

VIRTUOSITY

Newsletter of the ASCP, Issue 1, Nov. 2009

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Australasian Society
for Continental Philosophy

Welcome to VIRTUOSITY, the Newsletter of the ASCP

The ASCP circulated a newsletter during the latter part of the 1990s under the title “Virtuosity”. We’ve decided to relaunch the newsletter as part of our new phase as a more formalised organisation. Our aim for next year is to circulate two to three issues throughout the year, detailing important news and events of interest to members of the ASCP and wider Continental philosophy community in Australasia. This first ‘relaunched’ issue gives a summary of the events of the previous couple of years, which have been a very dramatic and productive period for the ASCP. Future issues of the Newsletter will include news, conference calls, new journal issues, links to reviews of ASCP authors, and other items of interest to the Australasian Continental philosophy community. We look forward to receiving contributions from members of the ASCP community and welcome ideas or suggestions for future issues.

1. Formalisation of the ASCP

After many years of debate, the ASCP finally become a formalised association, with an executive committee and updated constitution, at the 2007 annual conference, “Dialogues in Place,” held at the University of Tasmania, Hobart (more on the conference itself below). During the 2007 AGM, the ASCP was formally welcomed by Sue Dodds (President) and Eliza Goddard (Executive Officer) of the Australasian Association of Philosophy (AAP).

There had been periods during the 1990s when the ASCP did have a serving executive committee, and the updated constitution was also inherited from the early days of the organisation. But for a number of years the organisation existed only in the form of annual conferences with no real institutional grounding or support. Now we have a more consolidated group of people across a number of institutions working together to maintain and develop the organisation. We're also planning to expand the number of activities we support (in addition to the annual conference), and to play a more active role representing the interests of people working in the broad area of Continental Philosophy across Australia and New Zealand.

While maintaining its broad-based representative character, the ASCP can now take part in important debates concerning institutional and governmental issues that will affect all of us working in areas not fully represented by the AAP or similar institutional organisations. At the same time we're also aiming to expand the links between the Australasian Continental philosophy community and similar communities in other parts of the world (Canada, the US, the UK, as well as in South-East Asia and South Africa). The 2007-8 Executive Committee comprised the following members. Chair: Robert Sinnerbrink (Macquarie); Deputy Chair: Fiona Jenkins (ANU); Treasurer: Jack Reynolds (La Trobe); Secretary: Richard Colledge (Australian Catholic University)/Matthew Sharpe (Deakin); Web co-ordinator: Simone Bignall; Conference Officer: Matheson Russell (Auckland).

2. Executive Committee for 2009

We're pleased to announce that at the 2008 AGM, held at the University of Auckland, the following officers were elected to serve on the ASCP executive committee for 2009: Chair: Robert Sinnerbrink, Macquarie University; Deputy Chair: Jack Reynolds, Latrobe University Treasurer: Jo Faulkner, UNSW; Secretary/Liaison: Richard Colledge, Australian Catholic University/Marguerite La Caze, University of Queensland; Government/Institutional Representative: Andrew Benjamin, Monash University; AAP Representative: Paul Patton, UNSW; NZ Representatives: Matheson Russell, University of Auckland/Simone Drichel, University of Otago; Postgraduate Representatives: Michaela Baker/Andrew Montin; Web Coordinator: Simone Bignall; Conference Coordinator: Andrew Benjamin (Monash)

We would like to thank outgoing officers Fiona Jenkins (ANU) and Matthew Sharpe (Deakin) for all their contributions, ideas, and ongoing support throughout 2007-2008.

N.B.: An election of position for the executive committee will be held at the 2009 AGM, which will occur on **November 29, 2009 (12.30-1.45pm)**, during the 2009 conference, "Philosophy and the Work of Art," at Monash University. See the conference website for details (<http://www.conferences.monash.org/ascp2009/>).

3. ERA Journal Rankings Exercise

Many of you will be aware of the recent ERA journal rankings exercise. The government (both former and now current) will soon require rankings of journals (A+, A, B, C) according to various criteria of research 'excellence' (see the ARC website for details). The ARC invited submissions from relevant organisations in the humanities, including philosophy, ranking journals according to the specified criteria. The AAP circulated their draft rankings list of over 400 hundred philosophy journals and invited comments from the broader philosophical community. Unfortunately the initial list circulated by the AAP appeared heavily slanted against journals that publishing work relevant to Continental or European philosophy. Most were ranked 'C', few were ranked 'B', none were ranked A; many of the leading journals in various specialty areas were either missing or given completely inappropriate rankings (virtually all the top French and German language journals, for example, were either ranked C or ignored altogether). It was difficult not to see this as another case of the familiar institutional marginalisation of Continental philosophy.

This list caused much debate within the philosophical community (similar debates occurred in other humanities disciplines). A number of prominent individuals (Andrew Brennan and Jeff Malpas) wrote public statements criticising the selection criteria and even the very idea of a journal rankings exercise (drawing on similar arguments in the British context). Others (like Rosalyn Diprose) organised workshops exploring the question of humanities research and whether it can or should be quantified in ways that emulate the 'hard' sciences.

The ASCP took part in this general community debate and put together a submission responding to the AAP's draft list. We especially underlined revisions that we thought should be made in order to recognise important journals in the area of Continental philosophy. At the same time we also argued that the selection criteria and rankings process were inherently flawed. There had been considerable debate over whether it was worth boycotting the entire exercise, but we decided it was important to take part and respond vigorously to the very dubious rankings that had been proposed by the AAP. Hence we added a letter criticising the criteria used to rank journals and the potentially negative effects that these rankings, unless revised, could have on local research in the area of Continental/European philosophy.

We also made an independent submission to the ARC. In the latter we again criticised the flawed criteria that had been proposed for ranking journals and argued that this approach to journal rankings could have deleterious effects on local and innovative research in speciality and non-mainstream areas of philosophy. These documents will be made available soon on our website.

Happily, we can report that the AAP accepted our recommendations and substantially revised their list, upgrading a number of important internationally recognised journals and adding others that had been neglected. We are awaiting the ARC's response but are confident that our input will help boost the rankings of specialist journals that are crucial to the kind of research and publishing that members of our community do. Many thanks go to Jack Reynolds and Richard Colledge in particular for their excellent efforts with this thirty-five page submission.

ERA UPDATE: Earlier this year (2009) the revised ERA journal rankings list was released by the ARC for the areas of Arts and Humanities in order to seek further consultation and information about various journals and the inclusion of any missing journals. Although some of the requests we made for upgrading were met, others were ignored or reasons offered for the rankings that were proposed. The ASCP made further representations to the ARC concerning the omission of certain journals and the failure to adequately rank a number of respected journals publishing important work in humanities/Continental philosophy. According to the ARC, "The final Ranked Journal List for the first full implementation of ERA will be released once this feedback has been incorporated at the conclusion of the 2009 trials." (source: http://www.arc.gov.au/era/era_journal_list.htm). We await the ARC's release of the final ranked journal list with great interest, and will continue to lobby for the adequate recognition of journals with a substantial commitment to work in Continental philosophy.

4. New ASCP Website

After many years of faithful service, the ASCP website was relaunched in 2008 with new functions and extra information. The new site uses software that allows us to update and upload material on the site quickly and easily, and will enable us to more readily expand what we have had on our site in the past. We have retained the distinctive Nietzschean (or maybe Heideggerian?) hammer logo, and are now including ongoing news items and announcements (calls for papers, conference announcements, interesting talks and events). Over the coming year we will be building on the range of things available via the new website for ASCP members. If you have any suggestions or items you would like to see posted on the website please contact the website administrator (see www.ascp.org.au).

5. ASCP Conferences Round-up 2007/2008/2009

Dialogues in Place (University of Tasmania, Hobart, Dec 5-7, 2007)

The University of Tasmania, hosted the 2007 conference, which featured a number of noted international and national keynote speakers, such as Cheung Chan-fai (Hong Kong), Anna Freadman (Melbourne), Fiona Jenkins (ANU), David Morris (Canada), Julian Young (Auckland), Günter Zöllner (Munich). The theme of 'dialogues in place' readily lent itself to cross-cultural as well as cross-disciplinary dialogues, with a distinctive accent on German philosophical traditions of

phenomenology and hermeneutics (see http://ascp.org.au/dialogues_in_place.htm). The conference included papers from all areas of Continental philosophy, and particular emphases on the East-West dialogue in philosophy, place, and Hegel in Context. The lively AGM saw the establishment of a renewed and formalised ASCP executive committee with a new direction and vision for the society over the coming years. We would like to thank Prof. Jeff Malpas and the organising committee (especially Ian Paulin) for their fine efforts to ensure the success of this conference.

The Post/Human Condition (University of Auckland, Auckland, Dec 3-5, 2008)

This conference was the first ASCP event staged outside of Australia, and the first to fully acknowledge the contribution of New Zealand philosophers to the practice of Continental philosophy in the region. It also marked a new phase in the development of the ASCP as the premier Continental philosophy society in the Australasian region. The theme of the conference—the Post/Human Condition—captured the complex dimensions of contemporary philosophical debates over the meaning of the human and of the ‘post-human’, the question of humanism, humanity and animality, and the profound challenges posed to philosophy, the arts, and the humanities by new developments in technology, biotechnology, and biopolitics across the globe. The conference featured an exciting and diverse range of keynote speakers: Nikolas Kompridis (York), Len Lawlor (Penn State), David Wills (SUNY Albany), and Ewa Ziarek (SUNY Buffalo) (See <http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/departments/index.cfm?P=11442>). A video recording of Nikolas Kompridis’ keynote on technology’s challenge to democracy is available here: <http://www.thesevideos.com/>

We would like to thank the Department of Philosophy, University of Auckland, for their generous support, and especially the conference organisers, Dr Matheson Russell (Auckland) and Simone Drichel (Otago), for their wonderful efforts, which ensured that the conference was both highly enjoyable and a great success.

Philosophy and the Work of Art (Monash University (Caulfield), November 29-Dec 1, 2009):

We’re pleased to congratulate and thank Prof. Andrew Benjamin from Monash University and the Centre for Comparative Literature, Monash University, for proposing, organising, and hosting the 2009 ASCP conference at Monash with the theme “Philosophy and the Work of Art” (see <http://www.conferences.monash.org/ascp2009/>). The conference promises to be an exciting and very well-attended event, with over 140 delegates presenting on a wide range of topics but highlighting the theme of ‘Philosophy and the Work of Art’. The conference features Miguel de Beistegui (Warwick), Tina Chanter (De Paul), Stephen Crowell (Rice University), and Rosalyn Diprose (UNSW) as keynote speakers, and dedicated streams on architecture, art, literature, painting, film, and numerous key figures within the broad field of Continental Philosophy.

We look forward to meeting as many members of the ASCP as possible in Melbourne for the conference and hope that it is a stimulating, enjoyable, and rewarding event for all concerned.

6. Reviews of Recent Books by ASCP Authors

- Miguel de Beistegui on Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology* (MIT Press, 2006), http://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia05/parrhesia05_debeistegui.pdf
- Matthew Boss on Matheson Russell, *Husserl: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Continuum, 2007), http://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia03/parrhesia03_boss.pdf
- Kameron Godalek on Matheson Russell, *Husserl: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Continuum, 2007), http://metapsychology.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=book&id=3998
- Ingo Farin on Jeff Malpas, Stephen Crowell (eds.), *Transcendental Heidegger* (Stanford, 2007), http://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia05/parrhesia05_farin.pdf
- Robert Norton on James Phillips, *The Equivocation of Reason: Kleist Reading Kant* (Stanford, 2007), <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=12064>
- Jean-Philippe Deranty on Robert Sinnerbrink, *Understanding Hegelianism* (Acumen 2007), <http://www.archivesdephilolo.com/Bulletins/BLH/BLH18/BLH18Liste.php>

- Matthew Sharpe on Robert Sinnerbrink, *Understanding Hegelianism* (Acumen, 2007), http://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia04/parrhesia04_sharpe.pdf
- Mark G. E. Kelly on Timothy Rayner, *Heidegger's Foucault* (Continuum, 2007), <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/acumen/crh/2008/00000009/00000002;jsessionid=skb7x5r9bvo4.aalexandra>
- Robert Sinnerbrink on Alison Ross, *Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy: Presentation in Kant, Heidegger, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Nancy* (Stanford, 2007), http://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia03/parrhesia03_sinnerbrink.pdf
- Daniel Hourigan on Matthew Sharpe and Joanne Faulkner, *Understanding Psychoanalysis* (Acumen, 2008), http://metapsychology.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=book&id=4509
- Richard H. Corrigan on Rosalyn Diprose and Jack Reynolds (eds.) *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts* (Acumen 2008), http://metapsychology.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=book&id=4871&cn=394
- Cameron A. J. Ellis on Matthew Sharpe and Joanne Faulkner, *Understanding Psychoanalysis* (Acumen, 2008), <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=6325400>

If you have any news or items you would like to have included in upcoming issues of VIRTUOSITY please contact us via email: robert.sinnerbrink@mq.edu.au