that has arisen in the recent North American reception of the work of the French "critical metaphysics" theorists who publish under the name "Tiqqun" and "Comité Invisible." Their contention, simply put, is that the only possible political philosophy capable of responding to the insidious alliance between biopolitics and what they call "existential liberalism," which besets mass political thinking, must begin with a kind of "negativism", a "secession", and a declaration of the intolerable. I propose a reflection on the philosophical conception of *world* and *possibility* at stake in these notions of secession. I propose to show how at least two different orders of possibility are necessary if we are to think about the passage from the 'intolerable', an "exhaustion of the possible", to a positive starting point capable of furnishing inhabitable social relations, i.e., re-creating 'worlds' together amidst their ubiquitous destruction under existential liberalism.

Razvan AMIRONESEI: "La déprise de soi dans la pensée de Michel Foucault"

Le problème du sujet dans la pensée de Michel Foucault ne va pas soi. Le sujet, nous prévient-il, ne devrait pas être réfléchi à partir son unité substantielle, mais plutôt à partir de ses modes de subjectivation qui lui fournit une disposition et une forme propre. Ce travail traite le problème de la déprise de soi chez comme un des modes de qualification subjective. Mais peut-être, pour être scrupuleux, il faudrait dire que les lignes qui suivent se voudraient être une lacune, un espace blanc entre ces mots de Beckett : « En somme: vais-je pouvoir parler de moi, de cet endroit, sans nous supprimer? » - puisqu'elles les répètent sans pour autant se les arroger, mais plutôt à travers eux, suivant un mouvement par lequel elles se décolorent insensiblement pour se rendre ainsi invisibles. Pour plus de clarté, nous allons isoler les champs d'application de la 'déprise' entendue ici comme déprise de soi dans la pensée de Michel Foucault: (1) le rapport folie-œuvre pose à la fois la dispersion et l'effacement de l'auteur; (2) la problématique de l'auteur est prolongée par des pratiques de l'écriture pendant les années '80; (3) la question de l'identité (mot clé que la 'déprise' signale avec obstination) et du sujet compris comme sujet neutre.

Cameron CLAYTON: "Nietzsche and Lamarck: Language, Effective-History, and Physiology"

There are two ways of reading Nietzsche that seem to conflict: 1) Nietzsche the existentialist who teaches the importance of self-creation, and 2) Nietzsche the student of physiology who talks in terms of ascending and descending types that are largely immutable. In this paper, I will be trying to reconcile these themes by way of an understanding of the interaction between history, the body, and creative self-transformation. I will suggest that, similar to Gadamer's 'effective-historical consciousness', Nietzsche describes an 'effective-historical physiology' that relies on a Lamarckian conception of evolution: Adaptations in the form of values, truths, preferences, habitual ways of thinking, etc. that are bequeathed to us, not in language, but in our bodies. I argue that we cannot understand how Nietzsche thought self-creation to be possible if we neglect his Lamarckian conception of evolution in which values are incorporated physiologically and then transmitted to future generations.

Helen FIELDING: "The Phenomenological Space of the Polis: Arendt and Merleau-Ponty"

If we are governed by the logic of an ideology, of a system, this logic can be independent of perceptual experience, although it might promise a truer reality than the one perceived by the senses. In ideological thinking there is movement, but it is the progressive

movement of the system and not the unpredictable movement of beings who have a shared experience of reality. In such a system there is no place to encounter others. Hannah Arendt describes total terror as the destruction of the space between humans. Drawing upon Arendt and Merleau-Ponty I consider the polis as a phenomenological space, that is, as a shared space that grounds us in the realm of the actual.

Peter GRATTON: "Absolute Relations: The Speculative Challenge and Nancy's Post-Deconstructive Realism"

This paper takes up the important work of Quentin Meillassoux and his contributions to "speculative realism." I first focus on Meillassoux's critique of post-Kantian "correlationism." I then move to juxtapose Meillassoux's account with Jean-Luc Nancy's "post-deconstructive realism," arguing that Nancy's work shows that the problem of contemporary continental philosophy, *pace* Meillassoux, has not been a thinking of relation, but rather, too little. In this way, I suggest that Nancy's thinking of the relatedness of things outside of any human context overcomes an aporia left in Meillassoux's work in terms of his notion of "intellectual intuition" and its relatedness to the world.

Mark GREEN: "What Does One Second Feel Like?: How Durations Become Objects of Perception"

This presentation maintains that our perceptual awareness of temporal, durational and rhythmic values is underdetermined in the established and contemporary phenomenological analyses of perception. My paper consists of three sections: the first of which offers a series of examples to directly activate this mode of awareness in the audience, the second section briefly juxtaposes this type of experience with the antithetical perceptual analyses of modernity and phenomenology, each of which, I argue, employ a form/content schema to relate time to perception, while the final section suggests a new approach to this type of perception based on fixing a vocabulary for the felt-qualities, or hyletic data, of perceived durations. This last point is supported by a distinction between how the perceptual senses of spatial values and durational values are transposed across different sensory channels, durations being founded on how a given rhythmic pattern *feels*, apart from its particular sensory mode.

Dan HARRIS: "Giving Subjects: Heidegger and Derrida on Ethics, Organs, and Embodiment"

Is organ transplantation at odds with philosophical attempts to stress the saliency of embodiment? Embodiment discourses encourage us to think of the body as having meaning and agency greater and other than that made visible by a Cartesian stance toward mind and body. At the same time, advances in medicine are making organ transplantation an increasingly available option, and in organ transplantation we find at work perhaps an unmatched example of the reductive logic of science and medicine as the disembodied organ is made into mere useful material. This paper aims to address this paradox through the work of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida. I highlight the unique ethical potential of the realities of organ transplantation, and argue that in organ transplantation we glimpse the possibility of an ethics of the body that is able to deliver on the ethical promise of Heidegger's own work.

Shannon HOFF: "'The Colonization of Significance and the Future of Identity: Fanon, Derrida, and Democracy-to-Come"

Frantz Fanon's challenge is to articulate the possibility of self-determination for a subordinated and colonized subject, one whose agency and significance have been produced by the agency of others. His solution is nationalism of a particular kind. In this paper, I will explore Fanon's account of this nationalism that is supposed to rejuvenate agency. I will show how its exclusivity paradoxically establishes the ground for a new kind of internationalism or universalism, one that he says Europe could not create. In light of the idea of the dependence of universality on a particular nation, I will explore his critique of the universality presented by Western political ideals, and will conclude by discussing how his post-colonial nationalism is a case study in Derrida's democracy-to-come. Like Fanon's nation, the particular democracy is the only medium for the trace of a pure and impossible democracy, which can only operate by *not* operating.

Tyler KLASKOW: "'Looking' for Intentionality with Heidegger"

Phenomenologists find themselves in the unusual position of attempting to describe non-phenomenal phenomena. Intentionality is one such oddity. It is not phenomenal, yet, Husserl and Heidegger both purport to be able to 'read off' its necessary features. Both were well aware that such an enterprise has innate difficulties. The primary difficulty is how to make intentionality into an 'object.' To do so, a method for directing our 'phenomenological vision' is necessary. Heidegger, however, is unable to utilize Husserl's methods for this purpose. Since phenomenological method must 'follow its matter,' and Heidegger's matter is different from Husserl's, Heidegger cannot merely adopt Husserl's methods. Thus, Heidegger must develop a new method to investigate intentionality. In this paper I show the ways in which Heidegger's conception of intentionality diverged from Husserl's and why intentionality poses particularly difficult methodological problems. Finally, I investigate the new methods Heidegger develops (c. 1925-1928) to deal with these problems—categorical intuition: a reformulated version of the reduction, and a form of objectification—and why each of these methods fails.

Marguerite LA CAZE: "The miraculous power of forgiveness and the promise"

My paper explores the power that forgiveness and the promise, as potentialities of action, have to counter the two difficulties that follow from the possibility of being able to begin something new: irreversibility and unpredictability. Through her account of forgiveness and

promising Arendt tries to justify her view that action is different from labour and work in that its redemption arises from itself. Labour is redeemed through the made world of objects, and work is redeemed by the meaningful narratives that speech and deeds create. She says that the 'faculty' of forgiving allows for the possibility of redemption from 'irreversibility' or the problem of not being able to reverse what one has done. The remedy for unpredictability is the promise. Forgiving undoes the deeds of the past, while promises set up security, continuity and durability amidst uncertainty. Without these remedies the human condition itself seems to be destroyed. I will first consider what Arendt has in mind in writing of the miraculous power of forgiving and promising, and then consider their usefulness as a moral code in political life.

Steve LOFTS: "Cassirer and Heidegger: Mythical *Dasein* and Average Everydayness"

The vast majority of literature on Cassirer and Heidegger focuses almost exclusively upon their 1929 encounter in Devos Switzerland and the ensuing debate on the proper interpretation of the productive imagination and the nature of the schema in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The difference between them is said to be so fundamental that it is impossible to say which of the two is 'correct' without tacitly siding with one or the other in the battle. In this paper I will revisit the relation between Cassirer and Heidegger's philosophical projects and argue that Cassirer and Heidegger mutually influence one another considerably more than has previously been recognized. My claim is twofold. On one level it is historical, namely, that in their varied works Cassirer and Heidegger were engaged in an intellectual exchange that to date has gone unnoticed; in fact, this dialogue influenced the development of their work. The second level is systematic, namely, it is precisely because of their differences that there exists a connection – an interconnection even – between their respective philosophical projects; furthermore, both of them realized this. In other words, Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology and his existential analytic of *Da-sein* and Cassirer's project of the morphology of symbolic forms and his transcendental analytic of the *animal symbolicum* influenced each other in their development and are – in the minds of their authors – connected to each other. This thesis will be illustrated through an analysis of the relation between Cassirer's concept of mythical *Da-sein* and Heidegger's concept of average Everydayness.

Christian LOTZ: "The Loss of the Everyday: Celan's Poetics"

As is well known, the German-Jewish poet Paul Celan said in his now famous Buechner-Prize speech of 1960 that the poem is "actualised language, set free under the sign of a radical individuation, which at the same time stays mindful of the limits drawn by language, the possibilities opened by language." I shall elaborate how we could further make sense of Celan's claim, for Celan himself does not develop his thesis much further. I indeed believe that the poem should be understood as a mixture of two tendencies, which could be formulated in a dialectical fashion in the following way: the poem is at one and the same time both a *liberation of the individual, subjective, or even the singular moment in speech* as well as a *liberation of the universal moment in speech*. Given that Celan, as we might have noticed, prefers to say "the poem" instead of "poetry," I will later take this over in what follows, especially since I think that the reason for his use of "the poem" hints at the aforementioned combination of individuality and universality; for, the term "poetry" is in its generality disconnected not only from the speaker but also from any *unique* configuration, which does not do justice to what poetry is. The poem is, as I shall argue, an event that falls outside of the ordinary inasmuch as it sharply sets itself in opposition to the everyday use of language and thereby establishes new configurations of the relation between speech and language. In this connection, the poem is, in the words of Karl-Heinz Stierle, an "anti-discourse."

Iain MACDONALD: "When Yes Means No: Possibility and Non-Being in Adorno and Heidegger"

In the first minutes of a lecture course given in 1960-1961, Adorno claims that the tension between modern ontology, *i.e.*, Heidegger, and dialectical philosophy, *i.e.*, Adorno's own thought, is "not an unmediated opposition." What he means by this, first and foremost, is that there is a dialectical tension between Heidegger's thought and his own that invalidates ontology's claim to being more 'fundamental' than dialectics. In terms of the debate between Adorno and Heidegger, this statement amounts, perhaps ironically, to an injunction *against* the usually unequivocal hatred of Heidegger that we usually associate with Adorno. I will explain a little of what is really at stake in this debate and perhaps why it needs to take place. One way of posing this question is to ask how Adorno's "imageless materialism" (*bilderloser Materialismus*) relates to Heidegger's "refusal of being" (*Verweigerung des Seyns*). And the answer, in short, is that the opposition between imageless materialism and the refusal of being is dialectical. However, given the nature of the tension between dialectics and ontology, the first obstacle to my claim is Heidegger, of course, whose long and deeply critical engagement with Hegel and dialectics started in the 1920's. In a word, he argues for the derivative and misleading nature of dialectics.

Dawne McCANCE: "Le partage des voix"

In this paper, I am interested in voice—as embodied, rather than as associated with pure immediacy and idea, as it is in the tradition of metaphysics. I approach voice by way of "the mouth," not only the *speaking mouth* that belongs to an idealist philosophy and that structures oppositional interior/exterior, human/animal, life/death binaries, but more so, the *incommensurable mouth* that I find in the work of Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy and that I approach as a rewriting of the legacy of the living voice. With Nancy's *Corpus* and

Derrida's *On Touching: Jean-Luc Nancy* as two of my primary texts, and with reference to Freud's late note on psychical extension, I attempt to relate this "incommensurable mouth" to the logic of opening as repetition; the questions of species, sexual, and life-death difference; and not the least, the embodying—spacing and sharing—of voice(s).

Dan MELLAMPHY, Nandita BISWAS-MELLAMPHY, Emanuele LEONARDI: "The CompostModern Condition: Trans-Individuation, Technology, and Politics"

WHAT IS COMPOSTMODERNISM?: It is indeed correct that one can discern, in the lectures Nietzsche delivered in the early 1870s on *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*, his future philosophy in larval form. And it is also true that Nietzsche's revival of what he called "philosophy in the tragic age" (the "joyful wisdom" of his "tragic philosophy" and its underlying "*amor fati*") was "something *completely new*," *utterly modern, heralding modernism*—this in the words of Gilles Deleuze, from the introduction to his doctoral dissertation, *Difference and Repetition*. "[S]omething completely new begins with [...] Nietzsche": the "invent[ion] [of] an incredible equivalent of theatre within philosophy"—"a theatre of *physis*," *physis* in the Greek sense of the *force* (*élan en français*) of *nature*. What is "dramatized" in this "theatre" is the *logos*—wor[ld]ding—of *physis*: precisely the *physio-logos* with which the Pre-Platonic philosophers (*physiologoi*) were concerned. A twofold composting reveals itself here: (1) the cultivation, via a "method of dramatization" (the latter being the title of a lecture Deleuze delivered during the composition of *Difference and Repetition*), of a long-composting/long-composted tradition of "philosophy in the tragic age"—one which inaugurates philosophical modernism, and (2) the *deconstruction, decomposition, dissolution, ruination*, i.e. *composting* once again, of modern 'self-identity', modern 'individuality', in this [re]turn to and [re]exploration/dramatization of the forces of *physio-logical* individuation.

Jeff MITSCHERLING: "The Negative Lexicon: A Critical Look at Nine Central Prejudices of Modernity"

In this paper, I identify some of the prejudices that over the past four hundred years have increasingly influenced our thought about such matters as the mind, the soul, consciousness and the world. I begin with (A) this list of "simple negative statements" of the operative concept-terms, and I follow this list with (B) "preliminary explanations" of these statements:

- (1) *Intentionality* is not "of consciousness".
- (2) *Being* is not merely some abstract concept.
- (3) *Substance* is not "stuff".
- (4) *Essence* is not some "thing" that an entity "possesses".
- (5) *Form* is not "shape".
- (6) The *soul* is not some supernatural "thing" that an animal "possesses".
- (7) The *mind* is not reducible either to material being or to ideal being.
- (8) A *concept* is not a "mental thing" that we "possess".
- (9) A *habit* is not some "thing" that an organism "possesses".

The positive conclusions that result from these analyses together provide the conceptual platform for *Aesthetic Genesis: The Origin of Consciousness in the Intentional Being of Nature*, which is the third and final volume of the research project entitled *The Revision of Hermeneutic Ontology*.

Ugo PERONE (with Robert VALGENTI and Silvia BENSO): "Public Space and its Metaphors"

Most contemporary philosophy is consciously taking up again the question of the political, but not within the disciplinary framework of political philosophy. New objects and modalities of political reflection appear and, above all, with the expansion of such objects, a simple intellectual and philosophical arbitration of a political matter is refused. There arises here not an analysis of the mechanisms of practical politics, but the identification and constitution of politics as a specific space of thinking, what Badiou, perhaps with a different trajectory, would call a "truth procedure." If it would not sound inexorably presumptuous, I would dare to say that till now the identification of the political has been lacking, even if its mechanisms have been accurately and brilliantly described. This identification has been lacking because we live and we are in the political, because it has become always more the space in which we are immediately assigned as soon as we exit from the space of private existence, a space that we jealously try to preserve, but that has become irrevocably lost since early childhood. The political actually does not exist. The individual and collective life does exist; nature, with its inexorable cyclicity, does exist: the world—the blind and astute interlacement of the actions, the conflicts and the visions that will become history—does exist; but the political does not exist. It exists only as an invention: the invention of a specific space of the relation that intercepts life, that modifies nature and that is a curvature of the world. I would like to dwell on this invention.

Elvira RONCALLI: "Arendt and De Beauvoir: An Unlikely Convergence?"

Despite the fact that Hannah Arendt and Simone De Beauvoir are seldom associated with one another, upon closer examination, it is remarkable to find how much the two philosophers have in common. This paper sheds light on the philosophical convergence of Arendt and De Beauvoir's thought in particular in regard with their understanding of "action" and "freedom" as it emerges from *The Human Condition* and *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. It will be shown that "plurality" is central to both and that it is key to their novel conception of both action and freedom. Even though their convergence is far from being absolute, their parallel project exhibits an undeniable common effort to think the political and the ethical anew.

Clancy SMITH: "The Present Time of Things Past: A Proustian Reading of Augustine's Conception of Memory"

This paper will explore some of Proust's subtle reflections on the nature of recollection and apply them to Augustine's dynamic conception of memory found in his *Confessions*. We will see that *Swann's Way* articulates a protean and selective conception of memory that reveals far more about the present moment of inquiry, the act of confession itself, than it could ever recover from a past already lost to time. With this Proustian conception of memory we will revisit the *Confessions* and advance an alternate reading, focussing specifically upon the selection of tales culled from Augustine's memory and what overriding theme we may uncover that may have still plagued Augustine even unto the period in which he penned the *Confessions*. Guided by Giovanni Papini, the father of Italian pragmatism and a Christian mystic in his own right, we will explore Augustine's *Confessions* as a series of recollections perennially gravitating around an agonising dualism, in myriad guises, that plagued Augustine from his parentage, through his time with the Manichaens, up to the period in which the *Confessions* were composed. This will illuminate a more subtle reason why the search for God was so critical to Augustine, framed, as it was, as a search for peace in unity and an escape from the torment of dualism.

David VESSEY: "The Medieval Roots of Gadamer's Claim for Hermeneutic Universality"

In a series of recent articles, Jean Grondin has sought to shed light on what Hans-Georg Gadamer means by hermeneutic universality by focusing on his discussions of Augustine, specifically Augustine's analogy between the God as Verbum, as Word incarnate, and spoken language as thought incarnate. Against this reading, I think Gadamer's reliance on Augustine is overstated. I will argue that it is Aquinas' account of the inner word, the *verbum mentis*, that helps us to see what Gadamer means by the universality of hermeneutics, not Augustine's discussion of the *interius Verbum*.

Alistair WELCHMAN: "Biopolitics, Sovereignty and the US-Mexico Border Wall"

In this paper, I will analyse the extension of the US-Mexico Border Wall project to Texas. First, I will describe the project and its official justifications. Then I will argue that the official justifications cannot be taken seriously, i.e., the official purpose of the wall (reduction of unauthorized migrant crossings) is so at odds with officially presented evidence. However, rather than speculate (too much) on the 'actual' purpose, even unconscious purpose, I will use some of Agamben's analyses to argue that official discourse surrounding the Wall is a symptom of a transcendently unconscious malaise.

Katharine WOLFE: "Covering the Face with the Hands: A Study of Shame"

There is a stratum of "existence-for-myself" that is existence for another. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, it is here that one feels shame. Yet, shame is not, as Sartre has it, shame of one's facticity, but a primary affective sense of one's own selfhood as fundamentally relational. Further, shame is not a purely depressive or diminutive affect, but an ambivalent mode of attachment. Shame withdraws an affective investment from its original direction, much as a child's hand withdraws upon touching a hot stove. Psychologist Silvan Tomkins, however, emphasises that while an ashamed child covers her face with her hand, she peeks through her fingers (1995: 137). In this paper, I draw on the work of both Sartre and Primo Levi to delimit shame's constitutive conditions, and explore how shame motivates new attachments. Shame is not only an affective upsurge of self-consciousness, but an affective passage toward a changed constellation of attachments.