

Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy
La société canadienne de philosophie continentale

Annual Meeting, May 29-31, 2006
York University, Toronto, Ontario

All sessions, including special events, will be held in Winters College (WC) Rm 118
The CSCP/SCPC Reception will be held in WC Junior Common Room

SPECIAL EVENTS

Book Session: *The Gift of the Other: Levinas and the politics of reproduction*
(forthcoming, SUNY Press, 2006), by Lisa Guenther, University of Auckland
Speakers: Claire Katz, Penn State; Silvia Benso, Siena College
Monday, May 29, 3:00 – 5:30 pm

Special Noon Hour Guest Speakers:

James Mensch, St. Francis Xavier University, “The Intertwining of Incommensurables:
Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi*”
Monday, May 29, 11 am – 12:30 pm

Bettina Bergo, Université de Montréal, “What is Levinas Doing? Phenomenology and the
Ethical (Unconscious)”
Tuesday, May 30, 11 am – 12:30 pm

Karen Houle, University of Guelph, “Abortion and Responsible Mourning”
Wednesday, May 31, 11 am – 12:30 pm

Symposium Book Award Winner Keynote Address:

Lambert Zuidervaart, Institute for Christian Studies, “Alienated Masterpiece: Globalizing
Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*”
Tuesday, May 30, 7:30 – 9:30 pm

CSCP/SCPC Reception, Monday, May 29, 5:30 – 7:30 pm WC Junior Common Room
President’s Reception, Tuesday, May 30 (time and location TBA)

CSCP/SCPC Program 2006

Please note that each regular session will end approximately 5-10 minutes before the hour for a short break.

Monday, May 29

- 9-10 am "Bergson, Lukács and the Critique of Abstract Space," Alex Ferentzy, Trent University
Chair: Diane Enns
- 10-11 am "Spatial Relations: Art and Agency," Helen Fielding, University of Western Ontario
Chair: Stephanie Zubcic, University of Guelph
- 11 am -12:30 pm "The Intertwining of Incommensurables: Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*," James Mensch, St. Francis Xavier University
Chair: Paul Fairfield, Queen's University
- 12:30 – 2 pm LUNCH
- 2-3 pm "Oh that this too, too sallied flesh would melt": A Phenomenology of Sadness in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*," J. Keeping, York University
Chair: Alexandra Morrison, University of Guelph
- 3-5:30 pm Book Session: *The Gift of the Other: Levinas and the politics of reproduction*, by Lisa Guenther, University of Auckland
Speakers: Lisa Guenther; Claire Katz, Penn State; Silvia Benso, Siena College
Chair: Diane Enns, McMaster University
- 5:30 – 7:30 pm CSCP/SCPC Reception: Winters College Junior Common Room

Tuesday, May 30

- 9-10 am "Plotting an Ellipse: Derrida on Sovereignty and the Event," Maureen Melnyk, De Paul University
Chair: Helen Fielding, University of Western Ontario
- 10-11 am "*Aimer la mort comme une soeur... le deuil et l'autobiographie*," Zoran Jankovic, Institut catholique de Paris
Chair: Christine Daigle, Brock University
- 11-12:30 pm "What is Levinas Doing? Phenomenology and the Ethical (Unconscious)," Bettina Bergo, Université de Montréal
Chair: Diane Enns, McMaster University
- 12:30-2 pm LUNCH

- 2-3 pm "Heidegger on the Scientific Appreciation of Nature," W.S.K. Cameron, Loyola Marymount University
Chair: Brett Buchanan, DePaul University
- 3-4 pm "Immanence, Mimesis, Identity, and Nature: Adorno and Irigaray," Lorraine Markotic, University of Calgary
Chair: Jeff Dudiak, King's University College
- 4-5 pm "Hermann Cohen's Concept of the Infinite Judgment," Ian Angus, Simon Fraser University
Chair: Dana Hollander, McMaster University

President's Reception: Time and location TBA

- 7:30 – 9:30 pm *Symposium* book award winner Keynote Address:
"Alienated Masterpiece: Globalizing Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*"
Lambert Zuidervaart, Institute for Christian Studies
Chair: Paul Fairfield, Queen's University

Wednesday, May 31

- 9-10 am "Deleuze et Badiou: retour sur la question de l'être," Alain Beaulieu, Université de Sudbury
Chair: Antonio Calcagno, University of Scranton
- 10-11 am "Desirand: The Psychoanalytic Legacies of Deleuze and Guattari," Fadi Abou-Rihan, University of Toronto
Chair: Mielle Chandler, King's College
- 11-12:30 "Abortion and Responsible Mourning," Karen Houle, University of Guelph
Chair: Diane Enns, McMaster University
- 12:30 - 2 pm LUNCH and Annual Business Meeting, Atkinson Restaurant, 024 Atkinson College
- 2-3:30 pm Panel on Aesthetics
"From Aesthetics to Philosophy of History: The Nature of Suffering in Kant, Hegel, and Adorno," Shea Coulson, York University
- "Reversibility and Alterity in Merleau-Ponty: Chiasmic Flesh and the Ethics of Painting"
Scott Marratto, University of Guelph
Chair: Rashmi Pandya, McMaster University
- 3:30 - 4:30 pm "Auto-Affection and the Cogito: Jean-Luc Marion's Re-Reading of Descartes," Rashmi Pandya, McMaster University
Chair: Brigitte Sasson, McMaster University

Conference Paper Abstracts

Fadi Abou-Rihan, “Desirand: The Psychoanalytic Legacies of Deleuze and Guattari”

Anti-Oedipus is often considered the Medusa into whose face psychoanalysis cannot but stare and subsequently suffer the most abominable of deaths. While I do not wish to underestimate the critical legacy with which the text has been credited; I want to insist on a no less significant productive psychoanalytic legacy that needs to be unraveled. My presentation will unfold in three overlapping moments: the first will give that legacy its due and open up the connections between the various perspectives; the second will use that legacy to develop a theory of desire that is consistent with an understanding of the unconscious as a dynamic process; the third will show how this theory bypasses the polarities of subject and object and concentrates instead on the verb in its unfolding, on the verb as a gerund.

Ian Angus, “Hermann Cohen’s Concept of the Infinite Judgment”

This paper is an account of Hermann Cohen’s concept of the infinite judgment. The various aspects of the infinite judgment are addressed in the constructive order of privation, infinity and the origivative principle. It is argued that the three concepts of progress, horizon of expectation, and non-foundation are central to Cohen’s concept of the infinite judgment. It is suggested that the 19th century concept of progress can be relatively neatly discarded, whereas the notion of non-foundation seems remarkably ‘existential’ in the sense of 20th century philosophy. The paper thus focuses primarily on the key interpretive issue of the notion of a horizon of expectation in order to investigate what meaning the non-ground of ethical responsibility has for the conduct of human life.

Alain Beaulieu, “Deleuze et Badiou: retour sur la question de l’être”

Nous n’étions plus habitués au genre de dispute philosophique à laquelle s’adonnent Alain Badiou et Gilles Deleuze. Se réclamant de la métaphysique que tout le monde croyait éteinte (dépassée, renversée, détruite, déconstruite, etc.), les deux penseurs se livrent à un véritable duel, encore ouvert, qui concerne le statut à accorder à l’immanence et à la transcendance, au multiple et à l’un, au devenir vital et à la mathématique idéale. La question qui anime le débat est la suivante: “L’immanence radicale est-elle déterminable par une axiomatique (Badiou) ou se conquiert-elle par la voie d’une expérience vitaliste (Deleuze)?” Ce qui revient aussi à demander: “Y a-t-il une seule ou plusieurs voies possibles de conquête de l’immanence?” Nous reviendrons d’abord sur la “rencontre” entre les deux philosophes et aux sources des malentendus avant d’ouvrir quelques pistes de solution en interrogeant les conceptions de l’être et de l’événement chez Badiou et Deleuze.

W.S.K. Cameron, “Heidegger on the Scientific Appreciation of Nature”

Among Heidegger’s most brilliant contributions to environmental philosophy is his devastating critique of modern science’s technologically-driven, calculative mindset. Yet as compelling as this story appears, matters cannot be so simple, since any blanket condemnation of science generates intractable theoretical and practical problems. Of the many questions that could be raised, I will focus on two interpretive ones. First, does Heidegger in fact reject science completely? And if not, what form could science take once we have recognized and rejected the devastating consequences of understanding science as *Gestell*?

Shea Coulson, “From Aesthetics to Philosophy of History: The Nature of Suffering in Kant, Hegel, and Adorno”

Many scholars have noted the importance of Theodor Adorno’s connection of art, nature, and history, but few have fully explored it. As one of the most important 20th century German philosophers of aesthetics, Adorno offers a unique perspective on the relationship between art and nature in which both take on significant historical and political elements. This paper will examine how Adorno builds a substantial portion of his aesthetic philosophy from combining the Kantian and Hegelian aesthetic traditions, with the former offering an aesthetics of nature and the latter an aesthetics of art. By tracing the development of nature- and art-aesthetics in Adorno I will first attempt to uncover just what nature and art are for Adorno and how they could possibly come to participate in one another and will then extend these ideas in order to defend the position that for Adorno aesthetics attempts to re-read history through art insofar as art is the only space for the individual to experience nature, and thus implicitly his or her own suffering. Suffering could thus be reexamined as operating on both a historical and an aesthetic level.

Alex Ferentzy, “Bergson, Lukács and the Critique of Abstract Space”

Bergson has wrongly been derided as the chief precursor of the denigration of space in Western critical theory. Bergson’s critique of space is part of his more general critique of abstraction and is actually more accurately conceived as an early attempt to achieve a more nuanced conception of space. By distinguishing Bergson’s critique from his metaphysics it is possible to see the importance of the former in its own right, and from there, to reassess Bergson’s influence on 20th century theory. This influence begins in earnest with György Lukács who adopts Bergson’s critique explicitly in the *Theory of the Novel* and implicitly in *History and Class Consciousness*.

Helen Fielding, “Spatial Relations: Art and Agency”

Turning to a specific art work, Louise Bourgeois’ public, outdoor sculpture, *Welcoming Hands*, I explore embodied agency through a discussion of Jean-Luc Nancy’s reading of Martin Heidegger’s “Letter on Humanism”. Here agency is understood in terms of an originary ethics that does not allow for a division between ethics and action. Ultimately, I argue that not only can the ethical not be external to our embodied being, but that our embodied being is always at stake in our relations with others. Our being responsible for others is the actualization of being that is, in short, what it means to dwell. While drawing upon phenomenology, this study also implies a critique of this methodology which relies on ‘the hand’ that demonstrates and reveals; for Bourgeois’ sets of hands are in relation—they are intertwined with other hands, even as they invite the touch of those who walk by.

Karen Houle, “Abortion and Responsible Mourning”

This paper is part of a larger project in which I use the theoretical insights of Derrida, Lévinas and Bataille on mourning, death and responsibility for traction, making the question of responsibility erupt anew in the discourse of abortion. My work seeks to show that there are dimensions of the relationships of (m)othering, including – birthing, aborting, taking birth control, giving up, letting go, adopting out – which involve and foster the very ethical anchors of ‘responsibility’. In the first section, using first person narrative, and second-hand experiential accounts of abortion, I analyze the silence surrounding abortion experiences as traceable to the hegemony of responsibility as reason-giving, and the ways that discredits women seeking abortion as irresponsibles. Looking for another conceptualization of responsibility which could

frame abortion as a constitutive site of “the ethical” I turn to the later writings of Derrida on ‘responsibility and mourning’. Finally, I argue for four points of contact between the Derridean analysis of the conditions of ‘the responsible’, and abortion.

Zoran Jankovic “*Aimer la mort comme une soeur... Le deuil et l’autobiographie*”

Derrida, à l’encontre de Heidegger, essaie d’effacer les frontières que l’ontologie fondamentale trace rigoureusement entre “ma mort”, toujours la mienne, et la mort d’autrui. Pour brouiller cette distinction stricte heideggérienne, Derrida, tout comme Ricoeur, assigne un rôle crucial au deuil. En examinant ce “deuil originaire” ainsi que la fonction du ton autobiographique qui deviant omniprésent chez le “dernier” Derrida, cet article soulève la question qui est celle de savoir ce qui se passe quand mon deuil est raconté. Rapprochant de cette manière Ricoeur et Derrida, il tâche tout d’abord de faire apparaître que l’autobiographie ne peut pas “approprier” la mort par principe, et ensuite, que le deuil originaire derridien—en dernière analyse et paradoxalement—implique une certaine violence.

J. Keeping, “‘Oh that this too, too sallied flesh would melt’: A Phenomenology of Sadness in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*”

In this paper, I attempt a phenomenological analysis of the emotion of sadness, utilizing two performances of Shakespeare’s play, *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, as my research material. Studying emotions is challenging for phenomenologists. Not only are they notoriously subjective, but they are also highly dynamic, refusing to sit still for study. But artworks share with texts the power to make meaning objective. And great works of art, such as Shakespeare’s plays, contain considerable insight into emotions. I find that sadness is the intuition of a diminishment, specifically a diminishment of our self. This diminishment is intuited via a certain structuring of our body which combines cognitive, motile, and perceptual aspects. It is in part the physiognomic patterns which typify sadness that act to organize the spectacle in a certain way and in part constitute the situation as a sad one. I go on to distinguish sadness from the related phenomena of despair and depression.

Lorraine Markotic, “Immanence, Mimesis, Identity, and Nature: Adorno and Irigaray”

In this paper, I compare the work of two thinkers seldom brought together: Theodor W. Adorno and Luce Irigaray. I discuss four parallel tendencies in their philosophies. First, I argue that both advance and apply a form of immanent criticism. Second, I examine the concept of mimesis, which plays an important role in the work of each thinker. Third, I show how Adorno’s delineation of the suppression of the non-identical in idealist philosophy is akin to Irigaray’s depiction of the elision of woman throughout Western philosophy. Finally, I relate Irigaray’s discussion of the suppression of the body to Adorno’s suggestion that the domination of nature is the driving force in human history.

Scott Marratto, “Reversibility and Alterity in Merleau-Ponty: Chiasmic Flesh and the Ethics of Painting”

This paper responds to a challenge posed by Levinas to Merleau-Ponty. Levinas claims that in Merleau-Ponty’s account of “expression,” and in his ontology of chiasmic “flesh,” being is “relieved of the weight of its otherness.” The other, according to Levinas, can only be encountered across a “radical separation” and Merleau-Ponty’s ontology seems to exclude this possibility. I respond to this criticism by considering the notions of chiasm, flesh, reversibility,

and expression, particularly as they are developed in the context of Merleau-Ponty's analysis of painting. I argue that in Merleau-Ponty's ontology alterity is encountered in the flesh of the same—and that this bearing of the other in oneself is both the meaning of art and the condition of ethics. In the act of painting, the body of the see-er dispossesses itself in favour of the visible. Merleau-Ponty's analysis of painting shows that vision is “expression,” which is, according to my reading, a responsive-agency already suffused with an ethical meaning.

Maureen Melnyk, “Plotting an Ellipse: Derrida on Sovereignty and the Event

This paper begins from the observation that many of Derrida's final texts traverse an elliptical orbit around two foci: one, the concept of sovereignty and its entanglements with and production of the fictional or phantasmatic figures of the self, the state, and God; the other, the notion of the event. Specifically, I claim that Derrida's recent thought employs the notion of “event” in the deconstruction of this concept of sovereignty and its phantasmatic fictions insofar as his theorizations of the event challenge the power and rationality associated with each of the phantasmatic manifestations of sovereignty. My analysis traces both the development of the concept of “event” and the critique of sovereignty, demonstrating how the former participates in the ongoing deconstruction of the latter and therefore how each focal point is essential in plotting the path of this elliptical course that so obviously preoccupied Derrida's later thinking.

James Mensch, “The Intertwining of Incommensurables: Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*”

Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* consists of two separate accounts of the survival on a lifeboat of a 16 year old Indian boy. In the first, Pi shares the boat with some zoo animals that managed to survive the shipwreck: a tiger, an orangutan, a hyena, and a zebra. In the second, humans replace these animals. In both there is a fight for survival, which ultimately leaves Pi alone. It is left open which story is the “true” one. The questions the book leaves us with concern the relation of the animal to the human. Do we, as Pi tends to do, define the human by excluding the animal—i.e., by asserting that the animal is the nonhuman? Or do we confront and recognize our own animality? Where, in fact, do we draw the line between the two? Can we draw this line? Lacan writes, “The unconscious is that chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a falsehood: it is the censored chapter.” In this contribution, I propose to analyze *The Life of Pi* to show how the repression of “the other” of our animality deeply disturbs our self-recognition.

Rashmi Pandya, “Auto-Affection and the Cogito: Jean-Luc Marion's Re-Reading of Descartes”

Jean-Luc Marion in a relatively early work, *Cartesian Questions*, levels a decisive critique against Edmund Husserl's intentionality thesis. In the two major works that follow *Cartesian Questions*, *Reduction and Givenness* and *Being Given*, Marion's thesis maintains the critique of intentionality and supplements his version of phenomenology with an additional “reduction.” Unlike traditional criticisms of classical phenomenology that put the need or possibility of the “reduction(s)” into question, Marion claims that Husserlian phenomenology does not push the reduction far enough. This paper deals with a relatively early work of Marion, focusing on Descartes' *Meditations and The Passions of the Soul*, as such, it does not address the more interesting questions of Marion's revisionist phenomenology in any detail. The value of focusing on an earlier text is that Marion's early “Cartesianism” highlights the faulty presuppositions that inform Marion's mature philosophical position. In “Does the *Cogito* Affect Itself?” Marion is implicitly suggesting the possibility a non-intentional foundation for

phenomenology, while the explicit aim of his essay is to offer a non-intentional and so non-representational interpretation of the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum*.