



VIRTUOSITY:

Newsletter of the ASCP

Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy

Issue 5, October 2014

The ASCP circulated a newsletter during the latter part of the 1990s under the title "Virtuosity." We re-launched the newsletter in 2009 as a way of detailing important news and events of interest to members of the ASCP and wider Continental philosophy community in Australasia. This issue gives a summary of important events over the past year, as well as thoughts on future directions of the Society. 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. Thanks to all the contributors to this issue.

In this Issue

1. Welcome
2. ASCP 2013 Conference Report
3. Upcoming 2014 Conference
4. Best Paper Prizewinners
5. SPEP 2013 and 2014
6. Call for nominations to fill ASCP committee roles
7. Postgraduate/ECR survey results
8. Expressions of interest invited: Post-graduate/ECR working party
9. Members' books

1. Welcome

2014 has been an interesting, and largely positive, year for continental philosophy in Australia. At the end of last year we were reeling from the attacks launched by none other than the incoming federal government, in the form of a peculiarly obtuse, yet specific, critique of two members' successful ARC projects as a waste of taxpayers' money. We in the humanities are especially sensitive to such criticism: we hear the charge that our work is arcane and frivolous all the time in the news media, at parties, and at family gatherings, and so this particular attack was felt by most as yet another unpleasant and tedious return of the same. For our colleagues who were singled out, however, it was felt as a bolt from the blue. The criticism was not only particularly nasty and personal, but boded ill for the future of our field, given its improbable prominence in the coalition's renewed culture wars and proposed re-visioning of Australian society. Members of our



community, appreciating this significance, rose to the occasion by producing some very robust and apposite defenses of philosophy (see [this page on our website](#) to find these articles). We entered this new phase fighting for our lives but showing strength, and will need to keep honing our communication of the value of philosophy to continue to thrive.

Continental philosophy had a strong showing at the Australasian Association of Philosophy (AAP) conference this year, held at the ANU, with a high quality stream continuous through most of the 5-day conference. Professor Paul Redding — both a long time ASCP member and one of those ARC recipients denounced by the coalition — was elected President of the association. This is a significant gesture of goodwill from the philosophical ‘mainstream’ in Australia.

This year the ASCP executive also bid farewell to a number of members, some of whom had served the society for a long time and were due for a well-earned break: Dimitris Vardoulakis served a term as International Liaison Officer, organising the ASCP satellite session at SPEG and developing ties with that organisation. Jack Reynolds finished his term as Deputy Chair, and we congratulate him on his appointment as Philosophy Chair at Deakin University; Matheson Russell left the role as Secretary, where he had made a great contribution to building our membership, and we wish him all the best in his adventures as a new parent. Finally, and not least of all, we miss Marguerite La Caze’s contribution to the executive, as she departed as Chair at the last AGM after having also served previously in the International Liaison role. Marguerite performed the role of Chair with enthusiasm, diplomacy, and always with good humour, during an important stage of the society’s growth. In her final year as Chair, Marguerite edited a special issue on Australasian continental philosophy for *Symposium* (the journal of our sister organisation, the [Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy](#)). The issue went online earlier this month, and can be accessed [here](#).

We welcomed onto the executive committee for the first time Andrew Inkipin to share the role of Secretary with Simone Bignall, and Diego Bubbio came onto the committee as International Liaison Officer.

Finally in news of the year, the ASCP was invited by Rowman & Littlefield International to put together a book series featuring the work of our members, in recognition of the burgeoning of research in continental philosophy in the region. Simone Bignall, Diego Bubbio, Paul Patton, and I are editing the series, and we have issued a call for submissions through the news list. We invite proposals from researchers working in continental philosophy at all stages of career, and especially encourage authors who engage philosophy in ways that respond to the specific conditions and pressures (environmental, social, intellectual and political) of Australasia; and/or who draw on and extend the inquiries of others working in the region. See [this page](#) for more information.

— *Joanne Faulkner, Chair*

2. ASCP Conference 2013, University of Western Sydney, Dec 3-5



This was my third time attending an ASCP conference as a student, having attended two previous conferences in Auckland. Analytic philosophy is the dominant style at the University of Auckland, but there are enough Continental philosophy papers on offer—particularly at undergraduate level—to whet the appetite for it, if not to fully satiate interest. Given these circumstances, we often have a small cohort of philosophy students with an interest in Continental philosophy who lack forums for presenting their



work to an interested audience of any decent size. The ASCP conference provides just such an outlet for this research. It is encouraging to present a paper on Kant's aesthetics to a nearly full room.

Even though Auckland offers several papers in Continental philosophy, the subject area is so extensive that any new opportunity to find out about interesting philosophical theories that we would not otherwise have exposure to is an exciting prospect. This is another benefit of the ASCP conference. The papers on offer at the conference were diverse and interesting. (One particular highlight was Professor Gianni Vattimo's presentation.) My area of interest is philosophical aesthetics, and there was certainly enough on offer in the conference program to satisfy me. It is also impressive—and even a bit intimidating at times—to see just how encyclopaedic the knowledge of some of the other participants is. But more often than not I regard my exposure to these new areas of philosophy as exciting chances to find new philosophical resources.

It seems to me that the members of the ASCP are a welcoming community. This is important. As a geographical outlier from a strongly analytic department, there is sometimes the inclination to feel like a bit of an impostor. But I've found that the attendees at the ASCP conference are really friendly and willing to bring you into the fold, so to speak. The 2013 conference provided me with an opportunity to meet new people who are involved in related research areas and to further reinforce those relationships with existing friends from the Continental philosophy community. The large turnout for the conference was also fairly impressive.

I was heartened to see academics discussing various practical ways to encourage postgraduate participation in Continental philosophy and to make the ASCP conference a positive experience for them. I was also glad to see a session aimed at postdoc research funding. Humanities postdoc funding in New Zealand is practically non-existent—so it is nice to see some practical advice for opportunities (albeit very competitive ones) in Australia. In general, there seemed to me to be conspicuous efforts in defending, promoting and supporting academic research in Continental philosophy. Perhaps the prominence

of this activity was prompted by recent public criticism of some humanities research projects by certain members of the Australian parliament. In any case, I think the resulting discussions helped to reinforce a sense of solidarity amongst the conference participants.

As with previous conferences, I found the presentations to be stimulating and the Continental philosophy community to be both welcoming and supportive for graduate students. While my research interests straddle the analytic and Continental divide (primarily in aesthetics), I know how difficult it can be for anyone who presents on Continental philosophy topics at more general Australasian philosophy conferences to find an informed and interested audience. It is easy to feel like a philosophical outsider. It is great to be involved as part of a critical mass of academics and students who work in the area of Continental philosophy at a focused academic meeting like that of the successful 2013 ASCP conference.

- Daniel Wilson, PhD candidate, University of Auckland

3. Upcoming 2014 Conference

The **Australian Catholic University** in Melbourne will host this year's conference, from the 4th to 6th of December. The stellar lineup of keynotes includes Lee Braver (University of South Florida), Genevieve Lloyd (Emeritus, University of New South Wales), Kevin Hart (University of Virginia, and Australian Catholic University), Andreas Vrahimis (University of Cyprus), and Marguerite La Caze (University of Queensland).

Sadly Laszlo Tengelyi, who had been invited as a keynote for the conference, passed away in July.

The conference will also feature various book and topical panels, and postgraduate information sessions. We look forward to returning to Melbourne, the home of the **MSCP** and other vibrant CP communities.



4. Winners of the ASCP Best Postgraduate Paper Prize

The ASCP Best Postgraduate Paper Prize for the 2013 conference has been awarded *ex aequo* to James Muldoon from Monash University and to Lana Starkey from the University of Queensland (listed alphabetically).

The judging panel consisted of Simone Bignall, Sean Bowden, Diego Bubbio, and Magdalena Zolkos. The panel agreed that both papers were of an outstanding quality, and hence decided to award two prizes this year.

James Muldoon's paper, titled "Foucault's Forgotten Hegelianism," argues against the reading of Foucault as an anti-Hegelian thinker. The paper persuasively demonstrates, through an engaging reading of Jean Hyppolite's lectures, Hegel's and Foucault's shared preoccupation with, first, human autonomy as the end point of political and philosophical analysis, and, second, the analysis of the present through tracing the remnants of the past. The judging panel decided to award James Muldoon's paper with the Best Postgraduate Paper Prize for its persuasive and cogent argumentation, the solid and detailed evidence it provided for its historical claims, as well as for its general finesse and clarity.

Lana Starkey's paper, titled "Albert Camus and the ethics of moderation," offers a reading of Albert Camus' two philosophical essays, *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*, and examines the connection Camus makes between the ontological concept of the absurd and a moral and political concept of revolt. Starkey argues that both concepts draw from Camus' preoccupation with the limits of reason through an ethics of *la mesure* (moderation), and disavow both metaphysical hope and revolutionary violence. The judging panel decided to award Lana Starkey's paper with the Best Postgraduate Paper Prize for the perspicuous and compelling argumentation, its nuanced and innovative reading of Camus, as well as for the ambition and boldness of its claims.

The winners have been awarded the prize of \$500 each, and their essays will be published in the forthcoming issue of *Parrhesia*.

Congratulations!

- *Magdalena Zolkos, Treasurer*

5. SPEP 2013 and 2014

For the third time, the ASCP had a satellite session at the annual conference of the American Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, held in Eugene, Oregon, October 24-26, 2013. Once again, this is recognition of the ASCP's profile in the international community, made possible by the history of strong work in European philosophy coming from Australasia in the last decades. The panel of four speakers included Joanne Faulkner, Diego Bubbio, Christopher Mayes, Dimitris Vardoulakis, and Daniel Brennan. Like most of the other satellite sessions, the ASCP session was held on the beginning of the conference on Thursday morning. Consequently the turnout was small (about 12 participants), but all the papers had helpful and interesting question times. Highlights were Catherine Malabou's plenary session "Can We Relinquish the Transcendental?", and panels on Aristotle and contemporary thought, Hegel and emotion, rethinking Heidegger, political philosophy, existentialism, and feminist philosophy.

The members of the ASCP delegation were able to enjoy the SPEP's intellectual rigour, the receptions (which were also a good chance to have interesting discussion), and the local attractions – did you know that the 1978 cult-movie "Animal House", about a misfit group of fraternity members who challenge their Dean, was filmed at the University of Oregon campus?

SPEP 2014 will be in New Orleans, Louisiana, October 23-25. The ASCP Panel comprises: Rebecca Hill, Emily J. Hughes, Mark Kelly, Marguerite La Caze, and Dimitris Vardoulakis. We look forward to hearing about it!

- *P. Diego Bubbio, International Liaison Officer*



6. ASCP Committee Roles: Call for nominations

A number of ASCP Executive Committee roles will become vacant in 2015.

- Treasurer
- Institutional/Government Liaison
- Postgraduate Representative
- Early Career Researcher Representative (new position)

We invite nominations to fill two elected roles on the ASCP Executive Committee, which will become vacant at the 2014 Annual General Meeting in December:

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial accounting of the Society, for maintaining financial records of the Society's annual income and expenditure for its various activities, and for reporting on all financial matters to the Executive Committee in accordance with the relevant sections of the "Model Rules For Associated Incorporations Under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1984".

The Institutional/Government Liaison is responsible for the development of relationships with government and institutions — principally, and where applicable, the Australian Research Council (ARC), the Royal Society of New Zealand, and universities — where a clear benefit to the ASCP membership in general is to be pursued. Activities undertaken within the Government/Institutional Liaison role may include organising and overseeing grant workshops for members, leading the Society's response to ARC calls for submissions, or liaising with universities to advocate for the scholarly interests of members.

The Executive also appoints several roles to members on the basis of expertise or experience. In 2015, the role of Postgraduate Representative will become vacant and we therefore invite expressions of interest from members currently enrolled in a HDR program to fill this role. We are also creating a new role to represent ECR members, for which expressions of

interest are invited from candidates who have recently submitted their PhD and/or are underemployed.

Please contact Simone Bignall s.bignall@unsw.edu.au or Andrew Inkpin andrew.inkpin@unimelb.edu.au to express interest, and include a brief (up to 500 words) candidate statement. The final date upon which nominations will be accepted is one week prior to the Annual General Meeting, which this year is likely to be November 28, subject to the conference program being finalised.

We are also pleased to announce that from 2015, our wonderful website manager, James Garrett, will be formally appointed to the role of Communications Officer, who is responsible for maintaining and managing the Society's website (www.ascp.org.au), for the promotion of any Society events and activities, including the annual conference (in conjunction with the conference subcommittee), and for ensuring that any material publicised via the ASCP website accords with the rules and aims of the Society.

7. Postgraduate/ECR Survey Analysis: Some interesting and concerning results

Earlier this year the ASCP asked postgraduate and ECR members to complete a survey to help gauge the needs of those members, and where the ASCP might best target resources to support them. 37 people completed the survey, which is a relatively small sample size. In so far as we can draw conclusions from this sample, however, it showed that unwaged (or underemployed) ECRs are more disadvantaged than postgraduates with respect to material capacity to attend conferences; this is not surprising, given the resource allocation priorities of universities. 78% of ECRs were either honorary research fellows or did not have an institutional affiliation; the remaining 22% had fixed-term or casual appointments at city-based institutions. Cost of travel and accommodation



is the biggest impediment to attending the annual conference for these members, as well as postgraduate students.

To the question “Which ASCP activities and/or information source do you find most valuable?,” the annual conference was the clear winner, followed by the newsletter and the website (Thanks James Garrett, whose work has further improved the website in 2014). The most favoured “value” respondents recommended the ASCP exec should consider when allocating resources was “community,” followed by “advocacy for continental philosophy in the region” and “the promotion of excellent work of members (CV material).” Surprisingly (and disappointingly from my perspective), “equity of access to a diverse membership with diverse needs,” “amelioration of low turnout to postgraduate papers” and “opportunities for members to organise their own events” scored lowly among respondents’ priorities.

This result was contextualized by the responses to the open-ended question “Is it your intention to pursue an academic career? If not, what possible careers are you considering? If so, what impediments to this goal do you envisage?” — which indicated that postgraduates and ECRs generally perceive job prospects in the sector to be poor, but do not feel that other career opportunities are an option for them, and so are determined to keep trying regardless of their pessimism. Regardless of the small turnout to complete the survey, this attitude was pervasive across the participants, and so I think it is the most consistent and significant finding.

I hope that this may create an opening for academics to begin to address the way that we, as a community, regard jobs outside the sector, given that even those who are considered to be the brightest struggle, and often fail, to find secure work. We need to be providing students and ECRs with realistic advice, finding out and sending positive messages about careers outside of academia. Some of our members already work in the public service and private sector. In coming years our membership is likely to diversify further, and we will need to adapt to this development and welcome colleagues who, for whatever reason, are primarily employed in non-academic work.

- Joanne Faulkner, Chair

8. Expressions of Interest Invited: Postgraduate/ECR Working Party

Given both the poor turnout and concerning insights brought out by the survey, we are hoping to build our knowledge and the input of postgraduate and ECR members. The ASCP executive committee therefore seeks expressions of interest to participate in a working party or consultation committee on policy development in support of the needs of these members. Candidates must be ASCP members, and should either currently be enrolled in a PhD or Masters program at an Australasian university, or have recently completed their PhD either at an Australasian institution, or currently be residing here. ECRs who are underemployed or are in fixed-term employment will be given preference over those who have found secure/ongoing employment.

To register your interest, please contact Joanne Faulkner at j.faulkner@unsw.edu.au before December. I would like, if possible, to meet with the group at the conference.

9. Members’ Books

We would like to congratulate the following ASCP authors for books published since the last issue of Virtuosity:

- Adam Bartlett, Justin Clemens and Jon Roffe, *Lacan Deleuze Badiou*
- Diego Bubbio, *Sacrifice in the Post-Kantian Tradition*
- Greg Haigne, *Noise Matters: Towards an ontology of noise*
- Heikki Ikäheimo, *Anerkennung*
- Simon Lumsden, *Self-consciousness and the Critique of the Subject*
- Knox Peden, *Spinoza Contra Phenomenology*
- Tim Themí, *Lacan’s Ethics and Nietzsche’s Critique of Platonism*



— Nick Turnbull, *Michel Meyer's Problematology*

And editors,

— Matthew Sharpe and Dylan Nickelson, *Secularisations and Their Debates*

Our members' books do a great deal to raise the profile of Australasian continental philosophy. More information about members' books published this year can be accessed on the [website](#).



Australasian Society
for Continental Philosophy



AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2014

4-6 DECEMBER, 2014

Australian Catholic University,
115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy,
Victoria, Australia

HOSTED BY

SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY
Australian Catholic University

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES BY:

LEE BRAVER
University of South Florida

KEVIN HART
University of Virginia &
Australian Catholic University

GENEVIEVE LLOYD
Emeritus, University of New South Wales

MARGUERITE LA CAZE
University of Queensland

ANDREAS VRAHIMI
University of Cyprus

For more information on the conference,
paper submissions and registration details,
please visit our website:

www.acu.edu.au/ascp2014

For enquiries and submissions, please email:

ascp2014@acu.edu.au

