Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy

Annual Conference 2017

University of Tasmania
29 November – 1 December

Keynote Speakers

Professor Lewis R. Gordon
University of Connecticut

Dr Sigi Jöttkandt
University of New South Wales

Associate Professor Marguerite La Caze
University of Queensland

Professor Elaine Miller
Miami University

Plenaries

• The Work of Moira Gatens
• Justice and the Decolonisation of Knowledge

Enquiries
Hannah Stark - hannah.stark@utas.edu.au
Tim Laurie - timothy.laurie@uts.edu.au

Artwork by Anna Carlson
Where Things Are Happening

The Postgraduate/ECR Day and Opening Reception (both on Tuesday 28th) will be held at the Tasmanian College of the Arts. The rest of the conference (Wednesday 29th– Friday 1st) will be held on the Sandy Bay Campus.

Please see the map of the Sandy Bay Campus on the previous page. The Stanley Burbury Lecture Theatre is number 25 on the map, the Arts Lecture Theatre is number 27, the Humanities Building is number 29 and the Social Sciences building is number 26.

The registration desk will be in the foyer of the Stanley Burbury Theatre.

Rooms SocSci 211 and SocSci 212 are on level 2 of the Social Sciences Building; rooms SocSci 322 and SocSci 379 are on level 3 of the Social Sciences building; room Hum 346 is on level 3 of the Humanities Building; Hum 477a is on level 4 of the Humanities Building.
**Lunch Options**

Morning and afternoon tea and coffee will be served in the foyer of the Stanley Burbury Lecture theatre. In the tradition of the ASCP, lunch is not provided.

There are several cafes on campus: Lazenby’s Café (near the Stanley Burbury Lecture Theatre), The Trade Table Café (near the Centenary Building, number 10 on the map), Source Food Co-op (this is a bit of a stroll away—number 55 on the map—but has a great garden vibe and serves only vegan food), and the University Staff Club (number 18 on the map).

**Transport**

The University of Tasmania Sandy Bay campus is a brisk, half hour walk from the waterfront and CBD. If you do walk, and need a little pick-me-up to get you through, Sash in Sandy Bay do truly excellent coffee and are strategically located about half-way.

If you’re not up for the stroll, buses run frequently. If you’re heading from the CBD to the university, or the university to the CBD, you’ll want to be on bus 501 or 601. See Metro Tasmania (www.metrotas.com.au) for further details about tickets and timetables.

Otherwise, you can grab a taxi (131 008) or Uber.

**Session Chairs**

In the tradition of ASCP, chairs of general sessions are not assigned. We ask that someone in each session steps forward to act as the chair.

**Social Events**

**Tuesday**

The opening reception will be at Tasmanian College of the Arts, Hunter Street, from 5.30-7pm. A range of Tasmanian wines and produce will be provided.

**Wednesday**

Members of the organising committee will be heading to The World’s End (1/236 Sandy Bay Road) for a drink and some food after Marguerite La Caze’s lecture. You should come along! The World’s End is a laid-back pub with a great atmosphere, excellent beer selection and you can BYO food. There’s plenty of take-aways in the area; so, grab yourself some dinner, get a drink from the bar, and join us for a debrief. And there’s a ping pong table.

**Thursday**

The conference dinner will be held at the Westend Pumphouse (105 Murray St) from 7pm. The Westend Pumphouse is a pan-Asian bar and dining room that showcases the best of Tasmanian produce. They are passionate about supporting small-scale local, artisan enterprises. The menu is tailored to the seasons. The conference dinner will include an entrée and a main featuring sustainable Australian native meats and vegan foods. A range of Tasmanian beer, wine, whiskey and gin can be purchased from the bar.
Friday:

Members of the organising committee will be heading to the Hobart Brewing Co. (16 Evans Street) to celebrate the success of the conference with a few tasty frothies. The Hobart Brewing Co. is a micro-brewery near the Tasmanian College of the Arts (where the postgrad day and opening reception will be held). It’s a pretty atmospheric place to have a drink as their brewery is on view from the taproom. They offer a range of staple house ales, as well as a selection of seasonal brews (the chestnut ale they had on offer last summer was perhaps the tastiest beer ever) and Tasmanian wines. On Fridays, a range of food vans set up shop in the neighbouring lot. So please, come and join us.

If you are interested in being a part of this social schedule follow us on Facebook as we will post further information about times and places on the ‘ASCP 2017 Conference – UTAS’ page.

If you’d rather do your own thing, check out the ‘Food and Drink’ and the ‘Things to Do’ tabs of the ‘Visiting Hobart’ section on the ASCP conference website for some recommendations.
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<th>Time</th>
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<td>11:00 - 11:30</td>
<td>Registration/Morning Tea (Dechaineux Lecture Theatre, Hunter Street Campus, Hobart)</td>
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| 11:30 - 1:00  | **On Subjectivity in Universities: Navigating Institutions and Professional Wellbeing**  
                  Panellists: Michelle Boulous Walker, Remy Low  
                  Chair: Timothy Laurie  

This session will discuss the production and negotiation of subjectivities in universities, with a particular focus on the mental health impacts of intellectual and pedagogical labour. In a conversational format led by Michelle Boulous Walker (University of Queensland) and Remy Low (University of Sydney), the session will explore the value of collegiality, friendship and mutual care between critical thinkers, and to examine the relationship between interpersonal practices and political transformation within tertiary institutions. There will also be opportunities to consider “publish or perish” cultures and the systemic production of stress, isolation and depression. |
| 1:00 - 2:00   | Lunch                                                                |
| 2:00 - 3:30   | **After the PhD: Paths into Teaching, Research, and Academic Futures**  
                  Panellists: Hannah Stark, Timothy Laurie, Dirk Baltzly, James Chase  

The academic job market is changing: jobs are becoming harder to find, and that application processes are becoming more competitive. At the same time, universities are constantly seeking opportunities to invent new courses, programs and scholarly identities, so that new jobs may look radically unlike the ones they’re intended to replace. In this context, this workshop is designed for postgraduates and Early Career Researchers who are currently or soon to be navigating the academic job market. This workshop will focus on: writing academic CVs, cover letters, and responses to selection criteria; understanding job advertisements and position descriptions; making career decisions as an Early Career Researcher; and navigating casualization in the academic job market. |
| 3:30 - 3:45   | Afternoon Tea                                                        |
| 3:45 - 5:15   | **Building Intellectual Communities Beyond the Academy**  
                  Panellists: Laura Roberts, Elese Dowden, Bryan Mukandi, Anna Carlson, Erin Hortle  
                  Chair: Briohny Walker  

Although universities perform key functions in disseminating and gatekeeping intellectual labour, the social impacts of academic work happen in the spaces between universities and other worlds of critical thinking and practice. Taking as its focus philosophy in Australia, this roundtable reflects on contemporary efforts to expand critical thinking beyond university departments, especially in contexts where politically-oriented intellectual work is not consistently rewarded in tertiary settings. Guest speakers will relate their own experiences of running events, workshops and conferences that provide alternative ways of moving through intellectual spaces, and that cut across various institutional and disciplinary hierarchies. This will include a discussion involving representatives from organisations such as Queensland School of Continental Philosophy, the Brisbane Free University, postgraduate philosophy groups, as well as people using conventional and social media to construct intellectual communities. |
| 5:30 - 7:00   | Opening Reception                                                     |
Professor Elaine Miller

Elaine Miller is Professor of Philosophy at Miami University where she specialises in nineteenth and twentieth century Continental philosophy, and in aesthetics and feminist theory. Her research focuses on the nexus of philosophical conceptions of nature, art, and subjectivity, particularly in Kant, German Idealism, Nietzsche, and French Feminism.

Her books include *The Vegetative Soul: From Philosophy of Nature to Subjectivity in the Feminine* (SUNY, 2002), *Head Cases: Julia Kristeva on Philosophy and Art in Depressed Times* (Columbia UP, 2014), and as editor *Returning to Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy, Politics and the Question of Unity* (SUNY 2006).

Reflective Judgment, *Sensus Communis*, and Human Relations to the Natural World

Both German Idealist and German Romantic philosophers were inspired by the Kantian reflective judgment introduced in the Critique of Judgment, but they took what they interpreted as its significance in very different directions. In *The Vegetative Soul*, I argued for a division between idealism and romanticism as that between an "animal" and a "plant" interpretation of the Kantian reflective judgment in terms of humans’ relationship to nature. I revisit German Idealism and German Romanticism, not in order to consolidate the (European, masculine) authority they have so long held in the field of continental philosophy, but in order to focus on the theme of non-human nature in its absolute otherness to the subject. This alterity, I will argue, is overcome in German Idealism, but preserved in German Romanticism, one that may seem to be overcome in certain human encounters with the natural world and in certain aesthetic experiences, but never definitively. As Andrew Cutrofello and others have argued, Kant’s conception of reflective judgment inspired continental philosophy’s ability to make the singular the object of philosophical reflection; rather than subsuming a particular under a pre-given universal, reflective judgment calls attention to our inability to subsume a singular form under any concept that we already possess.

The bulk of my paper will consider Kant’s concept of reflective judgment, arguing that it can be understood as the threshold between body and language, one that connects pure self-reflection to the external world, both in its material and symbolic form, especially in the sense of its modality, involving Kant’s *sensus communis*. I will briefly discuss how Hegel used the concept of reflective judgment to argue for a continuity between substance and subject, and then contrast to this the position of the German Romantics on reflection, taken up in turn by Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. I will comment a bit on the burgeoning field of plant ethics, which I sometimes find troubling in its assumption of a smooth parallelism between all forms of life. In conclusion I will argue that the unbridgeable gap between the reflective subject and the in-itself found in Kant and preserved in the German Romantic philosophy of nature holds out the best hope for a non-instrumental approach to nature.
**Associate Professor Marguerite La Caze**

Marguerite La Caze is Associate Professor in Philosophy at the University of Queensland. She has research interests and numerous publications in European and feminist philosophy especially concerning questions of ethics, politics, and aesthetics, including philosophy and film. Her publications include *Wonder and Generosity: Their Role in Ethics and Politics* (SUNY, 2013), *The Analytic Imaginary* (Cornell, 2002), *Integrity and the Fragile Self*, with Damian Cox and Michael Levine (Ashgate, 2003) and articles in *Contemporary Political Theory, Culture, Theory and Critique, Derrida Today, Hypatia, Law, Culture, and the Humanities, PARRHESIA, Philosophy and Social Criticism, Philosophy Compass, Philosophy Today, Political Theory, Simone de Beauvoir Studies, Symposium* and other journals, and book collections, including on the work of Hannah Arendt, Simone de Beauvoir, Jacques Derrida, Sigmund Freud, Luce Irigaray, Immanuel Kant, Michèle Le Dœuff, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Iris Marion Young.

She held an ARC Australian Research Fellowship (2003-2007) and currently holds an ARC Discovery grant ‘Ethical restoration after communal violence: a philosophical account.

**Judging in times of crisis: Wonder, admiration, and emulation**

What kind of a role can emotions such as wonder and admiration play in times of crisis? This lecture compares wonder and admiration. I understand wonder in seventeenth century philosopher René Descartes’ sense as a response to something unfamiliar. In admiration, by contrast, we must regard the objects of our judgement as possessing valuable traits. In ordinary times, it may be immoral acts that stand out as unfamiliar and so provoke wonder. However, in times of crisis, as Hannah Arendt argued, it is the moral that will be extraordinary. In these circumstances, admiration is a response that can enable us to regard extraordinary acts as valuable moral exemplars and emulate them. The lecture will examine our motivation to emulate people we admire, discussed in a recent book by Linda Zagzebski, and show how we can admire a person such as Nelson Mandela without necessarily being motivated to emulate them. Conversely, we can have ambivalent feelings mixed with our admiration and still be moved to emulate others. The complexity of the relation between these three emotions and attitudes—wonder, admiration, and emulation—means that while they can contribute to resistance to immorality in times of crisis, they are not entirely trustworthy.
Dr Sigi Jöttkandt

Sigi Jöttkandt works at the intersection of literature, psychoanalysis and continental philosophy. She is author of *Acting Beautifully: Henry James and the Ethical Aesthetic*, *First Love: A Phenomenology of the One*, and *Nabokov to the Letter* (forthcoming). Currently a Senior Lecturer in English at UNSW, she is also co-founding Director of *Open Humanities Press*, an open access publishing collective whose mission is to make leading works of contemporary critical thought freely available worldwide.

"With a lever...": Beckett, Badiou and the Logics of Sexual Difference

In this talk I address an apparent shift in Alain Badiou’s thinking on sex and universality. Badiou is well known for claiming that sex, like other predicative descriptions of identity such as nation, race and class, is merely a particularity that must be subtracted from the universal in order to meet his criteria for ethics. However, more recently, Badiou has said that the sexuation of philosophical and symbolic thought is “inevitable”. Using Samuel Beckett as my guide, I work through the implications of this claim to ask whether Badiou’s philosophy allows for the possibility of a real change in his thought?
Professor Lewis R. Gordon

Lewis R. Gordon is Professor of Philosophy at UCONN-Storrs in the USA; European Union Visiting Chair in Philosophy at Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès, France; Core Professor at the Global Center for Advanced Studies; and Honorary Professor at the Unit of the Humanities at Rhodes University (UHURU), South Africa, where he was previously Nelson Mandela Distinguished Visiting Professor of Politics and International Studies at Rhodes. A graduate of Yale University and the Lehman Scholars Program of the City University of New York, his publications include Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism (Humanity Books 1995, 1999), Fanon and the Crisis of European Man (Routledge, 1995), Her Majesty’s Other Children (Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), which won the Gustavus Meyer Award for Human Rights in North America, Existentia Africana (Routledge, 2000), Disciplinary Decadence (Routledge, 2006), An Introduction to Africana Philosophy (Cambridge UP, 2008), and, with Jane Anna Gordon, Of Divine Warning: Reading Disaster in the Modern Age (Routledge, 2009). His most recent books are What Fanon Said: A Philosophical Introduction to His Life and Thought (Fordham UP; Wits UP; Hurst, 2015; Swedish translation, Vad Fanon Sa, TankeKraft förlag 2016), La sud prin nord-vest: Reflecții existențiale afrodiasporice (Cluj, Romania: IDEA Design & Print, 2016) and, with Fernanda Frizzo Bragato, the forthcoming anthology Geopolitics and Decolonization: Perspectives from the Global South (London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield International). His work is the subject of articles, essays, dissertations, anthologies, and monographs across the globe. Gordon is also the drummer for the band ThreeGenerations, Lewis on Twitter.

Fanonian Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis as Emancipatory Practices

I will talk about Fanon’s understanding of phenomenology, psychiatry, psychology, and psychopathology in colonial and racist contexts and its challenges and revolutionary potential. I will then contextualize his position, in a portrait from “the black” (of all kinds) to “the Black,” through a critique of Euromodernity as the meaning of “modernity” and the advancement of three basic themes from my own existential phenomenological and dialectical work in Africana, decolonial, and liberation philosophy: (1) What does it mean to be human? (2) What are the meaning, implications, and possibilities of freedom? And (3) What happens to practices of justification in a world in which even justificatory practices have been compromised? Put differently: the necessity of philosophical anthropology, philosophy of freedom and liberation, and the metacritique of reason. The conclusion will touch on, among other things, implications for moral and political thought.
Plenary Panels

**The Work of Moira Gatens**
3.30-5 Thursday 30 November, Stanley Burbury Theatre

Louise Richardson-Self (UTAS), Simone Bignall (Flinders), Timothy Laurie (UTS) and Moira Gatens (Sydney)

From her earliest publications on embodiment, the imaginary, and difference, to her detailed engagement with Baruch Spinoza’s philosophy and the literature of George Eliot, and her current research on affect and institutions, Challis Professor of Philosophy Moira Gatens has made an enormous contribution to the field of Continental Philosophy. Join with Simone Bignall (Flinders University); Timothy Laurie (UTS); and Louise Richardson-Self (UTAS) to honour the scholarly contributions of one of Australia’s most important feminist thinkers across the broad areas of social and political philosophy, feminist philosophy, early modern philosophy, and philosophy and literature. Gatens is the author of *Spinoza’s Hard Path to Freedom* (2011); *Collective Imaginings* (1999, with Genevieve Lloyd); *Imaginary Bodies* (1996); *Feminism and Philosophy* (1991); as well as numerous scholarly journal articles and book chapters. She is a fellow of the Academy of the Humanities and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, and in 2007-2008 was a Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin. In 2010 she held the Spinoza Chair at the University of Amsterdam, and in 2011 she was President of the Australasian Association of Philosophy. In 2017, she was awarded a Discovery Project from the Australian Research Council, entitled *Spinoza and Literature for Life: a Practical Theory of Art.*

**Justice and the Decolonisation of Knowledge**
4-5.30 Friday 1st December, Stanley Burbury Theatre

Marguerite La Caze (UQ), Elaine Miller (Miami University), Lewis Gordon (University of Connecticut), Sigi Jöttkandt (UNSW)

The ASCP aims to support and promote equity and diversity both in the Society and in philosophy more broadly. This closing plenary session reflects on the political scope, purposes and effects of philosophical knowledge production. In particular, it engages with contemporary discussions around epistemic justice and the decolonization of knowledge, and takes up urgent questions around the racialized, gendered and classed character of philosophical fields and projects. Our plenary participants bring specific expertise around issues relating to identity in the production of philosophical knowledge, and we welcome questions from the conference floor in this closing event for ASCP 2017.
Arguing for the compatibility of phenomenology and naturalism, this book also refashions each. The opening chapters begin with a methodological focus, which seeks to curb the “over-bidding” characteristic of both traditional transcendental phenomenology and scientific naturalism. Having thus opened up the possibility that the twain might meet, it is in the detailed chapters on matters where scientific and phenomenological work overlap and sometimes conflict – on time, body, and others – that the book contests some of the standard ways of understanding the relationship between phenomenological philosophy and empirical science, and between phenomenology and naturalism. Without invoking a methodological move of quarantine, in which each is allocated to their proper and separate domains, the book outlines the significance of the first-person perspective characteristic of phenomenology – both epistemically and ontologically – while according due respect to the relevant empirical sciences. The book thus renews phenomenology and argues for its ongoing relevance and importance for the future of philosophy.

Panellists: Ingo Farin, Jeff Malpas, Andrew Inkpin and Jack Reynolds

The Habits of Racism: A Phenomenology of Racism and Racialized Embodiment
By Helen Ngo

*The Habits of Racism* examines some of the complex questions raised by the phenomenon and experience of racism. Helen Ngo argues that the conceptual reworking of habit as bodily orientation helps to identify the more subtle but fundamental workings of racism, exploring what the lived experience of racism and racialization teaches about the nature of the embodied and socially-situated being.

Panellists: Bryan Mukandi, Laura Roberts, Omid Tofighian and Helen Ngo

Justifying Same-Sex Marriage: A Philosophical Investigation
By Louise Richardson-Self

There is massive public interest in same-sex marriage, a controversial topic that is rarely out of the media. This book investigates the extent to which legalizing same-sex marriage can contribute to ending the discrimination and social stigma faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender men and women (LGBT) in the Western world.

This issue breaks down into several further questions: can marriage equality be defended without reinforcing the idea that marriage is the most/only valuable form of intimate relationship? Can marriage equality be defended without further marginalizing non-conforming LGBT people? What kind of equality should LGBT people strive for? What critical agency might they lose when this equality is achieved? What institutional legacies should we embrace? The book focuses on human rights arguments supporting same-sex marriage and questions whether they are likely to both justify legal change and encourage shifts in the sociopolitical reception of LGBT people. After critically analyzing various arguments in favor of same-sex marriage, the author puts forward a justification that allows for marriage equality and does not result in the assimilation of queer identities into heteronormative identity.

Panellists: Hannah Stark, Janice Richardson, Lucy Tatman and Louise Richardson-Self
Derrida’s Secret: Perjury, Testimony, Oath
By Charles Barbour

Derrida’s Secret explores the sense in which secrecy is a condition for social relations: The Snowden Affair, Wikileaks, the ‘lone wolf’ terrorist, Hillary Clinton’s private email account - the secret is arguably the central element of our contemporary political experience. Organised as a reflection on Jacques Derrida’s later writings on secrecy, Charles Barbour looks at the basic ontological question: ‘what is a secret?’ Four chapters engages with a separate problematic - society and the oath, literature and testimony, philosophy and deception, and time and death. Shows that secrecy is not a negation of our relations with others, but a necessary to those relations.

Panellists: Dimitris Vardoulakis, Fiona Utley, Amrita Tarr, Nicole Anderson
Roberts, Laura  
University of Queensland

Alia Al-Saji with Luce Irigaray: Racialised time and Sexuate difference

This paper explores notions of gender, race and time through an engagement with two thinkers, Frantz Fanon and Luce Irigaray, whose thinking on temporality has not, until now, been put side by side in philosophical dialogue. While both Fanon and Irigaray’s work has received academic attention, their status as philosophical thinkers producing important critiques of the Western tradition has largely been overlooked. With this in mind, this paper places Alia Al-Saji’s reading of Fanon and her particular notion of racialised time, a concept that highlights the lack of access to subjectivity with its own past and possible future for the man of colour in the western tradition, alongside Irigaray’s critique of western thought which highlights the lack of autonomous subjectivity, and thus temporality, for women and girls. I do this, not in an attempt to respond to criticisms of Fanon or Irigaray, and neither to answer questions, but rather in the hope of opening up a productive space for future critical discussions around the questions of gender, time and race in our contemporary global contexts.

Bio: Laura Roberts currently teaches Gender Studies and Philosophy at UQ. Her research areas straddle the borderlands of feminist philosophy and post-colonial/decolonial theory, particularly the work of Luce Irigaray and Gayatri Spivak. Laura is currently finalising her monograph, forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press, in which she explores the question of the political in Luce Irigaray’s philosophy of sexuate difference.

Boulous Walker, Michelle  
University of Queensland

Re-Reading Philosophy and the Maternal Body: The challenge of African Feminism

I engage Azille’s Coetzee’s African Feminism as Decolonising Force (2017) to discuss “importation” and the philosophical “work” it does in cross-cultural and interdisciplinary contexts. In order to think through the complexity of the challenge of African feminism, I have returned to my earlier work, Philosophy & the Maternal Body: Reading Silence (1998) and reread this alongside Coetzee’s. As a result, I have emerged with the following questions:

i. What is the “work” that my theory is “imported” to do in Coetzee’s account? How does Coetzee frame or use my work? How does this connect or disconnect with the work of Western feminist scholarship generally, or French feminist philosophy, more specifically?

ii. What are the implications of this “importation”? Is my work “successful” (or not) in this context? Is it “problematised”? What do these terms come to “mean”?

What does the “importation” of my work into the domain of African feminist philosophy teach me, (and possibly other Western feminist scholars), about my own work - its blinds spots, its exclusions, silences, and denials? How does the importation of African feminism into my work help me to reread, rethink, and reconsider my own philosophical work – and its local position?

Bio: Michelle Boulous Walker is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy in the School of Historical & Philosophical Inquiry at The University of Queensland. Author of Slow Philosophy: Reading
Against the Institution (Bloomsbury 2017) and Philosophy and the Maternal Body: Reading Silence (Routledge 1998); editor of Performing Sexualities (IMA 1994). Other publications span the fields of European philosophy, aesthetics, ethics, and feminist philosophy. Teaching interests in philosophy include intersections with politics, film, and literature. Current research focusses on questions of philosophy and laughter.

Mukandi, Bryan
The University of Queensland

This paper wrestles with two works of art: two photographs; two testimonies. I read Destiny Deacon’s Being There (1998) as a declaration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presence, alongside Ricky Maynard’s (2005) Broken Heart, a lamentation of white settlers’ attempted annihilation of Aboriginal peoples from Tasmania. I revisit the 1830 ‘Black Line’, to which Broken Heart refers, and dwell especially on Paul Beatty’s suggestion that history ‘is the things that stay with you’. Aided by Kwame Nkrumah’s understanding of history and Lauret Savoy’s treatment of settler narrative as palimpsest, I consider ‘the things that stay’, that which remains, as both the recognition that the past is never completely effaced and thus never fully past; and that there is some continuation of what happened then in what is happening now. It is with this continuity that I am most interested, particularly as it relates to both black presence and the attempted erasure of the black in Australia. I therefore ask what it means to think in Tasmania today, the place where Jeff Malpas has thought and written about place; the place also, where European settlers assembled as the ‘Black Line’ and systematically attempted to eradicate First Nations peoples. To what extent is this gathering, and Australasian Continental philosophy itself, a reformulation, a reconstitution, repetition or simply the continuation of the ‘Black Line’? Must it begin with an epistemic ‘Black Line’, or is the present systematic exclusion of black thinkers and Indigenous thought, with the concomitant privileging of white thinkers and European thought, incidental?

Bio: Bryan Mukandi has a medical degree from the University of Zimbabwe and has worked in community health research at the University of Queensland. His doctoral work is a philosophic exploration of ‘black consciousness’. His areas of expertise are: Health, Black Thought (with a special focus on African Philosophy and Literature), and Continental European Philosophy.
Panel
Philosophy’s Utility

Malpas, Jeff
University of Tasmania

On Thinking in a Thoughtless Time

As it is a form of thinking, and an especially significant form at that, the question of the contemporary value and significance of philosophy cannot be asked apart from the question of the value and significance of thinking itself. Yet ours seems to be a time in which, if thinking is seen as valuable and relevant at all, it is only to the extent to which it serves an instrumental purpose – usually a purpose construed in monetary or commercial terms. Such monetized instrumentalism is problematic, not only because of the way it corrodes any real sense of value or undermines even the idea of the instrumental as such, but because of the way it brings with it a loss of any real sense of boundedness. It is just such a sense of limit or bound that is central to thinking, and so the contemporary “flight from thinking” can also be understood as a flight from boundedness. Moreover, as thinking finds its own bound, as well as its ground, in truth, so the flight from thinking is also a flight from truth, and a flight, too, from our own humanity.

Bio: Jeff Malpas is Distinguished Professor at the University of Tasmania. He is the author or editor of some 20 books, and has published over 100 articles in scholarly books and journals.

Učník, Ľubica
Murdoch

The Spiritual Foundations of Supercivilisation

In this paper, I propose to return to Jan Patočka’s question from 1970 and ask again what the spiritual foundations of life are in our times to reflect on the changes in modern societies after the turn to what we now call neoliberalism. My claim is that Patočka’s analyses concerning the turn to scientific rationality is now a defining feature of our times that ‘colours’ the whole of our understanding. According to Patočka, these changes started with the turn to modern science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, slowly changing our thinking framing it through the ideas of formalisation and subjectivity that we simply and unquestioningly accept. I will extend Patočka’s analysis of ‘rational Supercivilisation’ to argue that its ‘radical’ version now defines our present. The outcome is the privileging of formalised rationality that undermines other forms of reasoning, whereby human ‘subjective’ meaning becomes homeless.

Bio: Associate Professor Ľubica Učník teaches in Philosophy at Murdoch University, Perth, Australia. Her publications include articles on Husserl’s mathematisation of the Lebenswelt and Patočka’s thinking on modern civilisation and Post-Europe. Her book The Life-World and the Crisis of Meaning: Husserl, Heidegger, Arendt and Patočka was published by Ohio UP, 2016.

Vardoulakis, Dimitris
Western Sydney University

Utility in Spinoza’s Politics: An Epicurean Sense of Phronesis

It is well known that Spinoza places the concept of utility at the forefront of his philosophy. For instance, in Part IV of the Ethics, he defines the good as that which useful, and he argues that the human is god to other human because of the possibility that we can share what is useful to us. Here, I will show how, first, how Spinoza’s conception of utility draws from an epicurean tradition of understanding phronesis in instrumental terms; and, second, how utility in the Theological Political Treatise is always in conflict with authority, a conflict that fuels the
democratic imperative of the Treatise. Overall, I want to show that utility for Spinoza is the sine qua non of a democratic politics.

Bio: Dimitris Vardoulakis (Western Sydney University) is the author of The Doppelgänger: Literature’s Philosophy (2010), Sovereignty and its Other: Toward the Dejustification of Violence (2013), Freedom from the Free Will: On Kafka’s Laughter (2016), and Stasis Before the State: Nine Theses on Agonistic Democracy (2017). He has also edited or co-edited numerous books, including Spinoza Now (2011) and Spinoza’s Authority (2018). With Peg Birmingham, he co-edits the book series “Incitements” for Edinburgh University Press.

Panel

The Philosophy of Technology

Farin, Ingo
University of Tasmania

Totalitarian Technocracy: Ernst Jünger and Friedrich Georg Jünger

In this paper I present and analyse the two distinct contributions to a philosophy of technology by Ernst Jünger and his brother Friedrich Georg Jünger. Both authors describe the breakdown of the bourgeois world of the 19th century and the emergence of a new form of domination: totalitarian technocracy in the 20th century. I will establish how their work influenced Martin Heidegger’s ideas on technology from the 1930s onward and will also discuss to what an extent the insights of these three thinkers can be applied to our own situation.

Malpas, Jeff
University of Tasmania

The Spatialization of the World

Modern technological capitalism, including its instantiation in contemporary corporate and governmental structures, is inseparable from a mode of spatialization of the world that is characterized by a refusal of limit. This refusal belongs to the formation of modernity, and so to its own projection of world, rather than belonging to that in which modernity and world are themselves founded. As such, it is a refusal that gives rise to a contradiction within modernity even though it is a contradiction that modernity does not, and cannot, recognize. It is the recognition and attentiveness to limit, and the way limit is itself tied to place, that underpins any genuine conception of the ethical, and it is thus that the possibility of a critique of modernity not only has its foundation in an understanding of the contradictory character of modernity, as well as in an understanding of place and limit, but also stands alongside a rethought conception of the ethical.

Grieve-Johnson, Benjamin
University of Tasmania

Gilbert Simondon’s On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects

Published in 2017, Malaspina and Rogove’s translation of Simondon’s Du Mode d’existence des objets techniques (1958) is the first time this seminal work in the philosophy of technology has been available as a complete edition in English. With the aim of developing a general phenomenology of machines, Simondon’s central claim is that we can understand technics and technical evolution (which he terms “concretization”) by looking only to the internal dynamics of particular objects and ensembles of technical objects, rather than any external, social-economic constructions. Furthermore, he argues that traditional modes of theorising technology have been wrong to place technics in opposition to culture, and that it is this
mistake which has led to the characteristic alienation of human experience from the modern, technical world. This paper will briefly summarize Simondon’s approach, before providing a critical analysis aimed at questioning the usefulness of a theory of technology that denies any essential theoretical connection between technology and economics.

Leckey, Martin John
University of Melbourne

Pre-space thinking: cybernetics, disability and embodiment

According to Heidegger, we live in an age of technology, where the world around us is seen in terms of mere resources at our disposal. One manifestation of this occurs in cybernetics, whereby everything is viewed as information, a particular kind of resource. Although he views this age as a danger to nature and to humans, he has hope for transformation to a new age where we respect the intrinsic value of things. I will look briefly at strains of thought emerging from the history of cybernetics that both seem to exemplify the danger and may lead beyond the danger. Similarly, I will also look at examples of conceptions of disability that conform to both the technological and hoped-for post-technological ways of understanding. In both cases, I argue for the importance of appreciating the ways in which aspects of the world mutually condition one another. At the same time, I argue that we must be open to more transcendent aspects of reality, if we are to build a healthier relationship to technology.
Aquino, Yves Saint James  
Macquarie University  

Pathologising Ugliness, Normalising Prejudice  

The broad aim of my doctoral thesis is to investigate the ethical implications of medicalising norms of beauty. Medicalisation in this context may result from the ongoing conflation of health and beauty, with biological and sociocultural norms promoting the belief that a healthy body is a beautiful body (and vice versa). With the popularity of medical and surgical aesthetic procedures, the pursuit of the entangled ideals of health and beauty tend to reframe aesthetic concerns as medical problems. To a certain extent, medical reframing of aesthetic concerns leads to pathologisation of ugliness. Pathologisation of the ugly can occur in various ways: Ugliness can be associated with psychosocial problems, it can be depicted akin to disability, or it can be re-defined as disease or disorder. Criticisms against aesthetic medical practice are rooted in the notion that judgments about ugliness often reflect prejudices based on gender, social class and race. In this paper, my focus will be on the racial dimensions that underpin the pathologisation of the ugly by bringing into the foreground the racialised motivations that underpin some of the historical, cultural and political understandings of ugliness. I will then explain how racial dimensions of ugliness can inform an ethical analysis of medicalising norms of beauty—specifically how medicalisation impacts on the limits of medical practice and the goals of medicine.

Bio: A PhD candidate with the Department of Philosophy, Macquarie University, Yves earned a B.A. in Philosophy (2004) and Doctor of Medicine (2009) from the University of the Philippines, and an Erasmus Mundus M.S. in Bioethics (2014) from partner universities Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Radboud University Nijmegen and Università degli Studi di Padova.

Bankovsky, Miriam  
Politics and Philosophy, La Trobe University  

A Neo-Hegelian in the Cambridge School of Economics: The Family in Alfred Marshall’s History of Liberal Economics  

The use of Hegel by British Idealists to oppose evolutionary biology and utilitarianism in the second half of the nineteenth century is well-documented. However, the quite different impact of Hegel on Alfred Marshall (the founding father of the Cambridge School of Economics and one of Britain’s most influential orthodox economists) has been relatively neglected. This paper extends a small body of work on Marshall’s neo-Hegelian ethics to include the impact of Hegel’s Philosophy of History on Marshall’s account of the family’s role in reproducing liberal economic institutions. Opposing the popular reduction of Marshall’s economics to the supply-demand model of the Chicago price theorists (e.g. Milton Friedman and Gary Becker), Marshall’s broadly utilitarian “science of motives” is nonetheless shown to be oriented by a teleological ethics of social good, an ethics that naturalizes the familial roles of the Victorian period. Marshall’s neo-Hegelianism is thus shown to be entangled with the very schemes of thought (secular utilitarianism and evolutionary biology) that the British Idealists themselves sought to criticize.

Bio: I am a Senior Lecturer and ARC DECRA fellow at La Trobe University. Having initially focused on analytic and continental conceptions of justice in the Kantian tradition, my research now extends into economics, with a project entitled Revisiting the foundations of mainstream economics: A cooperative account of well-being and moral improvement.

Banwell, James  
University of New South Wales
Hegel’s Critique of Representationalism

Hegel’s description of the general structure of consciousness in the introduction to the Phenomenology of Spirit bears a marked similarity to representational theories of perception. These theories tend to characterise perception as a tripartite structure involving a perceiving subject on the one hand, a mind independent object on the other, and a series of mental representations that mediate between the two. Likewise, Hegel distinguishes between consciousness per se, consciousness of the object, and consciousness of its knowledge of the object, or how the object exists for it. Since Hegel describes the conclusion of the Phenomenology as the point at which this structure breaks down, we can read the work as offering a critique of representational theories of consciousness. However, consciousness as Hegel presents it at the outset of the Phenomenology in the ‘Sense Certainty’ chapter is not itself representational but is better characterised as a form of direct realism. Accordingly, I argue that Hegel’s critique of representational consciousness is best understood as a developmental account that demonstrates not only why representationalism is ultimately inadequate as a theory, but also why it is a necessary moment in consciousness’ development. I demonstrate how this development from direct realism to representational consciousness occurs in ‘Sense Certainty’, and how in the subsequent chapters ‘Perception’ and ‘Force and the Understanding’, Hegel begins not only to deepen his account of representationalism, but also to show how it progressively undermines itself.

Bio: James Banwell is a PhD candidate at the University of New South Wales. He completed his undergraduate studies at the Australian National University, and was awarded a grant by the Deutsche Akademischer Austausch Dienst to study at the University of Münster. He is interested in German Idealism, epistemology and metaphysics.

Barton, Michael
University of Melbourne

Proximate Beauty: Levinas and the Aesthetic Realm

In places Levinas is notoriously harsh in his writings about art and beauty, in general holding them to be of the world of ‘plastic images’ which seduce away from the ethical relation. Yet despite this, might there be an ethically significant relationship between aesthetic beauty and what Levinas means by the term (beauty) in a few key places in his writings? In answering this question in the affirmative I discuss the implications of this relationship for the way we understand beauty, proposing a possible Levinasian ‘aesthetic’, involving a notion of ‘proximate’ beauty that can be seen to underpin more classical notions, enabling a critical reappraisal of Levinas’s more negative writings about the aesthetic realm. In broader terms this Levinasian ‘aesthetic’ offers a more nuanced criterion from which to critique the aesthetic realm; not necessarily less critical, but arguably less oppositional than what is usually seen as Levinas’s position.

Bio: I’ve recently completed a PhD in philosophy, writing on Levinas and Socrates. I’ve occasionally lectured, as well as tutoring off and on, at Melb uni for a number of years. My main area of interest is moral (overlapping with continental) philosophy.

Beck, Kelly
University of Queensland

Philosophy, Literature and The Second Sex: the Principles of Simone de Beauvoir’s Dialogue with Women

Situated neither wholly within the disciplines of literature or philosophy, nor situated in between these disciplines; the work of Simone de Beauvoir nevertheless yields a voice that appears to express the outcome of a dialogue between the literary and the philosophical modes
of communicating about the world. Beauvoir argues that literature is an activity that works to disclose the nature of the human condition in the world. For Beauvoir, disclosure is an action; a political action that enacts the possibility for change. Laura Hengehold argues that Beauvoir preferred literary communication, because it is “better equipped to present the qualitative complexity, ambiguity and multi-sidedness of being than many kinds of philosophical argumentation, especially the categorical, systematic, and idealistic approaches in which she was trained as a student in the 1920s.” Beauvoir extensively uses extracts of literary works in *The Second Sex* and it could be tempting to think of the literary in this context as subordinate to philosophical argument, however, to do so would produce a misreading of the text. While the literary is not used simply as an example to illustrate a philosophical argument, nor is its use necessarily an example of a dialogue between ‘literature’ and ‘philosophy’ alone, rather, the interplay between literature and philosophy also points to the establishment of a dialogue between Beauvoir and women. This paper will explore the ways in which the nexus between literature and philosophy in *The Second Sex* supports Beauvoir’s development of a philosophical voice of women through her dialogue with the literary texts of women.

**Bio:** Kelly Beck is an MPhil candidate in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry at the University of Queensland. She is writing a thesis about the relationship between Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* and her short story collection *When Things of the Spirit Come First.*

**Bell, Nathan**  
Monash University

**Comrade Levinas: Ethics, Rights and Communism**

A recent book by Raoul Moati, *Levinas and the Night of Being,* makes a number of allusions to an ethical communism that Moati sees Levinas as providing - that the world is something shared in common. That a form of communism lies at the basis of Levinasian ethics is a provocative claim, and one that I wish to bring into proximity with certain remarks Levinas made in interviews where he laments the passing of the Soviet Union and the emancipatory promise of the communist project. Levinas is often reproached by communist theorists such as Alain Badiou and Slavoj Zizek, and my paper will represent a riposte to their critiques, demonstrating the fecundity of considering Levinas in relationship to a communist or socialist politics, and that his ethics goes beyond a bourgeois liberal defence of human rights, as they sometimes suggest. Badiou is critical of ‘those who scribble about rights’ in that such scribblings lack a Marxist systemic critique of injustice, and my paper will argue that a conception of human rights understood via Levinasian ethics need not be incompatible with Marxist considerations, and indeed may instantiate a type of ethical communism that might provide a necessary criterion of judgment with which to evaluate Zizek’s calls for forms of violence in politics.

**Bio:** Nathan has recently completed a PhD on the ethics of hospitality, drawing primarily upon the work of Hannah Arendt, Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida. Nathan teaches at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia.

**Bignall, Simone**  
Flinders University

**Césaire and Senghor alongside Deleuze: Postimperial Multiplicity, Virtual Assemblages and the Cosmopolitan Ethics of Negritude**

The Western academy often disdains the anticolonial theorists of Negritude, Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor, as essentialist nativists or naïve humanists, with Negritude understood as an affirmative theory of African ethnicity grounding an identitarian politics of decolonization. Furthermore, and conversely, postcolonial critics find the anticolonial poetics expressed by these insurgent thinkers of Negritude difficult to reconcile with their apparent capitulations to a moderate politics of neo-colonial compliance. This paper finds an unrealised potentiality in
Negritude, freshly understood as a cosmopolitan ethics of decolonisation that refuses to base postcolonial self-determination in state sovereignty. Césaire and Senghor sought new types of postcolonial and democratic political association in the decentralised, interdependent, plural conditions of the French empire itself, as a transnational form of cultural multiplicity and complex social assemblage. By reading Césaire and Senghor alongside Deleuze, I bring into alliance diverse conceptual resources coexisting in the mélange of the French empire. This fertile conceptual milieu allows us to understand how Negritude, like French poststructuralism, is an unmaking and reworking of the transcendent universals of imperial modernism. Negritude does this in the form of a situated alter-humanism that expresses, in the surrealist poetry of political life, the dispersed and decentred subject after empire. This virtual anticolonial subject professes liberty through an ethos of complex interdependence manifest in democratic practices constituting a transcontinental republic, and thus advances the postimperial redemption of humanity.

Bio: Simone Bignall is Chair of the ASCP and a senior lecturer in politics and policy in the Office of Indigenous Strategy and Engagement at Flinders University. Her book publications include *Postcolonial Agency: Critique and Constructivism* (Edinburgh 2010); *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (with Paul Patton); *Agamben and Colonialism* (with Marcelo Svirsky); and *Deleuze and Pragmatism* (with Sean Bowden and Paul Patton). She is currently completing a book on Posthuman Desire and a project titled *Excolonialism: Ethics after Enjoyment*.

Birch, Eva
University of Melbourne

The secret object of sacrifice in the work of Luce Irigaray and Fred Moten

In this paper I enquire into Luce Irigaray’s theory that woman is the originary object in the construction of the subject and the sacrificial order. Irigaray critiques Sigmund Freud’s origin story of the subject: his phylogenetic origin in the death of the father and the institution of the incest and animal taboos; and his ontogenetic origin in the myth of Oedipus. Irigaray asks if, instead of describing woman as an object of origin—an object to be exchanged in the phylogenetic narrative and an object/mother in the ontogenetic narrative—we could conceive of woman as origin. However, while intervening on Freud’s patriarchal structure, Irigaray repeats his colonial temporality by not questioning the raced division between phylogenesis and ontogenesis, and therefore cannot consider other originary objects. Irigaray’s writing on the woman as commodity, rather than the woman as object, helps solve this problem, as origin is no longer located in a false Enlightenment narrative, but rather its material conditions. I draw on Fred Moten’s concept of anti-origin, to draw out this latent aspect of Irigaray’s work. Irigaray and Fred Moten both have the commodity speaking, thus revealing how the subject’s object and therefore his origin, are illusory.

Bio: Eva Birch is a PhD student at the University of Melbourne. She has published articles in *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion* and *Screen Education*.

Bowden, Sean
Deakin University

The Role of the Category of Problems in Philosophies of Life and Philosophies of the Concept

Twentieth century French philosophy is often said to be characterized by a divide between ‘philosophies of the concept’ and ‘philosophies of life’. One finds such an assertion in the work of Cavaillès, Canguilhem, Foucault and Badiou, and even though they specify the divide and distribute philosophers to one side or the other in slightly different ways, a division of this kind does seem to be a distinguishing feature of the history of 20th century French philosophy. I will argue in this paper that, firstly, a number of key thinkers on either side of this divide share a concern with the role of ‘problems’ in the genesis of conceptual thought, but where these problems are sometimes said to be ‘lived’ and sometimes ‘logical’. Secondly, I will argue that
Deleuze brings together these two approaches to the role of problems in his account of problematic Ideas in Difference and Repetition.

Bio: Sean Bowden is Lecturer in Philosophy at Deakin University. He is the author of The Priority of Events: Deleuze’s Logic of Sense (EUP 2011), and co-editor of Deleuze and Pragmatism (Routledge 2015) and Badiou and Philosophy (EUP 2012). He has published in the European Journal of Philosophy, Critical Horizons, Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Deleuze Studies and elsewhere.

Brice, Benjamin
University of Sydney

Political Justice: Context and Contest. Aristotle against Rawls

In A Theory of Justice (1971), John Rawls claims that there is no conflict between Aristotle’s approach of justice and his own (§2). However, I would like to argue there are two major differences between them which partly account for the difficulty of political philosophy to grasp the Western democracies’ current uncertainties (especially linked to populism). First, John Rawls attempted to design principles of justice which could be applied to any people, or at least (in his revised theory) to any liberal people. Aristotle did not make any such attempt and he would rather focus on the action of a specific legislator in a given city (see Solon in the Constitution of the Athenians). Second, in order to reach a consensus, Rawls has framed an initial position where people make claims about justice as purely rational individuals (§24). This strongly departs from Aristotle’s approach. The Greek philosopher started from the enduring competition between the few (hoi oligoi) and the many (hoi polloi) and then tried to find a way to accommodate their respective claims about justice. In this paper, I would like to suggest that the Rawlsian way of dealing with the question of justice—which is still the dominant approach in political philosophy—could not provide the right lens to capture the major shifts in political context which have occurred since 1971 (the collapse of the Soviet Union, globalization in a new scale) and could prevent us from hearing and taking seriously the existence of contending views on justice in liberal democracies.

Bio: Benjamin Brice is visiting researcher at the University of Sydney (Government and International Relations department) and chercheur associé at the EHESS (École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris). He completed in 2015 a dissertation on Montesquieu and “Democratic peace” theories. Link: https://ehess.academia.edu/BenjaminBrice.

Callaghan, Alira
Curtin University

Nonanthropocentric Approaches: Exploring Creative Engagements of OOO Through Practice-Led Research

The curatorial statement for the exhibition And Another Thing posited that the collected works were “part of an alternate movement toward nonanthropocentrism, an effort to dislodge the human from the centre of discussion, to enrich the concept of being, and to open the very world itself to all things that comprise it. The world is brimming with things, and seen from a nonanthropocentric vantage, all things are equal, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral. Nonanthropocentrism repositions humans as just ‘another thing,’ no more precious or central than any other.” (Behar & Mikelsen, 2011). The exhibition was an early exploration into nonanthropocentrism for artist/curator Katherine Behar and was an event that preceded two of her books that explicitly dealt with object-oriented ontologies (OOO)—And Another Thing: Nonanthropocentrism in Art (2016), and Object-Oriented Feminism (2016). These contributions to the fields of both art and philosophy came from practically engaging with concepts of OOO and nonanthropocentrism through creative practice first and foremost. This paper examines what is meant by “practically engaging” with a philosophical theory in creative practice and
proposes the framework of practice-led research as the generative mode this action can occur within, referencing both my own art practice and that of others.

Bio: Alira Callaghan is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores the way we shape and are shaped by our interactions with objects, things, and materials (o/t/m). She is undertaking a practice-led PhD at Curtin University that uses creative practice to critique certain nonanthropocentric discourses surrounding our relationships with objects.

Campbell, Grace
The University of Queensland

The Performative Dimension of Self-Destruction”

In this paper, I examine the interpersonal and performative aspects of self-destruction. I position self-destruction as both an aim within itself and as a worthy subject of investigation. This is in contrast to much of the scholarship which views self-destruction as a symptom of madness, error, or vice. I particularly examine the interplay between the self-destructive person and their audience. Jean Amery described his suicidality as a nearly blasphemous affront to the ‘everyday logic of the living’. For him, suicide functions almost as a conversation and argument against the common sense statement ‘everyone has to live’. However, the suicide reframes this into a question of ‘does everyone have to live?’ and answers with a resounding ‘no’. These themes of dialogue and defiance are also present in autobiographical accounts of disordered eating and self-mutilation. I contrast the fascination with these writings to popular medieval accounts of fasting ascetic saints. Self-destructive behavior also creates tensions and paradoxes within the self-destructing person. It represents an embodied attack on and struggle against both the body and the ego. Self-destructive behaviour situates the self-destructive person so that they are simultaneously the transcendent torturer and the immanent victim. These tensions result in an interplay between conflicting aspects of the self.

Bio: Grace Campbell is a PhD candidate at the University of Queensland. Her work focusses on Jean Amery, Sabina Spielrein, and the phenomenology of self-destruction.

Cantin-Brault, Antoine
Université de Saint-Boniface

Löwith and Nishida on the History of the Present

To flee the Nazi regime, Karl Löwith decided in 1936 to move to Japan, where he stayed until 1941. While in Japan, Löwith met the founder of the School of Kyoto, Nishida Kitarō. Löwith had several encounters with Nishida and had some respect for him but never saw in Nishida anything more than a thinker that had found a new westernized way to prove ancient Buddhist beliefs, without questioning those beliefs and while remaining deaf to the true meaning of Western philosophy. Löwith felt that Nishida, like other Japanese thinkers as well, lacked the spirit of self-criticism that he identified as one of the distinctive traits of European thought. Nonetheless, beyond this missed historical encounter between Löwith and Nishida lies a space of philosophical common ground located in a shared understanding of time and history that puts much emphasis on the eternal present and the impossibility of thinking history as a linear progression bringing salvation, as philosophies of history-according to Löwith - have attempted to prove. It is not possible to understand precisely why Löwith was bound to the occidental-Hegelian logos during his stay in Japan, especially since in Meaning in History of 1949 he attempted to break from the Hegelian logos, or from any European eschatological logos that had led to the atrocious events of the 20th century. However this philosophical dialogue between Löwith with and Nishida serves as an interesting means to deepen the meaning of time and reflect on the problems of eurocentrism.

Bio: Antoine Cantin-Brault is a professor of philosophy at the Université de Saint-Boniface, where I teach a wide range of courses. I have written articles on Hegel, Heraclitus and
Heidegger. I am currently working on the notion of time in a dialogue between continental and oriental philosophy.

**Cantwell, Andrew John**
Monash University

*A Defense of Schopenhauer’s Metaphysics of Compassion*

In *On The Basis of Morals* (1839), the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) advances a highly original and complex theory of compassion. In his view, in a world of “colossal” egoism, compassion is “the great mystery of ethics” and defies a purely empirical explanation. In response, he proposes a metaphysical explanation of compassion as the literal participation in another’s suffering; in compassion, one literally participates in another’s suffering since one is connected to another by virtue of the unifying metaphysical essence of will. David Cartwright argues that Schopenhauer’s concept of compassion is incoherent insofar as it is grounded in this metaphysical notion of participation. Instead, Cartwright advances his own psychological model of the participative process: a “naturalized” or wholly empirical version of Schopenhauer’s theory of compassion. In this paper, I argue contra Cartwright that Schopenhauer’s metaphysical notion of compassion, when viewed charitably and with regard to its many intricacies, is conceptually coherent.

Bio: Andrew John Cantwell holds a B.Sc., (University of Sydney), B.A., Hons. (Philosophy) (University of Tasmania), Current: MA (Philosophy) (Monash University).

**Carli, Riccardo**
University of Queensland

*The Ethical Return of Dionysus in the Late Nietzsche*

This paper pursues Dionysus’ traces and describes the echo of his presence in Nietzsche’s moral philosophy. I will show how, during his period of absence from Nietzsche’s texts, Dionysus works anyway in the shadow, acquiring a renovate theoretical power and preparing his return in the eighties. What re-emerges is a stronger Dionysus, ready to challenge Apollo’s supremacy not only in the aesthetical field but also in ethics. Arguably, it is the overwhelming prevalence of an Apollinean principle of order what Nietzsche criticises in all prescriptive ethical systems: Apollo’s dominion takes the form of the illusion of a single morality, endorsement of an undisputed system of value, faith in the rationalisation of human behaviour. For Nietzsche, these forms of morality hide a potential passivity and even reactivity, which impede a proper self-realisation. My paper supports this narrative, dealing in particular with the tricky case offered by virtue ethics. Although Nietzsche has been often and quite convincingly associated with this ethical perspective, I argue that the return of Dionysus influences Nietzsche’s idea of virtue as well. The study of how Nietzsche distance himself from some Ancient and Hellenistic ethical accounts, together with a careful description of Zarathustra’s ‘gift-giving’ virtue, will show how the potential risks of virtue ethics are very similar to what already denounced against the other moral systems: in particular, an overestimation of the power of reason and a blind subordination of the individual to the community.

Bio: Riccardo Carli is a PhD student at the University of Queensland, Brisbane. His research concerns Nietzsche’s aesthetics and the understanding of art as the principal activity for nurturing the free spirit.

**Carlson, Anna**
Brisbane Free University

*Fair Share: Collective Justice, Urban Ecologies and the Alter Politics of “The Right to the City”*
The city has long been a site of abstraction, shaped by imagined divisions between humans and the natural world. As the intersecting precarities of the anthropocene make visible the limits of these urban imaginaries, exciting frontiers are emerging that present alternative models for interactions between the rights of people and the ‘rights’ of the environment. Such approaches often seek to grapple with the justice implications of global ecological problems like climate change and resource scarcity from within the murky liminal zones of nature/culture, cities/environment, human/non-human, breaking down traditional conceptual, theoretical, and legal divides. In this presentation, I explore spaces of collectivity in the neoliberal city: thinking through the practices of ‘right to the city’ movements to understand how they reimagine the relationships and boundaries between individual human rights, collective rights, and the environment. In particular, I consider how these groups mobilise around existing spatial injustices, and reimagine possibilities for justice through an articulation of collective rights, decolonial theory and queer ecologies. In doing so, I hope to explore the implications of these movements for broader theories of human rights in and the environment, and ask what a meaningful ‘space for one’s life’ might look like.

Bio: Anna is a community organiser for the Right to the City Brisbane, co-producer of 4zzz’s Radio Reversal, and a co-founder of the Brisbane Free University. She writes about aesthetics, ethics and the spatial politics of cities, and hopes to begin a PhD on surveillance and settler colonialism in 2018.

Carlson, Anna
Brisbane Free University

Reimagining the Boundaries: Decolonisation, Sovereignty and the Aesthetics of Indigenous Resistance in Brisbane

In Brisbane’s West End, speculative investment drives rapid gentrification, with correlated increases in policing and surveillance. Already racialised, surveilled and marginalised, urban Indigenous communities are among the first displaced. Anti-gentrification protests and right to the city movements resist these displacements, often mobilising around notions of community, connection and belonging. These resistance projects challenge colonial power dynamics and acknowledge Indigenous sovereignty in some ways, but they are rarely led by Indigenous communities, and they rarely offer a vision of a “decolonised” city. In this presentation, I investigate the relationship between anti-gentrification movements and movements for Indigenous sovereignty in the settler colonial city. I focus in this talk on three case studies: a pop-up protest occupation, a politicised street party, and a flag painted and re-painted onto a busy intersection. By putting these aesthetic interventions in conversation with the works of Indigenous scholars Lilla Watson, Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Glen Coultard, as well as the works of Elizabeth Povinelli and Ghassan Hage, I pose questions about the aesthetics of decolonisation and urban Indigenous resistance movements in Brisbane. In particular, I argue that these temporary interventions destabilise settler colonialism by making visible the contingencies, contestations and contradictions of the settler colonial city.

Bio: Anna is a community organiser for the Right to the City Brisbane, co-producer of 4zzz’s Radio Reversal, and a co-founder of the Brisbane Free University. She writes about aesthetics, ethics and the spatial politics of cities, and hopes to begin a PhD on surveillance and settler colonialism in 2018.

Cheong, Marc
Monash University

‘Keeping It Real’ – from Sartre to #nofilter

Studies on existentialism were du jour in the 1940s-50s, thanks to Sartre and his contemporaries. However, recent scholars contend that studies of existentialism belong to the past, with criticisms on their practicality. For instance, they provide "no convincing examples of what an
authentic person would be like” (Thody, 1997). Meanwhile, in contemporary society, our dependence on social media is increasingly prevalent. As consumers and producers, we are encouraged to project our true (offline) selves on our online personas -- from using our real names in online posts (a la Facebook), to trends such as #nofilter (Instagram photos of ourselves without photographic enhancement). This hints at a revival of ‘authenticity’, between our real-world selves and our online personas. I argue that modern social media platforms (and users) crave the value of ‘authenticity’, despite its (controversial) uses for commercial interests, and how it is affected by contemporary social trends. In particular, I will provide empirical examples from social media about what behaviour is considered ‘authentic’ in online projections of ourselves. While I contend that authenticity may be "difficult to put into practice" (Thody, 1997) when we’re thrown in the real world, I would argue that it isn’t difficult for one to be in "good faith" with one’s online persona, at least. In my contribution, I hope to bridge the gap between our real-world selves and our online personas -- and indirectly between continental philosophy and contemporary life -- in ultimately finding meaning in the world.

Bio: Marc Cheong is a Lecturer in the Faculty of IT, Monash University. He is one of the pioneers of research on Twitter, specifically inquiry into human behaviour from social metadata. His research emphasises the ‘human’ aspect of technology, with a cross-disciplinary interest in existential philosophy.

Churcher, Millicent
University of Sydney

Transformative Institutions? Embodiment, Power, and Affect

Increasing attention has been paid to the imaginative and affective roots of social harms and injustices, including injustices of misrecognition (Gatens 1996; Young 1990) and epistemic injustices (Fricker 2007; Medina 2013). Broadly speaking, these injustices are thought to be bound up with collective ways of imagining racial, sexual, and other forms of embodied difference. These collective imaginings are permeated with affect, and have the capacity to structure tacit understandings of ourselves in relation to others that establish and sustain damaging patterns of social and political behaviour. This paper argues for the need to pay attention to the double role of imagination and affect in perpetuating and meliorating harmful social and political practices. In particular, it explores the capacity of institutional structures to harness agents’ imaginative, affective, and reflective capacities in order to elicit responsible social and political agency. This discussion draws out the limitations of existing accounts of institutional practices that engage affect to motivate desirable forms of social and political behaviour; specifically those that focus on institutional mechanisms of publicity, punishment, and reward to curb undesirable habits and practices, and on arrangements that support relations of co-operation and interdependence between differently embodied agents. In light of these limitations, this paper reflects on what more is required at the level of institutional practice to intervene in harms that are underwritten by damaging social imaginings.

Bio: Millicent Churcher is a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Sydney. Millicent’s research interests include the early modern sentimentalist philosophy of Adam Smith, as well as contemporary studies on empathy, emotions, and institutions in relation to social (in)justice.

Colledge, Richard and Parker, Don
Australian Catholic University

Freud: Between Dark Romanticism and Scientific Empiricism

Over the past decade or so, and building on the work of German scholars such as Günter Gödde, English language interpretations of Freud as an inheritor of 19th century German Romanticism have blossomed, led by the work of Matt Ffytche, Sean McGrath, and contributors to several edited collections over this period. These works have highlighted the tacit – and
sometimes quite explicit – psychodynamic sophistication not only of Schopenhauer, the later Schelling, von Hartmann, and perhaps also Nietzsche, but also of figures such as Goethe and Carus, and further back still, Hamaan, Herder and even Jacob Böhme. The net result of this scholarship has been that Freud has come to be seen within a rich vein of Romantic, Idealist and Voluntarist thought, through which the idea of the unconscious came to be virtually commonplace within German intellectual circles. Given this background – that was surely basic to the young Freud’s academic formation – it is striking that Freud’s references to such sources in his written work are few, his personal library is largely bereft of their works, and his contemporaneous collaborations with inheritors of this tradition were virtually nil. If Freud was, to take Tauber’s phrase, a “reluctant philosopher”, this needs to be read in the light of his admission on a number of occasions concerning his willful ignorance of much of the 19th century German philosophical tradition. With the very notable exception of his sole philosophical teacher, Franz Brentano (whose own empiricist and anti-idealist bent is perhaps a key part of this story), Freud’s mentors and interlocutors during the formative years of his life’s work (through until at least 1910), were overwhelmingly physiological empiricists. Further, and strikingly, recent research has shown the depth of Freud’s Anglophilia, and the extent to which he was perhaps as much a child of the Scottish Enlightenment as he was of German Romanticism. Indeed, in a direct sense, it is the former that has perhaps the stronger claim in defining the intellectual roots of Freudian psychoanalysis.

Bios: Richard Colledge is senior lecturer and Head of the School of Philosophy at Australian Catholic University, based on Brisbane campus. His graduate work centred around the thought of Søren Kierkegaard (MA, Leuven) and Martin Heidegger (PhD, UQ). His current research focuses on various themes in phenomenology and hermeneutics, the philosophy of religion, and philosophical psychology.

Don Parker is a PhD student in Philosophy, studying through Brisbane campus of Australian Catholic University. His research interests centre on psychoanalytic thought, both Freud and post-Freudians such as Melanie Klein and James Hillman.

Dean, Liz
The University of Melbourne

Governance as a Generative Limit

Wendy Brown(2015) argues that neoliberal governance is enacted through ‘discursive formulations’, ‘policy entailments’ and ‘material practices’. Such governance operates through more generally, attempting to frame how people can live, think and feel. This paper will consider both the possibility and problems attached to neoliberal governance for, with Luce Irigaray, ethics of relation. In particular, the paper takes up the productive limit of neoliberal governance as this manifests through recent Australian federal governments reform to leases of First Nation’s Australia traditionally owned land. The paper briefly discusses the negotiation of leases with many ‘remote’ communities (posed as it is, as a solution to how these communities are constructed as precarious, vulnerable and a social problem) to consider how precarity and precaritization, as generative, is also resisted.

Bio: Liz Dean teaches into the Sociology program, in the School of Social and Political Sciences at The University of Melbourne.

Demandante, Darlene
Macquarie University

Political Subjectivity in Rancière’s "Proletarian Nights"

This paper is broadly focused on the notion of ‘political subjectivity’ in Rancière’s seminal text, Proletarian Nights. It treats Proletarian Nights as a concrete example of the method that Rancière proposes; that is listening to the voices of the people, particularly those of the 19th
century workers in France. How should we talk about the people that we wish to emancipate? Who are these people? From which and whose position is it right to speak such that emancipation could be possible? These are the questions that Rancière’s archival work tried to address as he attempted to reveal a proletariat that is different from how Marx presented them to be. Rancière showed that during the violent outbreaks of (18th century) revolutions that overthrew one form of government in exchange of another, there were significant moments involving proletarians whose concern was not that of a bloody revolution but instead were preoccupied with their own dreams of different lives, far from their state of suffering and poverty. This capacity to recognize their circumstances and constantly find the means to try to improve their situation draws an image of the proletarian that is different from their conventional portrayal as a suffering poor people. The discussion in this paper is about specific themes in Ranciere’s Proletarian Nights, that demonstrate the affects and experiences of the workers in order to show what this contributes to the discussion on political subjectivity and at the same time answer the question: “Who is the subject of politics?”.

Bio: I am currently undertaking my PhD in Philosophy at Macquarie University. My research interests include social and political philosophy particularly on the question of the ‘political subject’. I am looking at this question through the works of the contemporary French philosopher Jacques Rancière.

Deurwaarder, Beau
University of Melbourne

What Year is This? Returning to Twin Peaks

When returning to the town of ‘Twin Peaks’, David Lynch offers the following advice: “there’s the donut, and there’s the hole, and you should keep your eye on the donut, and all the other things that go on, they don’t matter. What matters is falling in love with the story, or ideas, and realising those...” By this, Lynch is suggesting that we should pay attention to the stories and ideas that take place on screen, and realise how they work together on their own terms. We should not lend too much thought to the details that are missing; the holes in disclosure are what the mystery gravitates around. To me, Lynch’s advice seems sound. Much of the intrigue of ‘Twin Peaks’ relies on the information omitted and the connections that we are forced to make ourselves. The arc of the original ‘Twin Peaks’ run was built on Laura Palmer’s secrets. As we see in ‘The Return’, these secrets have spread far beyond the boundaries of Twin Peaks, but they all lead back to Laura, in some form or another. In this paper I will take a final look at the conclusion of ‘Twin Peaks: The Return’, by route of a close analysis of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s exposition of ‘the secret’ and secrecy in ‘A Thousand Plateaus’. I will also look to Mark Frost’s ‘The Secret History of Twin Peaks’ and ‘The Final Dossier’, in order to keep my eye on the donut, and not the hole that it protects.

Bio: Beau Deurwaarder recently completed a Master of Fine Arts at the Centre for Ideas at Melbourne University. His thesis considered how the practice of sorcery and the eternal return coalesce in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. Beau currently tutors undergraduate philosophy at Trinity College at Melbourne University.

Deutscher, Max
Macquarie University & University of Queensland

Motivated Emotion: After Ryle and Sartre

Decades after the loss of confidence in the projects of Ryle, and of Sartre, the reductive physicalist programs that replaced those conceptual and phenomenological methods have failed to secure stable results. Consciousness has returned—for scientifically oriented philosophers—as if an apparition—a cosmic mystery. I think that the language and methods of Ryle, and of Sartre, can aid us in disarming this neo-dualism. My present attention to motive and emotion is part of that project. I set out from a border dispute in the field of affect. Are
moods emotions? And what of motives? I reckon motives not as emotions, but rather as amongst the causes of emotions. As to emotions—are they feelings—or something that can be felt? I argue that to have an emotion (or a motive) is not to be identified with feeling it. Despite the legendary power of emotion and motive to upset reason, intelligence is intrinsic to their structure. Thus I accept Rylean arguments that emotion and motive give us reasons (not always good ones) for what we do and feel. One can, too, invoke Sartre’s nihilation in describing the liberty that arises with consciousness. This does not require us discount the causal relevance of being motivated, or having emotions. Certainly, it is in rejecting dualism that Ryle denies that emotions and motives are causes of behaviour. I argue, however, that as (sometimes conscious) causal conditions of feelings and behaviour these emotions and motives need not be the ‘hidden ghostly thrusts’ that Ryle lampoons.

Bio: Emeritus prof, Macquarie; honorary prof, UQ. Main publications: Subjecting and Objecting; Michèle Le Doeuff; Genre and Void: looking back at Sartre and Beauvoir; Judgment After Arendt; In Sensible Judgement.

Diserens, Katherine
University of Queensland

Arendt with Peirce: Humanity and Agape

Hannah Arendt theorised a relation between humanity and totalitarianism that I argue can be illuminated by the work of classical pragmatist C.S. Peirce. My paper will focus on Peirce’s treatment of ‘agape’, a form of love that for him is both a disposition and a cosmological principle that encourages both individuation and harmony. I argue that this is suited to understanding the political reality of ‘humanity’ as Arendt understands it, even though she dismisses a certain type of ‘love’ as anti-political. Both theorists are concerned with the dynamics of spontaneity and continuity as essential to humanity appearing in a complex and changing world. Moreover, together they inform a theory whereby humanity participates in the (re)creation of a political reality that in itself constitutes resistance to totalitarianism, with ‘agape’ being one tool to achieve this end.

Bio: Katherine Diserens is a PhD student at the University of Queensland. Her thesis deals with the works of Hannah Arendt and C.S. Peirce, developing a political epistemology that enables anti-totalitarian thought and action. She hopes that humanity can keep its promise of "Never Again".

Dowden, Elese B
University of Queensland
Colonial Mind, Colonised Body: Structural Violence and the New Zealand Prison System

Police violence and prison violence is sporadically reported on in New Zealand media, and there is evidence of poor conditions and unjust treatment both in private prisons and public prisons across the country. While fights between inmates and physical violence by and against guards are more commonly reported on, the structural colonial violence entailed in the Aotearoa prison system in much less a part of wider public conversation around incarceration. In this paper, I make reference to Lisa Guenther’s 2013 work on phenomenology, solitary confinement and incarceration, along with the work of Frantz Fanon and Lewis Gordon on race and existentialism, in order to analyse the current state of the New Zealand prison system through an existential phenomenological lens. I also aim to draw upon direct experiences from prisoners and inmates. Additionally, this paper will contain a strong decolonial thread in my engagement with Nelson Maldonado Torres’ work on the coloniality of being, in which I conceive of coloniality as an occupation of personhood. Pākehā people are underrepresented, and Māori and Pasifika peoples are overrepresented in Aotearoa prison populations. It is my argument that these statistics reflect prisons as a wider colonial project, in which colonial bodies practice recolonisation through the structural violence of prisons. Nelson Maldonado-Torres’ writings on the coloniality of being will guide my theory throughout the paper, as it is my
argument that coloniality is not only structural and institutional, but becomes a part of the outlook of the embodied self – both for prisoners and non-prisoners alike.

Bio: Elese B Dowden’s current research focus is a PhD thesis project entitled Reconciling the Impossible: Forgiveness and Grief in Contemporary Rwanda, New Zealand and Australia. This work considers trust, forgiveness, grief and shame in the decolonial context. Her research interests also include postcolonial studies, gender, political philosophy, trust, existential phenomenology, and the philosophy of memory and trauma. Elese holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Politics and Philosophy and a Master of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Edwards, Christopher
Murdoch University

Being-‘In’-Time: Heidegger’s Interpretation of Kant in Light of the Knowledge Problem

In this paper, I will discuss Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant. I will frame this interpretation in terms of what I take to be the guiding problematic of fundamental ontology: the problem of knowledge. The problem of knowledge concerns the correlation between being and thinking, which, to this day, poses explanatory challenges to epistemological inquiry. This problem is also taken up by Kant, and I contend that Heidegger’s interpretation and modification of Kant’s transcendental philosophy is illustrative of Heidegger’s own distinct approach to the knowledge problem. This approach is to draw our attention to the hidden conditions that unify the two sides of this problematic correlation. In the context of Kant, this correlation is between the sensibility and the understanding, and for Heidegger, what is occluded by such a distinction is the originary temporality of human existence, or “time as pure self-affection”. For Heidegger, it is this originary sense of temporality that unifies and makes possible any relation between the act of thinking and the things we think about. To explain this, I will review Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant’s first Critique. My aim will be to show that Heidegger’s approach to the knowledge problem is to draw out the essential conditions of human knowledge that are concealed by our traditional methods of philosophical inquiry, which, in this context, is time in its originary character.

Bio: Chris Edwards is a postgraduate student at Murdoch University. Chris enrolled in the Philosophy Programme in 2012, obtaining honours in July of 2015. Chris began his PhD in February of 2016, completing his candidacy in August of that year. His research interests concern Martin Heidegger’s critique of modern epistemology.

Faulkner, Joanne
University of New South Wales

Between Worlds: The Aboriginal Child as Site of Cultural Mediation in Toomelah and Zach’s Ceremony

Representations of Aboriginal childhood as a fraught and vulnerable existence are overdetermined by the material, affective, and psychic residues of colonisation in Australia. Cultural works depicting Aboriginal children often signify a being-in-between European and traditional ways, as well as their site of mediation. The stolen generations and its legacies cast a shadow over the present, in the forms of intergenerational trauma and white guilt, as well as in government policies not yet purged of bias against Aboriginal styles of parenting, and which continue to remove Aboriginal children at a rate never before seen in Australian history. The intermediary status of Aboriginal childhood in Australian imagination—between a colonial past and “postcolonial” future, and between mainstream Australian and traditional Indigenous modes of life—will be explored through two films: Toomelah (2011) and Zach’s Ceremony (2017). Each film takes as its focus multiple aspects of the significance attributed to juvenile Indigeneity as intermediary zone: between cultures, between past and future, and between childhood and adulthood. However, it is argued that in this intermediary space both films, with
varying degrees of success, represent an agency wrought in vulnerability and ambiguity. The paper argues that such agency must be comprehended, supported, and encouraged to develop in situ if Australia is to decolonise its systems of support and welfare.

Bio: Joanne Faulkner is an ARC Future Fellow in the School of Humanities and Languages at UNSW. She is the author of Young and Free: [Post]colonial Ontologies of Childhood, History and Memory in Australia (RLI 2016) and The Importance of Being Innocent (Cambridge UP 2011), among other books and articles.

Ferwerda, Susanne
University of Tasmania
Thinking Water as Kin: Perspectives on Water in the Anthropocene

This paper argues that in order to move away from an Anthropocene that is founded on deeply embedded ideas of human exceptionalism, we should be thinking of water as kin. In an era that is characterized by constantly changing human-environment relationships, water has surfaced as a particularly crucial element in renegotiating what it means to live on this planet. Sea levels are rising, ice caps are melting, weather has shifted, and droughts are prolonged. What does it mean that the Whanganui River in New Zealand, the Indian Ganges and the glaciers and waters it originates from are now declared legal ‘persons’? With the extension of personhood to include bodies of water, questioning the difference between the human and the non-human becomes all the more prescient in the Anthropocene. Recognizing that agency is not specifically located in the human subject and incorporating insights on matter from new materialism, this paper explores the idea that thinking water as kin changes how humanity relates to their aqueous environments as well as to the watery make-up of human bodies themselves. Water as kin multiplies and complicates connections and relationships in a time where systems of agency are already proving themselves far more complex than Humanist notions of relationality. Drawing on companion species theory, new materialism, and an affirmative biopolitics, this paper traces the ways in which extending kinship to include bodies of water changes the way we think about climate change and the Anthropocene.

Bio: Susanne Ferwerda is a PhD candidate in English at the University of Tasmania. After completing a Masters in Gender Studies at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, she started a PhD examining Literature in the Anthropocene. Drawing on environmental criticism and feminist theory, she is currently studying the place of water in contemporary short stories.

Flanagan, Tim
Murdoch University
The Sublime Words of the Third Ennead

This paper is an initial overview of a broader and ongoing project; one that seeks to deploy the insights of scholarship on Plotinus in consideration of certain (uniquely aesthetic) moments in the Kantian development of transcendental philosophy. Working out from his sustained interest in the Plotinian treatise ‘On Nature and Contemplation and the One’, signalled both in Difference and Repetition (1968) and his secondary thesis that year on Spinoza and Leibniz, the paper surveys the broader historical context of Deleuze’s engagement with this key thinker from late antiquity. In so doing, the paper attests to certain readings of Plotinus that emerged in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century that emerged as a response to understandings of teleology following Kant’s third Critique. The central claim is that Deleuze’s own genetic rereading of Kantian transcendental thought is to be seen in this context. This is clam is evidenced by consideration of the suprasensible (or ‘spiritual’) unity of the faculties put forward in Deleuze’s study of the Baroque; one which draws on the sense in which the monadological outlook, so operative in the transformation of the critical philosophy’s emphasis on conditioning, is itself an iteration of what Plotinus describes as an ‘unfolding’ or ‘development’.
Bio: Tim is Lecturer in Philosophy at Murdoch University where he works on the critical reception of metaphysics. He completed my PhD under the UK’s ‘Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme’, with a thesis on how the Baroque provides for an understanding of certain received and ongoing problems in philosophy.

**Fry, Tony**  
University of Tasmania

Decoloniality, the City and the Future

The design of the colonial city was an instrument of colonial order and as such a mechanism of social control. This paper will illustrate this by showing the relation between the planning of the first cities in Spanish America, as they structured and ordered ways of life and the construction of the other in a Eurocentric form of the human - this under the Spanish authored ‘Law of the Indies’ (Laws of Burgos 1512 and New Laws (1542). The fate of many of many of these cities has been to end up divided between ‘the formal’ and ‘the informal’, the protected and the feared. The trace of the colonial past lives on, the claim of post-colonialism is illusory and decoloniality is a futural challenge. The paper will (i) confront the historical, political and epistemological challenges of this situation; and, (ii) examine the ontological designing consequences of the afterlife of the colonial erasure of indigenous knowledge and its relation to the city.

Bio: Tony Fry, is Adjunct Professor, Creative Exchange Institute UTAS, Visiting Professor at, University of Ibague (Colombia) and, Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Tony’s a design theorist/ philosopher/practitioner with specific interest in cities and post-conflict environments (including Timor-Leste and Colombia). He is the author of 12 books—the latest: Remaking Cities (2017).

**Fulvi, Daniele**  
Western Sydney University

Good, Evil and Experience in Schelling’s *Freiheitsschrift*

Moving from Schelling’s conception of evil, I argue that the relation between good and evil can be understood in ontological terms. Schelling argues that evil is to be considered as a positive ontological principle, rather than pure non-being or a lack of good. It follows that evil is not subordinated to good, but is coessential and complementary to it. Indeed, Schelling ascribes the origin of evil to God, arguing that it arises from the dark and irrational ground of God’s existence and is posited by Godself as the necessary counterpart of good. The merit of such an account is that it can lead us to take into account the domain of experience, insofar as evil is not anymore a matter of morality but an ontological feature which grounds our experience in the world. Relying on Schelling, I also argue that evil, being a positive ontological principle, unfolds itself through the opposition to (and the struggle against) good. Schelling himself argues that “where there is no struggle, there is no life”, meaning that this opposition, and the resulting struggle, is the condition demanded by every existence to become real, personal and effective. In other words, from the dark ground comes an irrational craving of the evil principle to become itself the centrum of reality and the ruler of human conduct. I therefore conclude that the struggle between good and evil is to be understood as the fundamental condition of possibility of human experience.

Daniele Fulvi is a PhD student in Philosophy at Western Sydney University, where I’m working on a project on Friedrich Schelling and Luigi Pareyson. She obtained a Bachelor’s degree in Philosophy at the University of L’Aquila and a Master’s degree in Moral and Political Philosophy at the University of Florence.

**Gleadell, Kyle**  
Murdoch University
Today, we live in a world which is characterised by rapidly increasing scientific innovation and technicisation. Furthermore, our understanding of who we are and the world in which we are situated are increasingly understood in terms of scientific explanation. Following the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, I will discuss the implications of a scientific worldview regarding what we now take to be legitimate knowledge, and further, what this means for human action. As Gadamer argues, the domains of modern science and the human practical world share a problematic relation. This is because the modern scientific method already presupposes a split between the theoretical and practical domains. Accordingly, practice is reduced to the verification of mathematically projected laws rather than as the starting point of knowledge. In order to support this claim, I will show how the meaning of theory and practice have changed since the time of Ancient Greek Philosophy, in which the split of theoria and praxis, according to Gadamer, is first prominent. Accordingly, I will explore Gadamer’s appropriation of the Aristotelean distinction between episteme, phronēsis and techne in order to highlight the differences between theoretical and deliberative forms of knowledge, and the way in which they inform human practice. For Gadamer, it is ultimately our situatedness that shows that the theoretical and practical domains are not separate, but actually inform one another, as they both arise simultaneously within the same human situation.

Bio: In 2017 Kyle Gleadell enrolled as a postgraduate student at Murdoch University. His Ph.D project draws on the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer in order to examine the relation of modern science and the human world, and how this relation constitutes our understanding of ourselves and the world today.

Gleeson, Loughlin
University of New South Wales

Freedom and Nature in Honneth and Hegel

This paper will address the relationship between the key Hegelian concepts of ‘freedom’ and ‘nature’ against a backdrop of exegetical and practical considerations. I will take as my point of departure Axel Honneth’s concept of ‘social freedom’ as systematically set out in Freedom’s Right (I). Drawing for justificatory support on Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, Honneth argues that social freedom designates a joint achievement amongst mutually recognising subjects who are capable of reciprocally coordinating their reflexive aims and goals within the institutional context of a democratic Sittlichkeit (I). I will then, in a second step, criticise Honneth’s reconstruction of Hegelian freedom on the grounds of de-naturalisation (II). It will be argued that the dual descriptive and normative or evaluative omission of external nature from Honneth’s account represents as much an exegetical problem, considering Hegel’s own writings (most notably Philosophy of Spirit) and the naturalistic insights contained therein, as indeed it does a practical one, in view of the looming global environmental crisis. By way of conclusion, I will propose an alternative holistic reading of Hegelian ‘concrete freedom’ within which, crucially, the external natural world or environment figures as an essential ‘dimension’ (III). This expanded conception of Hegelian freedom, itself understood as a relational achievement marked by the genuine reconciliation with constitutive ‘otherness’ (psycho-physiology, other subjects, nature and social reality), is intended to remedy the stated problems associated with Honneth’s strictly anthropocentric interpretation of Hegel.

Bio: Loughlin Gleeson is a Phd candidate (philosophy) at UNSW, working in the area of Hegel-research.
Grieve-Johnson, Benjamin  
University of Tasmania

How Can We Understand the “Digital World”?

The increasing role of digital technology in forming our everyday experience of the world has seen a resurgence of interest in the mechanology of Gilbert Simondon. Some recent literature in this field, including On the Existence of Digital Objects, by Yuk Hui (2016), attempts to apply Simondon’s method of understanding the nature of technical objects through their relations with the surrounding technical milieu, to the new field of digital technologies. This discourse suggests a new category of digital objects (meaning any object composed of data), which is ontologically distinct from both technical objects and natural objects in that the digital object is pure thematic relationality without physical form or place. In this paper I will argue that to treat the digital as a distinct ontological category, or even a distinct phase of the technical, is problematic in at least two ways: Firstly, this approach overlooks the physical infrastructure on which the digital necessarily rests, which would allow digital objects to be first contended with on familiar ontological ground. Secondly, as Heidegger warns, by seeking to understand the digital by sole reference to its artefacts, we overlook something more fundamental, which is that technology is firstly a particular mode of human understanding. It is not the digital object that is without form or place, then, but human being which is displaced by expressing itself through the language of the digital.

Bio: PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania with an interest in exploring the phenomenological implications of being immersed in a world defined by technology.

Grinter, Aaron  
Swinburne University

It’s Not a House, it’s a Home: Redefining Human Emplacement Within Ecological Systems to Address the Impending Crisis

As argued by biologists Paul and Anne Ehrlich in Why Isn’t Everyone as Scared as We Are? (1990), there is a disparity between the recognition by experts that “civilization is in imminent serious jeopardy” and the level of concern within the public and particularly elected officials. The Ehrlichs suggest that this contrast in degree of concern stems from a lack of acknowledgement of the fundamental interconnectness of humanity and natural systems. A lack of recognition of the fact that not only does the human and social world rely upon the health of the biosphere, but that our fates are inextricably linked. The recent diagnosis of the Anthropocene shows that human behaviour has a dramatic effect on the global system, and although until now this has been negative, it has the potential to become positive. This paper argues that, in light the imminent threat of environmental collapse, there needs to be a revised interpretation of the relationship between humans and nature, one that is not only supported by ecology and physics, but also creates the potential for a future where human society is more integrated with natural systems (or even a future at all). Drawing on the work of theoretical biologists Brian Goodwin, Mae-Wan Ho and CH Waddington, and physicists David Bohm and Erwin Schrodinger, this paper constructs a clear image of the emplacement of all life in a global ecological system.

Bio: Aaron Grinter is a PhD Candidate at Swinburne University. His undergraduate degrees were both science and philosophy, and he combined these in his honours to explore the history and philosophy of science through ecological philosophy. His PhD utilises this to construct a complete blueprint for a culture and epistemology of sustainability.

Hebblewhite, William  
Macquarie University

The Politics and the Policing of Naming
My argument in this paper is that a politics and policing of naming occurs at the level in which we refuse to name the perpetrators of terrorist actions. In brief, by refusing to name the perpetrators of terrorist actions we refuse to acknowledge the individual characteristics, motivations and identity of the actors. This has a number of repercussions for understanding the historical and social contexts which lead such actors to act in the way that they have. The repercussions of not naming these perpetrators I feel have not been adequately developed within the framework of a politics of naming, and thus the aim of this paper is to explore the extent to which the not naming of perpetrators feeds into the problematic divisions of society which perpetuate an “US verse THEM” mentality.

Bio: I am a PhD Candidate at Macquarie University.

Hippolito, Ines
University of Wollongong

Research in cognitive science that sees no continuum between a single atom and an embodied practice, such as the enjoyment of a work of art, is not complete. However, science often looks at these phenomena as mathematical constructions grasped by humans via neuronal inferences of past experiences or linguistic conceptualizations. In this paper, I am to offer a philosophical analysis and a qualitative description of the structure of inhabitation in space and time as a conceptual toolkit for research in particular practices of embeddedness to work with. I will take the hypotheses that inhabitation is dependent (1) on space and time as primary continua (because they vary independently of other continua), and on (2) individual self practice, as a movement that exist in space and time (secondary continua, varies on the basis of other continuum). In function of these hypotheses I will proceed with an analysis of how a self moves in function of time and space; and propose that, in a sense, time is the absolutely primary continuum insofar as the perception of a region of space may persist over time, constituting the life narrative. I expect being able to show the sense in which even if human practices do not evidently present continuous boundaries as, for instance, the rainbow does (where does yellow ends and orange begins?), they are nevertheless part of a natural continuous— the practice of a narrative—that is, they are not mathematical construction of representational concepts or sensory processes.

Bio: Ines is graduated in Philosophy (BA 2010, MA 2012), and post graduated in Cognitive Science. She is at the moment an International Postgraduate Award PhD Candidate at the University of Wollongong. She has published work (Elsevier, Willey, De Gruyter, Springer), and received several international awards and scholarships, including the University of Oxford.

Hondroudakis, Geoff
University of Queensland

Nick Land’s Fanged Noumena: Towards a Poetics for the Information Age

Silicon Valley controls the poetics of information technology. The languages for describing networks, data, and information technologies in general, are to a large extent controlled by the media narratives cultivated by these corporations. Given this context, I contend there is a need for alternative poetics of the digital: an aesthetics of information tech attentive to those aspects ignored or suppressed by this discourse. In this paper I analyse the early work of Nick Land, collected in Fanged Noumena, for the poetics he deploys in theorising the technologies and structures of digital capitalism. I argue that this style offers a useful critical-aesthetic apparatus for describing the profoundly dangerous possibilities posed by our technological futures; a poetics capable of articulating the terrors facing 21st century technological society. Land writes in the militaristic register of covert-ops science fiction, the hacker fantasies of dystopian cyberpunk, and the cosmic horror of Lovecraftian fiction. He blends literary style with philosophical speculation in what has come to be called ‘theory-fiction,’ or ‘hyperstition,’ a style that, in their introduction to Fanged Noumena, Ray Brassier and Robin McKay aptly describe as
a discursive method that subverts the distinction between cognitive representation and fictional speculation (26). By analysing and exploring the potential of this poetics, I aim to show that, though Land’s work presents a difficult and deeply problematic politics, the aesthetic frameworks he deploys remain useful schema for writing the dangers and fears of the 21st century.

Bio: Geoff Hondroudakis is nearing the completion of his Honours in Literature and Philosophy at the University of Queensland, where his thesis looks at literary subjectivities responding to technological development in the digital era. In further study, he aims to research the culture and philosophy of digitality and the anthropocene.

Hortle, Erin and Hannah Stark
University of Tasmania

Framing Sexual Selection: Elizabeth Grosz’s work on Deleuze, Darwin and Feminism

In Becoming Undone and Chaos Territory Art, Elizabeth Grosz brings together Deleuze and Darwin in a project which affirms the creative force of sexual selection. This chapter begins with a discussion of how Deleuze defines species, how he thinks about sexual difference, and how he engages with the tension between species and individual. Given the fact that Deleuze cannot be described as an evolutionary or feminist thinker, how and why does Grosz mobilise Deleuze’s work in her feminist evolutionary project? How does a Deleuzian approach both open up and mediate the distinction between natural and sexual selection that so interests her? This chapter re-examines the ways in which Grosz deploys the more-than-human examples in the works of Deleuze and Darwin, particularly birds and molluscs, to render sexual selection a complex production of difference. In particular, this chapter focussed on Grosz’s use of Deleuze’s concepts of difference, as well as assemblage, territory and becoming, to theorise evolution as a dynamic force. The chapter concludes with an interrogation of how Grosz’s interest in evolutionary theory is a feminist project and how this might invite us to think about Deleuze’s work in new, more political, ways.

Bios: Erin Hortle is a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania, Australia. Her academic and freelance writing engages with the cultural inscription of the more-than-human world.

Hannah Stark is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Tasmania. She’s the author of Feminist Theory After Deleuze and co-editor of Deleuze and the Non/human (with Jon Roffe).

Hush, Anna
University of Sydney
‘Staying on the Tightrope’: Mobilising Coalitions Through Precarity

Identitarian modes of thinking about feminist political subjectivity have faced a number of critiques in the past decades - particularly from some Marxist theorists, who have argued that identitarian models fail to acknowledge the material primacy of class. Recently, the fecund concept of precarity has opened up new ways of thinking about the political ontology of the subject, yielding the promise of theorising a new basis for a coalitional politics of diverse social groups. The Spanish activist group Precarias a la Deriva, for example, argue that ‘precarization affects all of us, and, however, axes of stratification traverse it’. Understood as the heterotopic socio-economic distribution of vulnerability, precarity flows unevenly along axes of class, race, gender, (dis)ability, nationhood, etc. This paper makes the argument that precarity does in fact provide a novel means for overcoming the impasse of the dialectic between identity and difference. By considering the ethical and existential dimensions of precarity and how it fares vis-à-vis identity as an ontological foundation for collective solidarity, I analyse the suitability of precarity for feminist politics. I argue that precarity constitutes a shared, but not universal, condition; one that fosters alliances between disparate groups subjected to systems of structural violence. The concept is useful insofar as it is sensitive to the ways in which social identities render some bodies more vulnerable to illness, violence, and exploitation. To thicken the above
theoretical movements, I turn to Black Lives Matter and the contemporary movement for a Universal Basic Income as instances of coalitional mobilisations of solidarity against precariouslyness in neoliberal times.

Bio: Anna Hush is a current Honours student in philosophy at the University of Sydney. Her thesis, supervised by Professor Moira Gatens, examines the potential for precarity to ground a coalitional approach to feminist politics. Anna is also active in community campaigns against sexual violence in academic spaces.

Idris, Farhan M.
KU Leuven, Belgium

An Ethics of ‘Languaging’ in a Postcolonial World: Derrida, Rey Chow and Glissant

In his late work Monolingualism of the Other, or, the Prosthesis of Origins, Derrida ventures to think the questions of race, accent, difference and origin in terms of hauntology in languages that garner a universal status “logic of haunting” that inheres in its non-native speakers, a racialised aphasia. “I only speak one language and but yet, it is not mine” (Derrida 1998: 27). In coming into being as a multilingual postcolonial subject, for Derrida, is not merely to repudiate the situated ways of our speaking, nor to reject the “originarity” of language. Like Derrida’s, Rey Chow’s work is instructive in helping us to think further about racialized aphasia and the loss of voice in speaking as subjects in both one’s mother tongue and a universal tongue of intercultural communication (i.e. English/ French). In Not a Native Speaker (2014), Chow instructs us to see accents and (racialised) aphasia as a symptom of an incomplete assimilation or a botched attempt at eliminating another tongue’s competing co presence. Having an accent is tantamount to leaving on display “the embarrassing evidence of one’s alien origins and migratory status” (Chow 2014, 58). Chow wants to develop an ethic with respect to “universalised” language (in this case, English) that will affirm accented speech instead of accented speech being stigmatised. Such linguistic discontinuities are the conditions of the emergence of possibility for the identity of any language. Like Derrida, Rey thinks the originary unity of language is contestable. The tension between displacement and discontinuity in using a “universal language” and the embodied specificity of one’s own mother tongue, is a postcolonial condition Chow dubs as “languaging” (Chow 2014, 99). By reading the Martinican theorist Edouard Glissant into this conversation between Rey Chow and Derrida we will try to expand what an ethic of “languaging” might look like. In Glissant’s Poetics of Relation the creole provides the discursive space outside of a “universal language” to rethink relations of testimony, and tasked to write the (postcolonial) future because it provides a new sense of home from a (Caribbean) spiritual homelessness. Likewise, affirming languaging as a postcolonial ethic is similarly extending testimonial solidarity to postcolonial subjects of language.

Bio: Farhan M. Idris is a philosopher from Singapore, and has previously studied in Nijmegen and Leuven. His current research is on developing a “philosophical tantrism” from the work of Kukai, Abhinavagupta and recent French antihumanists.

Ikäheimo, Heikki
University of New South Wales

Hegel and Liberal Naturalism

Do freedom, intentionality and the rest of what belongs to Sellars’ ‘manifest image’ fit a naturalist conception of the world? Much of course depends on what we mean by naturalism. Recent interpretations of Hegel by influential American readers have presented Hegel as a basically Kantian thinker for whom the gulf between nature and mind is theoretically unbridgeable. Such an interpretation could only ever have established itself by ignoring or downplaying huge swaths of what Hegel actually wrote, namely the parts on Philosophy of Nature and Anthropology in his Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences. In this paper I will
elaborate on an idea by Barbara Merker of ‘levels of normativity’ from the organic to the social and institutional in Hegel and discuss how it fits and further develops contemporary conceptions of ‘liberal naturalism’. There is more to learn from Hegel himself on these issues than from Hegel construed as a Kantian.

Bio: Heikki Ikäheimo is senior lecturer in philosophy at UNSW Australia in Sydney. He works on critical social philosophy, social ontology, philosophical anthropology, recognition and personhood. His publications include the monographies Anerkennung (2014) and Self-Consciousness and Intersubjectivity (2000), the co-edited collections The Ambivalence of Recognition (forthcoming), Recognition and Social Ontology (2011) and Dimensions of Personhood (2007), and a number of articles on Hegel, recognition, personhood and related themes. Many of his texts can be downloaded at https://unsw.academia.edu/HeikkiIkaheimo.

Inkpin, Andrew
University of Melbourne

Merleau-Ponty and the Intelligence of Painting

Traditional philosophical conceptions of human intelligence have usually focused on intellectual abilities, understood in contrast to and abstraction from the senses, as language-like and rule-governed in their function, and often in a simplified or idealized manner. This paper focuses on the alternative model of human intelligence at work provided by Merleau-Ponty’s discussions of painting, which not only contrast sharply with the traditional image of intellectual abilities, but also succeed in capturing characteristic traits of human intelligence its loose nonmechanical cohesion, flexibility, and openness to particularity that are often neglected. Having briefly introduced some of the defining features of his approach, the paper focuses specifically on the way the realization of meaning (sens) is conceived in terms of style and ‘sensible ideas’. Thus it first sets out how Merleau-Ponty’s conception of style—as a ‘mode of formulation’, a ‘system of equivalents’, or a ‘coherent deformation’—allows the meaningful patterning of marks in paintings to be understood as contrasting with conceptual meaning. Second, it shows how his conception of ‘sensible ideas’, which binds the realization of general meanings to sensible particulars, accounts for thematic relations between paintings. I argue that these two features complement each other, such that paintings are characterized by (a) configurations of forms or patterns that are inherently meaningful but lack conceptual determinacy; and (b) a relation between particulars and general features that—unlike rules—is governed not by identity but by similarity, resulting in an overall functional organization that is analogical rather than logical.

Bio: Andrew Inkpin is a lecturer in contemporary European philosophy at the University of Melbourne.

Jarvinen, Kalle
Murdoch University

Re-Thinking Our Ethical Existence After the Death of God: Butler, Jan Patočka, and Responsibility

In this paper, I hope to frame the widespread and differential precarity of human and non-human life through biopolitical, geopolitical and ecological forms of government as emerging out of two key features of contemporary Western thought: (1) a kind of instrumental attitude towards both human and non-human life; and, (2) a compartmentalisation of our ethical responsibility (“responsibilization”) towards others located within the bounded liberal subject. Both this instrumentality and responsibilization, I argue, are symptomatic of the “contemporary nihilism” of the naturalistic reductionism. I will analyse this contemporary nihilistic condition in terms of Nietzsche’s proclamation of the Death of God, and how this event has foundationally disturbed “Western” ethical thought. I suggest that this disturbance provokes a need to reconceptualise responsibility beyond ontotheology, naturalism and subjectivism.
Subsequently, I will position the struggle for an account of responsibility as tied up with overcoming our understanding of both ethics and subjectivity in individualistic and naturalistic terms. I conclude by raising the attempts of Jan Patočka and Judith Butler to re-think subjectivity in terms of its corporeal and meaningful openness towards and dependence upon others as providing fruitful starting points from which to re-think our ethical responsibility towards others.

Bio: Kalle Jarvinen is currently studying his PhD in Philosophy at Murdoch University. Presently, his project draws upon phenomenology, post-structuralism and the philosophy of science to critique the contemporary problem of "responsibilization" and to re-think responsibility through critiques of both the naturalistic reductionism and atomisation of human existence.

Jaworski, Katrina
Uni SA

Ethics of Wonder and Generosity in Understanding Suicide as Ethical

Suicide is researched more widely than ever before thanks to the collective efforts of suicidology, or the field committed to the study of suicide. Disciplines such as psychiatry, psychology and public health play key roles in the production of knowledge about suicide. The problem with this knowledge is not only the fact that suicide is overtly framed through the pathological lens, or that specific disciplines have a lot of power over how we understand suicide as a complex phenomenon. The problem is about the taking for granted of the philosophical roots of suicidology, which remain buried beneath the plethora of knowledge generated about suicide. The problem is also about not knowing how to respond to what has been taken for granted, and by extension, forgotten. This paper responds to this dual problem in three ways. To begin with, I critically examine the philosophical underpinnings of suicidology. Dissatisfied with critique for the sake of it, alongside the constant push by suicidology to pin down and measure the meaning of suicide, I then consider the role of ethics, and its relationship to wonder and generosity in continental philosophy. Finally, I consider what role such ethics might have in rethinking how we understand suicide – a rethinking that remains open to change, to difference and unconditional hospitality as means of truly responding to the painful agency of suicide. This rethinking, I argue, is necessary towards the task of divorcing morality from ethics for the sake of focusing on the ethical character of suicide rather than whether suicide is ethically correct.

Bio: Katrina Jaworski is a Senior Lecturer in Cultural Studies and Research Degrees Coordinator at the University of South Australia. Since 1999, her research has continually focused on suicide. More recently, she has written on philosophy of dying bodies, as well as Rwandan genocide. She also writes on happier topics, but this never lasts for too long. To date, she has authored The Gender of Suicide: Knowledge Production, Theory and Suicidology (Ashgate/Routledge). She is the co-editor of Women Supervising and Writing Doctoral Dissertations: Walking on the Grass (Lexington). With Nikki Sullivan, she is currently completing the 2nd edition of A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory (Edinburgh Press).

Jeffs, Rory
Deakin University

Misrecognising Recognition? On the Challenges and Politics of the Use of Hegel for Recognition Theory

Recognition remains a central part of contemporary political and social discourse, whether it is with reference to the indigenous recognition campaign or the same-sex marriage debate. For the last few decades, there has also been a growing reconsideration of Hegel’s philosophy and its application in the politics and ethics of recognition. This paper will provide a historical context to how interpretations of Hegel’s theory of recognition have been shaped from out of two
traditions of neo-Hegelianism, that of the French legacy of Alexandre Kojève’s political interpretation that attempted to fuse existential and Marxist themes by aligning class struggle with the struggle for recognition of the Master-Slave dialectic; and the German tradition of critical theory. The paper will then evaluate the influential criticisms of Hegelian recognition that emerged from Lacanian psychoanalysis, structuralist Marxism of Louis Althusser, with their inflections also in post-colonial and post-structuralist readings, based on the psychic or ideological lures of misrecognition that deny any emancipatory potential for recognition claims. It then discusses whether the attempts to reconstruct Hegel’s recognition theory, again from anthropological grounds, from both Jürgen Habermas and Axel Honneth have addressed the force of the this critique or bypassed it by taking a non-metaphysical and non-historical framework. The paper asks whether recognition itself is the problem as being deceptive or limited category for political or social analysis, or is it the creation of a binary framework that holds the goals of economic justice and cultural recognition cannot merge due to the differences between philosophical anthropology and political economy.

Bio: Rory Jeffs is a PhD candidate at Deakin University. His PhD is on the work and legacy of Alexandre Kojève. His research interests pertain to political and social philosophy, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, as well as the history of ideas.

Koftanski, Wojciech
Australian Catholic University

The Ethics of the Image: Kierkegaard and Ricoeur on Imagination and Morality

Are we in any way morally accountable for cherishing a false or harmful idea? By appealing to Kierkegaard’s and Ricoeur’s renderings of imagination, I claim that there is a form of responsibility attached to how we visualize or conceptualize things, not just to what we do. I will demonstrate my point through an analysis of the relationship between selfhood and imagination in Kierkegaard and Ricoeur. For Kierkegaard, human selfhood is essentially tied to imagination. Through imagination, we have the capacity to move away from what we are in the present, to what we can (should) become in the future. My possible (future) self is represented in what Kierkegaard calls the image of the ideal self. We are morally responsible for the creation of, and engagement with, the image of the ideal self, because faulty design and improper employment of the image determine human selfhood and action in the world. According to Ricoeur’s theory of “figuration”, imagination is the capacity that allows for a transition from an imaginative con-figuration of fiction to its practical re-figuration in the real world. Ricouer claims that fiction devised in imagination precedes real action - an act is often a response to fiction. This is so because fiction is nothing but a set of possible accounts of human action. Conjuring up and holding a fictional, but harmful course of action or intention in one’s imagination is morally problematic for Ricoeur, because “seeing as” leads to “being as”.

Bio: Wojciech Koftanski lectures in Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne. His research focuses on the relationship between the notions of imitation, selfhood, and morality. His PhD thesis investigates the concept of mimesis (imitation) in the thought of Soren Kierkegaard.

Kanjere, Anastasia
La Trobe University

White Innocence and History: Rehabilitating a Violent Past through Simplicity

Whiteness has a troubled relationship with its past. It is rare to find a defence of white supremacy so transparent as to openly deny the existence of histories of racist violence— this means that whiteness’ self-construction must come to terms with a conception of the past and of history. In this paper I address in particular the tension between a construction of white innocence and racial violences of the past. It is necessary for whiteness to reconstitute itself as innocent— even when it may, on some level, acknowledge that injustices did occur. Drawing
on the work of Ahmed, Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos, and Moreton-Robinson, I focus in particular on the rehabilitative discursive projects in Australia and the United States. In particular, I argue that in each context it is the notion of simplicity that forms the nexus around which reconstructions of the past that facilitate a disavowal of violence aggregate. The past is reconfigured as simple: the nostalgic yearning that whiteness expresses is for a place of simplicity, and this simplicity is ensured by the unquestioned, unquestionable nature of white dominance in this imagined past space. This discourse of simplicity is mobilised in service of a reinscription of white innocence.

Bio: Anastasia Kanjere is a white settler writer, researcher, activist and casual academic, born and raised on Wurundjeri country in so-called Melbourne. Her writing on race, gender, borders, motherhood and poetry can be found in Going Down Swinging, The Pin, and xBorderOperationalMatters, and in the journals Writing from Below and Romance Notes.

Lam-Saw, Norma
Western Sydney University

Is a "Bartleby Politics" Possible?

Herman Melville’s “Bartleby, the Scrivener” has been read by philosophers such as Giorgio Agamben and Gilles Deleuze as something of a figure of passive resistance. While Bartleby is characterized as fundamentally passive throughout Melville’s novella, doing little more than repeat the phrase, “would prefer not to” before dying at the end of the narrative, it is through this essential passivity that some philosophers find an expression of political resistance. Not only does Bartleby offer “the strongest principle against the principle of sovereignty” for Agamben, but similarly offers a conception of a new filial community that refuses the authority of a patriarchal society for Deleuze. Despite the possibility towards political resistance that both Agamben and Deleuze finds in Bartleby’s radical passivity, philosophers such as Alain Badiou and Antonio Negri maintain that such readings of Bartleby’s passive approach to resistance is nothing other than a valorization of weakness as passivity, and that Bartleby’s solitary refusal of authority leads only to “a kind of social suicide.” Does Bartleby’s radical passivity lend itself to political resistance? And is the notion of a “Bartleby politics” possible? This paper will briefly outline the way in which Agamben and Deleuze find a certain political potential in Bartleby’s radically passivity. It will then turn to the criticisms of these readings offered by Antonio Negri and Jacques Rancière to discern whether Bartleby’s radical passivity offers a political resistance or, if the notion of a “Bartleby politics” is possible.

Bio: Norma Lam-Saw is a PhD candidate and casual academic at Western Sydney University. Her PhD project examines the paradox of passive resistance in Herman Melville’s “Bartleby, the Scrivener” through readings offered by continental philosophers such as Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze and Antonio Negri.

Laurie, Tim and Hannah Stark
University of Technology Sydney and University of Tasmania

The Politics of Becoming-Imperceptible in Maggie Nelson’s The Argonauts

Can love be utilised to create alternative political imaginaries? While global struggles for marriage equality have ostensibly affirmed progressive visions of diverse intimacies, a range of conservative cultural projects have been advanced through appeals to love of family, community and nation. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze’s references to love and politics, this paper argues that both progressive and conservative articulations of romantic love have retreated from ideas about love connected to knowledge of and engagement with others. Deleuze’s Spinozism is here rerouted through the exuberant prose of Maggie Nelson’s The Argonauts (2015), which offers a post-sentimental concept of love shaped by contemporary queer politics, but also resistant to sanguine solutions offered by some – if certainly not all –articulations of queer radicalism. Along the way, the paper navigates a path between (often tacitly
heteronormative) claims that love belongs exclusively to privatised domains of domestic bliss, and pedestrian assertions of love as an innate virtue belonging to one’s preferred political community. The paper utilises Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming-imperceptible in order to draw out the political tensions in the novel between passing, recognition and misrecognition in relation to a range of political communities and allegiances.

Bios: Timothy Laurie works in the School of Communication at the University of Technology, Sydney, having taught in Cultural Studies at Melbourne University, and Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney. He is currently co-authoring Masculinity After Deleuze for Bloomsbury. Tim’s research interests include gender and sexuality studies, cultural studies, and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze.

Hannah Stark is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Tasmania. She’s the author of Feminist Theory After Deleuze and co-editor of Deleuze and the Non/human (with Jon Roffe).

Le, Vincent
Deakin University

The Origins of Laruelle’s Non-Philosophy in Ravaisson’s Understanding of Metaphysics.

Laruelle’s untranslated dissertation and first book, Phenomenon and Difference: An Essay on Ravaisson’s Ontology (1971), is unanimously overlooked as an idiosyncratic exception that has little to do with Laruelle’s subsequent development of a non-philosophy. On the contrary, this paper analyses Laruelle’s dissertation and Ravaisson’s own writings to show how Ravaisson enables Laruelle to develop his mature non-philosophy’s three central ideas of philosophy as decision, the Real as radical immanence, and cloning as the staging of a vision-in-One. Firstly, Laruelle inherits Ravaisson’s critique of Platonism and various anti-Platonisms as dividing the unity of being between two terms, of which one alone is conflated with all of being to the detriment of the other as mere appearance. Moreover, Laruelle follows Ravaisson’s third way of envisioning being as an originary radical immanence, which all philosophies presuppose to constitute their various dualisms by dividing being in two. Finally, Laruelle’s idea of cloning adheres to Ravaisson’s eclectic method of expressing being’s immanence through his cohering of the diversity of philosophies, as well as other disciplines like art and religion, into a single historical narrative of one and the same being’s self-unfolding. By tracing how Laruelle discovers the notions of decision, radical immanence and cloning in Ravaisson’s ontology, we shall see how non-philosophy is still providing an answer to philosophy’s own fundamental question of being conceived as the Real, even as it rejects all historical philosophies’ ideas of being understood as decisions.

Bio: I am a Masters of Research candidate in Philosophy at Deakin University. My research traces the influence of Augustine’s concepts of good and evil on Descartes, Kant and Schelling. I have also published and presented on more contemporary philosophers, such as Slavoj Žižek, Meillassoux and Nick Land.

Legg, Catherine
Deakin University

Peirce and Sellars on Perception

Whereas Charles Peirce’s pragmatist account of truth has been much discussed, his theory of perception still offers a rich mine of insights. I have previously argued (Legg, 2008) that Peirce’s early rejection of ‘intuition’ defines him as an inferentialist—in fact more so than Robert Brandom, who allows certain qualia concepts (such as red) to be given by non-inferential sensory ‘reports’, while Peirce seeks to analyse even qualia inferentially. Such a ‘hyperinferentialism’ has been criticised for replacing the world’s felt immediacy with a congeries of propositions. Such criticisms led John McDowell to shift his landmark Mind and World account of mental content as the unity of sensibility and understanding somewhat towards sensibility, under pressure from Charles Travis (McDowell, 2009). Relatedly, the later
Peirce posits in addition to the perceptual judgment a ‘percept’ which is possessed of the insistency, determinacy, and indescribability that Travis urges for perception as a whole. This paper explores Peirce’s ‘two-ply’ view of perception in the light of the original inferentialism of Wilfrid Sellars. Is Peirce’s percept an obvious instance of the Myth of the Given? Or is his view rather quite Sellarsian in spirit, in that—as claimed in (Forman 2007)—Sellars attempts to combine an internalism concerning concept understanding with an externalism concerning truth?

Bio: Catherine Legg holds a BA (hons) from University of Melbourne, an MA in Philosophy from Monash and a PhD from ANU, where her thesis (Modes of Being) concerned Charles Peirce’s philosophical categories. After a spell of hands-on ontological engineering, she returned to academia and now teaches at Deakin University. Her current research bridges philosophy of language, logic, pragmatism and AI, with a side interest in ‘cat metaphysics’.

Leijssenaar, Bas
KU Leuven, Belgium

From Single Author to Complex Fabric: A Pluralist Account of Constituent Power
Institute of Philosophy

Recent attempts to resuscitate the concept of constituent generally fail because they rely on the outdated and dangerous fiction of a single, uniform constituent subject (e.g. ‘the people’) which makes the idea of a self-identical, unitary people appear as a precondition for all forms of (legitimate) collective self-determination. Under contemporary circumstances such unitary communities are increasingly absent. Moreover, recent scholarship (Jason Frank, Kevin Olson) suggests that collective identity does not precede and entail rights of collective agency and collective self-determination, but rather that these dimensions are negotiated and articulated together. This means that we cannot impose historical ‘imaginaries of constituent power’ on contemporary ‘imagined communities’. Responding to these challenges, I argue for a pluralistic account of constituent power in which the constituent subject is conceptualised as a hybrid political actor. This account is developed, first, by conceptualising constituent power as emerging from a plurality of sources that cannot be traced back to one unitary source, and, second, by conceptualising constituent power as being exercised in a plurality of modes or instantiations, ranging from ‘original’, formless, pre-institutionalized to various ‘constituted’, procedural forms. Such an account should be able to conceptualise contemporary events such as the insurgency of the marginalised and the precarious, the influx of refugees, the necessity of cross-jurisdictional dialogue, and the struggle between contradictory social forces as exercises of popular power instead of threats to it. The proposed account also allows a role for traditionally non-political actors and values, such as the environment or future generations, as well as outside actors, such as non-citizens and refugees, in the exercise of constituent power.

Ling, Alex
Western Sydney University

Creating Controversy: Contemporary Scandal and the Simulacrum of Novelty

We live in scandalous times. Every day some new controversy demands our attention, our emotional investment, and ultimately our judgment. The transgressive nature of these scandals leads many to understand them in revelatory terms: as offering a tantalising glimpse of what ‘really’ goes on, cutting through the multiple layers of artifice to reveal an underlying ‘truth’. Others, however, contend these routine transgressions simply present the strategic face of contemporary capitalism: calculated marketing exercises designed to stimulate consumer interest, such ‘controversies’ arguably do little more than attest to the contemporary truism that there is no such thing as ‘bad publicity’. Yet there exists today another, far more insidious form of scandal. Less concerned with the direct accumulation of capital than with shoring up the base mechanisms of power, this fundamentally ‘statist’ development involves the fabrication of controversy not simply in the place of, but moreover in the form of the real. Here, the scandal
paradoxically replicates the disruptive effects of radical creation (without, for all that, actually presenting anything new) in order to produce its opposite: stasis. What we instead bear witness to is the production of the ‘simulacrum of novelty’, the sole purpose of which is to stand in for – and thereby neutralise – the very possibility of real creation and the threat this entails. In hijacking the idea of ‘creation’, the state effectively annexes the real, replacing the ‘radically new’ with the ‘simulacrum of novelty’, and supplementing the controversial ‘creative act’ with the sterile act of ‘creating controversy’.


Lloyd, Martyn
University of Sydney & University of Queensland

Against the Dialectic of Enlightenment; or, How Not to Read Kant avec Sade

Within Continental Philosophy the figure of the Marquis de Sade is almost always framed in dialectical opposition to Kant. And insofar as the Enlightenment itself is widely held to have a dialectical structure, the ‘Kant avec Sade’ dialectic is, within Continental Philosophy and Critical Theory, at the heart of many, if not most, understandings of the entire period. While there are several different versions of this dialectic, this paper will focus on the two most prevalent: that established by Horkheimer and Adorno in their ‘Dialectic of Enlightenment’ (1944), and that established by Lacan including in his seminar ‘Kant avec Sade’ (1963). Such understandings vary significantly from those which consider Sade in his historical context, the philosophy of the French Enlightenment. Indeed such understandings of the meaning of Sade are so far removed from the historical Sade that it is tempting to conclude the two are utterly irreconcilable. How useful then are such ‘dialectical’ meanings in our attempts to understanding Sade, or the Enlightenment, or by extension ‘Western’ modernity? In considering the meaning of Sade, this paper will bring into focus the difficulties and rewards of drawing Continental Philosophy into a closer dialogue with Intellectual History.

Bio: Martyn Lloyd is a Junior Research Fellow in Enlightenment Studies at the University of Sydney and an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Queensland. His book ‘Sade’s Philosophical System in its Enlightenment Context’ will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in early 2018.

Lumsden, Simon
University of New South Wales

Nature and Freedom in Hegel

The core notion of freedom in Hegel’s thought is the idea of being-at-home-in-otherness. In Hegel’s social and political thought this notion allows us to see institutions as objective structures of right through which we inhabit the world and they are as such as expressions of human freedom. Given these institutions are human achievements this is not a difficult notion to understand: we can be at home in them, under certain conditions, when we see them as our own and as expressions of who we are. The question this paper explores is if the model of freedom is appropriate to think the relation of human beings to nature. Can humans be at home in nature without appropriating nature into a human project?

Bio: Simon Lumsden is Senior Lectures in Philosophy at UNSW. He has published widely on German Idealism and is the author of "Self-Consciousness and the Critique of the Subject: Hegel, Heidegger, and the Poststructuralists" (Columbia UP, 2014).
Ecological Crisis and the Problem of How to Inhabit a Norm

The Anthropocene is distinguished by the knowledge that collective human action is damaging the earth’s biophysical systems in a manner that has serious implications for human life and nature. Despite this knowledge moral philosophy is limited in its capacity to provide the wholesale re-orientation of human practices that are required if humanity is to respond successfully to the array of ecological crises that have emerged in the Anthropocene. Moral prescription is not easily applied to the cumulative damage of individual actions, such as is the case with the collective human actions that has caused climate change. This paper will argue that the role second nature plays in culture provides a better prospect for understanding normative change than moral philosophy, because it is allows for an appreciation of the ways in which norms are embodied. Second nature is also central to understanding the difficulty of changing norms and it also allows us to understand that the emergence of new norms, with which we might better be able to respond to ecological crisis, requires the development of material pathways in a culture by which appropriate norms can be inhabited.

Kantian slip: Foucault’s critique of Kant in the Introduction to Kant’s Anthropology

Even though Kant says that he is mainly concerned with ‘the knowledge of the human being as a citizen of the world’ (Kant, Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, 7:120), Foucault criticised him for focusing primarily on the GemÄ¼t (i.e. man’s internal dimension) and not on his ‘citizenship of the world’, which is supposedly the primary concern of Kant’s ‘pragmatic anthropology’. Likewise, Foucault criticises Kant for bequeathing to modern philosophy precisely this illusory idea of man as both the subject and object of knowledge (i.e. the empirico-transcendental doublet). He challenges not only Kant but also all ‘philosophical anthropologies’ that came after him. He points out that, inasmuch as the transcendental illusion needs to be criticised, its anthropological or ‘empirical’ counterpart also needs to be debunked. Foucault’s criticism of Kant and all philosophical anthropologies in the Introduction to Kant’s Anthropology is such that he wants to wake us up from our ‘anthropological slumbers’, to use the language of The Order of Things (OT). In this paper, I will examine Foucault’s twofold critique of Kant found in his Introduction: Kant’s misaligned focus on the GemÄ¼t and his being the source of the anthropological illusion. I will also explain the reason/s why Foucault says that this slip ‘need not be repeated’. Furthermore, I will expand on the links between the Introduction and OT, saying that the former functions as a propaedeutic not only to Kant’s Anthropology but also to Foucault’s OT. This will assist us in understanding the development of Foucault’s thought.

Bio: Wendyl Luna is currently undertaking his PhD (Philosophy) at UNSW Sydney. In 2015, he graduated with a Masters by Research degree from the same university. His research interests include contemporary French philosophy, particularly the philosophy of Michel Foucault. For his PhD, he is undertaking an in-depth examination of Foucault’s Kantianism.
Durham University

Nature, culture, habit: Félix Ravaisson and the Extended Evolutionary Synthesis

This paper proposes a way of constructively retrieving Félix Ravaisson’s philosophy of habit in the context of contemporary evolutionary theory. In his 1838 essay Of Habit Ravaisson takes the traditional notion of habit as ‘second nature’ and extends it beyond the familiar Aristotelian domain of human cultural formation to incorporate all living things, so that culture is present all the way down in biotic nature. The obvious difficulty with a theology of nature like this is its apparently Lamarckian character: for habits to have long run evolutionary significance they must be inherited in some way, but this is strictly ruled out by the genetic inheritance emphasised in the twentieth century Modern Synthesis of evolutionary theory. I argue, however, that several crypto-Lamarckian themes in the presently emerging Extended Evolutionary Synthesis (esp. phenotypic plasticity, genetic accommodation, and niche construction) provide an empirical footing for Ravaisson’s account. When joined to contemporary biology in this way Ravaisson’s account of habit offers a plausible way of understanding nature as always already cultural, and culture—with all its semiotic, normative, creative, and rational aspects—as a thoroughly natural phenomenon.

Bio: Nathan Lyons is a Research Fellow in the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University. He works on the philosophy of nature—particularly theories of the entanglement of the natural and cultural—in dialogue with medieval thought and contemporary evolutionary theory.

Martin, Philip
Macquarie University

The Sensuous Aesthetic and the Logic of Expression: the Critical-Romantic Bind in Kant, Marx, and Nishida

The notion of the aesthetic is central to Kant’s critical project. On the one hand it is used to postulate and examine the negative limits of cognition and explore the a priori forms of intuition. On the other hand it provides the basis for an analytic of judgements in general modelled on disinterested judgements of taste that reflect on beauty. However, if we want to combine these systematic theoretical elements with the more extravagant claims of the transformative power of aesthetic experience offered by Romantic theories of art, we are left in a bind. The hard distinctions between subject and object in the Kantian set up are in direct conflict with Romantic accounts of the dynamic fluidity between subject and object that is evoked by the experience of art or the beautiful. Marx’s formulation of this theoretical aesthetic tension in his early philosophy concerns how the materially sensuous being and activity of the subject could be conceivable within the scope of critical transcendental philosophy. Under this guise, the problem simultaneously encompasses aesthetic perception, judgement, and production. Nishida Kitarō, the most influential philosopher of the Kyoto School, develops an interesting response to this problem. In this paper I will explore how Nishida uses Buddhist (and Daoist) concepts such as self-awareness as critical methodological tools to negotiate this bind and develop an account of aesthetic perception, judgement, and artistic production as intertwining loci of aesthetic expression.

Bio: Philip Martin is a PhD candidate at Macquarie University. He works in philosophical aesthetics, film-philosophy, and cross-cultural philosophy. His dissertation project focuses on Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, and the Kyoto School.

Mayes, Christopher
Deakin University

Forgetting and Remembering in Foucault: Counter-Histories and the Lustre of Power
The “Rhodes must fall” movement, Charlottesville riot, statues of Cook perpetuating discovery myths or Macquarie masking colonial violence, and numerous other examples underscore the volatile effects of history on collective understanding of the present. In the Society Must Be Defended lectures, Foucault observes that ‘the discourse of the historian’ is a ‘sort ceremony’ that produces ‘both a justification of power and a reinforcement of that power’. This reinforcement occurs through drawing attention to ‘the lustre of power’ by using ‘its examples and its exploits, to fascinate men.’ The telling of Australian history, even critical histories, often follows this course by recounting stories of brave and resilient men in the past to ‘fascinate men’ and reinforce power in the present. These histories not only give power its lustre, but submerge counter-histories, namely the histories of Indigenous dispossession and colonial violence. Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos argue that ‘the writing of the white nation proceeds through the development of narratives that unfold as if the land might indeed have been unoccupied’. In forgetting Indigenous dispossession and remembering settler-colonial achievements, we perpetuate a discourse that leaves the lustre of the colonial-settler state unchallenged and historical injustices silenced. This paper examines the role of counter-histories in Foucault’s political theory, and asks whether this tactical re-remembering has political effects that can substantially re-shape Australia-Indigenous relations, or if it simply gets ignored and enfolded into dominant narratives.

Bio: Christopher Mayes is a Research Fellow (DECRA) at Deakin University. His forthcoming book - Unsettling Food Politics - examines the biopolitics of food and agriculture in settler-colonial Australia. His DECRA project is on the history of bioethics in Australia since 1980.

McGrow, Lauren

Not Laying Down - Sex Workers Building Resilience and Claiming Agentic Power

Why are sex workers as a population deferentially exposed to risk and vulnerability, including injury, violence and death? This is the question that bothered me after doing outreach and support in a Christian program to sex workers in Sydney, NSW for many years. Why are they set apart? Sex workers are judged morally, mostly as criminals and as those who may spread disease to the community at large. Often they are considered victims in need of rescue. They are a hidden population. And they have to be. Stigma has ensured that sex workers keep quiet about their occupations most of the time. Why are people in the sex industry stigmatised? The influence of Christianity in the West has given rise to shame which is directed at sexual women. For many Christian activist groups in this field, the most important thing about a woman is her sexual integrity. Prostitution sits at the very edge of sexual acceptability. Yet many sex workers challenge this stigma, through blogging, protest and resistance to negative representations. Why take this laying down? Three examples of resilience strategies among sex working communities will be highlighted to show that Christian programs are often recreating the problems they are working hard to address. Why are the voices of sex workers important? Because those at the sexual margins are the best people to name their own subjectivities; to discern ways of addressing oppressive structures; and to affirm supportive practices that will be of ultimate benefit.

Bio: Lauren McGrow, Ph.D. (2014), Charles Sturt University, is an independent scholar who lives at the edge of the world in Southern Tasmania. Her work is concerned with diverse human sexualities and the impact of religious structures upon marginalised women. Lauren’s first book, Missionary Positions, examines Christian outreach to sex workers.

Miller, Liam

University of Queensland

Game Over: Video Games and Death

Video games are vehicles of learning. They have, by necessity, been designed to teach the player how to play, and engage, with the game world. As these worlds become increasingly more
complex, their ability to communicate, in a Deweyan sense, also increases. In short, complex games make for complex learning tools. Properly understood, these tools can be implemented in a wide range of classrooms and subjects. One example of this kind of lesson is using video games to explore the concept of death. In a video game, players are exposed to death all the time. The implications of this ‘death’ are short lived; they are temporary and exist only in the game world. Like any playful scenario, the implications and consequences of any outcome are restricted to within the game world. However, it is this isolation that allows playful activities like games to expose players to concepts, ideas, beliefs, and possible outcomes, with little to no risk. Using several video games, this paper will explore the concept of death and how it is viewed in contemporary western society.

Bio: Liam Miller is an early career researcher whose work explores the intersections between philosophy and play, games, education, identity theory, and fiction.

Mol, Joeri, Miya Tokumitsu and Graham Sewell
University of Melbourne

Office Design: Episteme, Classification & The Taming of Monsters

In this paper, we invoke the Foucauldian notions of ‘episteme’ and ‘techne’ (or ‘technique’) to examine the relationship between classification systems and social order. Whereas epistemes capture the constitutive limits of a certain ‘regime of truth’ or body knowledge, technes refer to the associated practices that use knowledge as an institutionalized form of governmentality. By taking a longue durée perspective, we lay bare three different epistemes, each with their idiosyncratic classificatory techniques that as knowledge practices, give rise to three distinct forms of social order, being: theocracy, meritocracy, and the market. By unpacking the historical evolution of ‘the office’, we describe how the classification systems underling distinct epistemes and their corollary set of techniques were created, maintained and contested from the Renaissance until the present day. As the privileged site of knowledge production, the office played a pivotal role in the both naturalization of epistemes and technes, as well as, the accommodation of classificatory anomalies. Making use of the anthropological concept of cosmology, we describe how, through rendering the underlying epistemes invisible, the aforementioned social orders became naturalized, thus foreclosing a straightforward contestation. Yet this naturalization was only ever a precarious equilibrium at best as classificatory anomalies kept presenting themselves. As the ‘control room’ of a dominant episteme, the office was the site where such classificatory ‘monsters’ were confronted. As we will demonstrate the most powerful monsters were those that could not be accommodated through a revision of the techne, but required an overhaul of the underpinning episteme.

Bio: Joeri Mol researches markets – both inside and outside organisations. HI is interested in how price and value are brought into an (often) uneasy relationship. Some of his concerns include: what is the viability of critique in the face of the market? Can we emancipate ourselves from the market as employees, consumers and citizens?

Mosely, Michael
University of New South Wales

(The) Nothing Beyond Meaning: Heidegger, Time, and World as a ‘Transcendental Problem’

To understand Being [Sein] as ‘intelligibility’ or ‘meaningful presence’ is now a common position in contemporary anglophone studies of Heidegger. This position is not unfounded; in Heidegger’s account of the world not only in Being and Time (1927) but also throughout his lecture courses of the 1920s world is said to be given primarily in significance [Bedeutsamkeit]. But in the years following the publication of Being and Time Heidegger can be seen to distance himself from this conception of world, claiming that it was only ever a preliminary characterisation, and that its sole role is to lead over into world considered as a as ‘transcendental problem—a world defined not by meaningfulness but as ‘original’, or
paradigmatic’, view and ‘formed’ through Dasein’s transcendence. From the perspective of Being as intelligibility such a claim is non-sensical and thus its significance for understanding Heidegger’s thinking has been overlooked. This paper seeks to address this neglect and provide an explanation of Heidegger’s claim. By tracing the development of Heidegger’s thought through his early writings until the late 1920s it shows that Heidegger’s account of the world in its significance does indeed lead over into world as a transcendental problem. It is argued that Heidegger’s understanding of Dasein as time, his view that Being has been understood as presence throughout the history of philosophy, his determination of a connection between Being and time, and the inadequacy of Being as presence describe the Being of Dasein (as ahead-of-itself-already-in) leads Heidegger to see in his reading of the Schematism chapter of Kant’s first Critique that time is that which is originally given—not an act of the subject—and is thus the ‘unthematic prior view’ that allows Being to be understood and that thus determines Dasein as ‘world-forming’.

Bio: Michael is a PhD candidate at UNSW working on Heidegger’s concept of the clearing.

Negrin, Llewellyn
University of Tasmania

The Problem with Beauty

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, art has had a conflicted relationship with beauty. Seeking to distance themselves from the realm of conspicuous consumption, many artists have adopted an anti-aesthetic stance. Beauty has been eschewed on the grounds that it is deceptive or superficial, distracting from the deeper intellectual concerns of art through its appeal to the pleasure of the senses. Far from being a necessary condition of art, it has come instead to be regarded as antithetical to it. However, in recent times, there has been a revival of interest in beauty amongst artists and theorists such as Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Alexander Nehamas, Noël Carroll and Wendy Steiner who seek to defend the legitimacy of the sensuous pleasures of beauty against its puritanical denial by anti-aesthetic art. Reacting against the necessity for art to be primarily a vehicle of ideological critique, they endeavour to recover the sensory aspects of the aesthetic experience. However, as will be argued in this paper, this rehabilitation of beauty is no less problematic than the anti-aestheticism it seeks to replace. For, both are predicated on a reductionist conception of beauty as sensuous pleasure devoid of meaning, the only difference being that in the former, sensuous pleasure is privileged over intellectual content while in the latter, the reverse is the case. As such, both positions are symptomatic of a crisis in the aesthetic in which the unity between form and content has been torn asunder. In mounting the case for the resurrection of sensory pleasures of art against its intellectualist hypertrophy, the recent defence of beauty has failed to grasp that beauty and meaning are not necessarily antithetical, but can be mutually enhancing. Just as an anti-aesthetic intellectual art which deprives one of sensuous pleasure can be impoverishing, so is an aestheticized art where sensory pleasure is promoted at the expense of meaning. What is needed is the recovery of a sense of beauty where form and content are interrelated.

Bio: Llewellyn Negrin is a Senior Lecturer in Art Theory and Coordinator of the Masters of Fine Art programme at the School of Creative Arts, University of Tasmania. Her research interests are in the role of aesthetics in art and everyday life, particularly as it relates to the fashioning of appearance. She has published a book Appearance and Identity: Fashioning the Body in Postmodernity and has published widely in journals such as Philosophy and Social Criticism, Theory, Culture & Society, Body & Society, Feminist Theory and the European Journal of Cultural Studies.

Oechslin, Reto
stànza©

Improbable Empire: Montaigne saw the devil in our coming to terms with contemplation
The last thing one cannot possibly erase from reason, may well correspond to the preciseness of Montaigne’s contemplative realisation. His highly contagious inflexion towards live experience (le vécu) reached ingeniously out to what logic plays best: dark poiesis (making). Montaigne ultimately realised, that in encumbered theoria (seeing) and logos (logic), the devil must lie in the way these are reasoned (Begründet, Grund). He speculated that these modes meet in contemplation (from theoria), comparable to the nexus of action and breath. His on-off logic mirrors thence the impossible: the orphic function hidden in contemplation, which like an invisible force pushes contemplation constantly forwards into shades, particularly of theoria and animæ (live axioms). His unorthodox quantum torch found the black hole through which all vanities of in-between (entre) need to pass, driven by their elaborate preoccupations with real-virtual conjectures. In his revelation, he finally recognised the precariousness of future contemplation, including ours. Turning hyperboles into superfluous barricades, essentially driven by his intention to cure our blindness in the game logic plays, he concluded further that in this improbable empire, chance is eternally out of reach. However, later he then also became aware that the hues of chance may well appear at one precise location, which he thence clearly associated with contemplation. This remarkable function he considered as the engine behind the theatre of contingent speculations (Parmenides et al.), which subsequently gives considerable relevance to his acumen today. This presentation draws upon these hypotheses and investigates their consequences for our coming-to-terms with contemplation.

Bio: Reto Oechslin (born Switzerland 1955, lives Sydney) is a philosopher and logician. He holds a PhD from the University of Sydney and studied at the Universities of Geneva and Basel (Arts and Social Sciences). He is a member of the Swiss Socialist Party and the initiator of the platform stànza©.

Ogden, Steven G
Charles Sturt University

An Each-Way Bet: Foucault and Theology

Rightly, philosophers have been wary of theologians. In turn, theologians have been wary of Foucault. In recent years, however, a small number of theologians have begun to mine his rich vein of thought. Of course, Foucault rigorously critiqued the Church, but he was not avowedly anti-Church. Foucault once quipped “I have a very strong Catholic background, and I am not ashamed.” In general, it is difficult to categorize Foucault’s work, which seems fitting for a philosopher who eschewed categories. In particular, his relation to theology is hard to categorize. Arguably, it hinges on what I am calling his “meta-ethical gaze”, which shapes his work on subjectivity and freedom, resonating with the best of contemporary theology. In other words, there is something fascinating about the way he sees things. As such, across various contexts, Foucault affirms the critical tradition of thought as a form of resistance, upholds personal freedom, encouraging a self-transformation that benefits others, where the value and integrity of the human body is recognized. These Foucauldian truths transcend specific contexts, and reflect something of his meta-ethical gaze. Certainly, Foucault attempted to desacralise his work (History of Madness). Nonetheless, there are also theological sediments, which are embedded deeply in terms like spirituality and salvation (The Hermeneutics of the Subject). As such, the aim of this paper is not to make Foucault a theologian, let alone a practicing Catholic, but instead, it is to analyse the complex relationship between his work and theology, exploring both the limits and the possibilities.

Bio: Steven Ogden is an Anglican theologian. Former Dean of Adelaide, and Principal of St Francis Theological College Brisbane, Steven is now working in Fortitude Valley, thinking and writing about violence. His latest work is ‘The Church, Authority, and Foucault’ (Routledge, 2017).

Oota, Tadahiro
Kyoto University (Japan)
Compassion and Imagination by Schopenhauer

Schopenhauer finds the principle of ethics in Compassion (Mitleid). According to him, a behavior can be morally good only if it is motivated through the “immediate participation in the pain of others” (Schopenhauer, Ueber die Grundlage der Moral, §16), i.e. it is motivated immediately and intuitively by the pain of the others and to dissolve it. On the other hand, he mentions that all human behavior can be univocally determined only by his inborn character and the given motives (§ 20). From these presuppositions, he claims that moral behavior can be realized only by the immediate given cognition, i.e. not by any reflexive thought as abstract cognition. Hence, the moral behavior can be motivated by the “mere comprehending of concrete case” (§19) and its motive remains “only negative” (§17), i.e. it can be motivated only after the case happens, i.e. only once the pain is actualized. However, Schopenhauer sometimes mentions to the possibility that one morally behaves before the pain is actualized. E.g. as an example of moral behavior he gives an example of a man stopping to attack someone through the reflection to his possible pain in future. (§19) Then, how can moral behavior be motivated before the case happens? To resolve this problem, I will focus the role of “imagination” in Schopenhauer’s philosophy. According to him, while the imagination produces intuitive representations, it is distinguished from behavior and free from its principle.

Bio: Tadahiro Oota is a doctoral course student in the Faculty of Letters at Kyoto University in Japan. He is also a research fellow at the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. His specialty is in the area of 19th Century philosophy, especially Arthur Schopenhauer and Jakob Friedrich Fries.

O’Rourke, Josh
University of New South Wales

Hegel’s Concept of Religion

This paper discusses the relevance of Hegel’s thought to the subject of religion. Rather than focusing exclusively on Hegel’s explicit writings on this topic, I analyse sections of Hegel’s Logic and Phenomenology. I focus on Robert Brandom’s strongly inferentialist reading of Hegel, and following Paul Redding, argue that it is deficient in several key respects. These deficiencies are particularly apparent in regards to Hegel’s concept of religion. The strongly inferentialist interpretation cannot account for the way in which Hegel conceives the affective practises constitutive of religion to contribute to the broader structure of normative reason. The Hegelian corrective to strong inferentialism casts several issues in the contemporary philosophy of religion in a light different to that in which they are accustomed to appear; these include issues surrounding the status of religious knowledge claims and the conceptualisation of religious experience. The pragmatic Hegel that emerges here turns out to be very different from the common figure that appears in mainline philosophical and theological traditions. Since this common figure serves an important structural function in the self-comprehension of these traditions, Hegel’s relationship to them must be reconfigured. In gesturing toward such a reconfiguration, I argue that Hegel’s concept of religion may helpfully mediate some of the characteristic divergences between continental and analytic approaches to the subject, perhaps while avoiding the pitfalls respective to either. However, the legacy of Hegel’s richly historical thought still confronts those interested in subjects such as the relationship between religion and philosophy with many ambiguities. In conclusion, I trace some of these ambiguities, arguing that they are connected with deep ambivalences to be found in commonly held conceptions of the role of Christianity in Western culture.

Bio: Josh O’Rourke is a former UTAS graduate and PhD candidate at UNSW.

Peers, Chris
UNSW/Monash University

The Concept of the Genitive
This paper reports progress in my thesis about conceptions of the family in Plato and Hegel. My study is partly shaped by a curiosity about the possibility that the critique of patriarchy may have set aside, or even overlooked, the significance of the genitive grammatical procedure, for the production of metaphors about the family. In essence, the name “genitive” summarizes any attribution of a source, or of property relations, any form of origin for an object in a sentence. This is especially relevant for discussion of the family because the parent-child dyad is possibly the primary exemplar of genitive functions. The genitive procedure can be disclosed in any grammatical sequence that involves words (prepositions, prefixes etc) like “of”, sometimes, “with”, or even “among”. For example, “I am the child of my parents” relies on the genitive relationship between my parents and me. I am treating the genitive as a further permutation of the signifier-signified relationship, which, as thinkers like Lacan and Derrida have shown in exhaustive detail, purport to trace the meaning of a given word. Accordingly, a preliminary conclusion one could draw by dint of this connection, is that the meaning of the parent-child dyad would be submitted to deconstruction. The possibility that a child is only a child by way of the causal properties we naturally assign to the parent would be brought into question. This has specific relevance for my investigation of Hegel’s conception of the family, by which the family is able to think itself, and gain a speculative autonomy. While Hegel insists that the family is a patriarchal structure, he fails to justify the homology between male parent and child that this implies, even though he adopts Antigone as a crucial model for the female child. The paper provides an outline of my progress on this aspect of my thesis to date.

Bio: Chris Peers is Senior Lecturer in education at Monash University. He is undertaking a second doctorate on the conceptions of the family developed by Plato and Hegel.

Pemberton, Monte

The Meaning of Values in Australian Politics

In her ‘Australian Liberals and the Moral Middle Class’ Judith Brett points out that the Liberal Party started out as a party of virtues but has become a party of values. Brett’s explanation for this shift hinges on changes in the way the middle class practically and intellectually cast its relations with others. Her account also helps explain why values have achieved such a prominent place in political discourse across the political spectrum. In this paper I take Brett’s account as a starting point for an examination of values in the political imaginary more generally. With the help of Brett, Aristotle, Sartre, Lefebvre (and perhaps Baudrillard), I discuss virtue and value with an eye towards constructing a broad picture of the modern Australian political imagination, and more pointedly, Australian political memory.

Bio: Monte Pemberton studied philosophy at UTAS, Macquarie University, and the University of Queensland. His main research project concerns Australian political memory.

Pierdziwol, Annette

University of Notre Dame Australia

The fact of Pluralism and the Work of Sympathy

Much contemporary social and political philosophy is motivated by the observation that a basic feature of democracy is what Rawls called the fact of reasonable pluralism: “Citizens realise that they cannot reach agreement or even approach mutual understanding on the basis of their irreconcilable comprehensive doctrines.” Rawls and many who followed in his wake offer Kantian-inspired responses to this situation, emphasising the role of public reason. In this paper, I explore a Humean-inspired approach that instead emphasises the importance of feeling, sympathy and habit. I draw specifically on Hume’s ‘Treatise’ account of sympathy to develop this, and bring it into conversation with Nussbaum’s contemporary work on emotion, imagination and education.
Bio: Annette Pierdziwol is a Research Associate at the Institute for Ethics and Society at The University of Notre Dame Australia. She was awarded her PhD in Philosophy from the University of Sydney in 2010 and held a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh. Her research focuses on approaches to moral cultivation in the history of philosophy.

Power-King, Geoffrey
Murdoch University

Dostoyevsky, Mathematics and Meaning

In this paper I analyse Dostoyevsky’s representation of mathematics throughout his novels Notes from Underground and The Brothers Karamazov. I hope to show that in these novels we can see two dominant streams of ethics represented and critiqued. I will be reading Notes from Underground as a critique of utilitarianism and in particular how utilitarian and positivist ideas were used by Dostoyevsky’s contemporaries, such as Nikolai Chernyshevsky, in Russia. In this work Dostoyevsky shows how beliefs held by his contemporaries render common assumptions about ethical life, such as responsibility, incomprehensible. In The Brothers Karamazov, following Jan Patocka, I will read Ivan Karamazov’s rejection of God’s plan as a critique of the Kantian separation of God from the phenomenal world. Ivan is stuck with a “Euclidean” mind which can only deal with the phenomenal, Godless world that he cannot accept due to the suffering of children. Because of his inability to comprehend God’s justice Ivan must attempt to rethink Christianity and the organization of society as represented in Ivan’s poem “The Grand Inquisitor”. However, Dostoyevsky’s novels can be read as a critique of both of these positions. Literature returns us to the world of human meaning and experience in which mathematics is not primary. By returning us to this world we can see the possibility of the active love, taught by the elder Zosima in The Brothers Karamazov, as a grounds for a different way of living with other people.

Bio: Geoffrey Power-King completed his honours dissertation on Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov in 2013. He is currently working on a PhD in comparative literature and philosophy at Murdoch University on the works of Dostoyevsky.

Pryor, Rebekah
University of Melbourne

This is My Body: Exploring the Nexus Between Art Practice and Irigarayan Philosophy from a Religious Feminist Perspective

In this paper, I reflect on the influence of Luce Irigaray’s thinking on my art practice-led doctoral research. With consideration to her discussions of woman as mother and mystic in particular, I present a series of images that render anew the maternal body in divine terms, as: Performing the Icon, Lament, Sacred Canopy and Lullaby. These are assessed for their usefulness as artefacts of ‘love at work in thinking’: a condition of human becoming and ethical relation according to Irigaray’s schema. They are also critiqued in terms of Marie-José Mondzain’s philosophy of the image economy, wherein the image—since its iconic appearance in the early Christian church—is always symbolic and political, and always signifies a spiritual and economic occupation of space. My analysis leads to several key questions: what does it mean to make one’s own image? What kind of space do such images occupy or create? And, how can they aid our everyday recognition of sexuate difference and the divine nature of otherness that is, according to Irigaray and others, so critical to our becoming? In the end, I come to a proliferation of divine images that spring out from the generative nature of the body in relation-with an other, in the hope that such images contribute towards a new religious feminist aesthetic.

Bio: Rebekah Pryor is a Melbourne-based visual artist. Her recent practice-led PhD research interacted with the philosophy of Luce Irigaray to critique iconographic and theological
representations of the feminine in Christian visual culture and develop new motifs of the maternal body that contribute to an expanded religious feminist aesthetic.

Reynolds, Jack
Deakin University

Embodiment, Emergence and Naturalism

There has recently been something of a renaissance in philosophical attention to embodiment, including phenomenologies of the body and more empirically oriented proponents of embodied cognition. However, both of these “embodied turns” confront a dilemma pertaining to the strictures imposed by a commitment to naturalism, which to some extent comes with the territory in the sciences of embodied cognition but arguably also needs to be respected by phenomenologists of the body who are empirically-minded and leave behind a strictly transcendental (or neutral) construal. My diagnostic claim is that the arguments for irreducibility—of embodied know-how to knowledge—that, of Leib in regard to Korper, etc.—tacitly appeal to something like emergence. And whether it concerns properties or laws/principles, emergence is marked as more or less problematic (“spooky”) for orthodox (reductive) construals of naturalism. One strategy for avoiding the charge of “spookiness” is negative: to reject or undermine the conception of nature and naturalism that the charge itself presupposes, or, better, to commence a more positive project of phenomenologising nature that forges concepts more adequate to the experiential practice of science rather than its philosophical idealization by many forms of naturalism. This work is important, but arguably not sufficient on its own. Another strategy I will pursue here, however, is to elaborate less necessitarian construals of the arguments about irreducibility and the kind of emergence at stake.

Bio: Jack Reynolds is Professor of Philosophy at Deakin University

Richards, Harriette
Western Sydney University

Fashioning Melancholia: Applying the Concept of Melancholia to the Study of Fashion

The concept of melancholia has long been considered in relation to aesthetics and creative artistic labour. However, while the relationship between melancholia and aesthetic production is an established one, this “creative work,” including “the realm of arts [...] poetry, philosophy [and] statesmanship” (Klibansky et al, 1979: 17), has not yet included fashion. Drawing from my doctoral research, this paper not only reflects upon this absence of scholarly attention, but also redresses the lack. Based on an historical reading of melancholia and informed primarily by the work of Walter Benjamin (2009) and Sigmund Freud (2005), I conceive of melancholia as determined by two primary elements: a deep and fundamental ambivalence and a profound sense of loss. I contend that the qualities of ambivalence and loss that characterise melancholia also characterise fashion. Fashion “conceived of as a socially and culturally symbolic, creative practice” is quintessentially determined by ambivalence, reflecting the contrasts and contradictions of modern life. The ambivalence of the relationship of fashion to time, the body, and to death means that fashion, like melancholia, is also fundamentally determined by a profound sense of loss. In this paper, I argue that not only is the content of fashion frequently determined by an aesthetic of melancholia, but that the structural form of fashion is uniquely characterised by melancholia. Further to this argument, I also pose the question: how might philosophical concepts, theories and methods—such as melancholia—allow us to further the scope and broaden the horizons of fashion research?

Bio: Harriette Richards is a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. Her current research considers the cultural history of Aotearoa New Zealand through the sartorial representation of an aesthetics of melancholia. Recent work has
been published in Fashion, Style & Popular Culture the Australasian Journal of Popular Culture.

Richards, Kieran
University of Sydney

Deleuzo-Guattarian Cosmoses and the Cosmic

Within their collaborative texts Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari elaborate a notion of cosmoses as they are effectuated through an array of concrete assemblages: within the contexts of painting, music, and literature, as constructed by a range of figures, such as Paul Klee, Robert Schumann, and Henry Miller; through to vast movements of deterritorialisation within the animal kingdom, such as the long marches of the lobster or the ‘pilgrimages to the source’ amongst salmon. Generally speaking, Deleuze and Guattari abstract the cosmos in terms of two distinct conditions: a condition of closure—a closed cosmos; or, a condition of unfastening or opening—as an open cosmos or a cosmos that is opened. In this paper we investigate the Deleuzo-Guattarian abstraction of the cosmos and its concrete effectuations within their collaborative work. To do this we identify a number of cases in which Deleuze and Guattari invoke the cosmos, collaboratively and/or individually, in an effort to extract from those cases a set of attributes with which we can comprehend the adjectival sense of the ‘cosmic’. That is to say, to elaborate a material for the thought of an attribute, or a set of attributes, of the cosmos. Following this we turn to a moment when, in Mille Plateaux, Deleuze and Guattari characterise the modern figure of the artist as a ‘cosmic artisan’, and we explore the interrelation of these two terms through Deleuze and Guattari’s own formula: that to become an artisan is the only way to become cosmic.

Bio: Kieran Richards is a doctoral candidate in architecture at the University of Sydney, Australia. His research is organised around the work of Deleuze and Guattari and its intersections with literature and architecture.

Richardson, Janice
Monash University

Feminist Aesthetics and Conceptions of Self: Kant and Spinoza

Kant describes the thrill of the dynamic sublime as having two stages. The (male, white) viewer of art is initially threatened by the portrayal of the might of nature (such as storms) that could easily overpower him. However, he then recovers and recognises himself as a creature of reason, with the capacity to stand up to the might of nature, were his moral values at stake. As Christine Battersby illustrates, the experience of the dynamic sublime prompts this viewer to envisage separating himself from nature. In her radical re-working of Kant’s dynamic sublime, Battersby envisages a self and other that emerge gradually through relationality rather than through such a split between self and other and illustrates this in female artists’ portrayal of the sublime. Is it possible to map a Spinozist perspective analysis onto Kant’s dynamic sublime? As Genevieve Lloyd has convincingly argued, there is no equivalent to the sublime in Spinoza’s oeuvre. However, in the Ethics, Spinoza describes a transition from the “bondage of the passions” (inadequate knowledge) to that of adequate knowledge—a transition in which the use of imagination is, at least to some extent, replaced by reason. In this paper, I reframe the Kantian dynamic sublime by mapping its two stages onto the central transition from inadequate to adequate knowledge in Spinoza’s Ethics. At stake is a comparison between their different images of reason, selfhood, our relationship to otherness and nature, informed by a feminist perspective.

Bio: Associate Professor Janice Richardson, Monash University, is author of: Selves, Persons, Individuals (Ashgate, 2004), The Classic Social Contractarians: Critical Perspectives from Feminist Philosophy and Law (Ashgate, 2009) and Law and the Philosophy of Privacy (Routledge, 2016); journal articles in Feminist Legal Studies, Law and Critique, Angelaki, Minds and Machines.
Robinson, Scott
Monash University

The Impossible Body of Jacques Rancière’s Aesthetics: The Disappearing Dancer of Aisthesis and the Role of Desire in Aesthetic Experience

The sixth part of Jacques Rancière’s Aisthesis (2013), a masterful study of modern aesthetics, addresses Stéphane Mallarmé’s 1893 comments on the dance of Loïs Fuller. Fuller invents new ways the body can signify, which are interpreted by Mallarmé. Rancière declares the dance a ‘new art’, characterized by the curved ‘serpentine’ line and the body’s play of appearing and concealing created by use of a veil and electric light. These features have the virtue, for both Rancière and the critics he engages, of pure form that can signify freely. However, this virtue has the effect of minimizing Fuller’s artistic contribution and rendering her performing body secondary to the aesthetic experience. Critics referred to Fuller’s body in performance as ‘de-sexualised’, ‘unlocatable’, ‘relieved of the weight of its flesh’ and ‘immaterial’. By rendering Fuller’s dance immaterial, I will argue that Rancière neglects what is at stake in his own aesthetics, which is the meaning of the sensible. In his urgency to elevate this specific art to the status of idea and form, Rancière leaves the dancer out of her dance and renders the body of aesthetics an impossibly immaterial apparition. Noting previous discussions of this effect including Dana Mills’ recent work, I will analyse why Rancière may be insensitive to this problem by examining the role of desire in aesthetic experience as it is presented in Aisthesis. From this basis, I seek to clarify how Rancière conceives of the status of desire in aesthetic experience, specifically as present and yet suspended.

Bio: Scott Robinson is a PhD Candidate at the University of Monash, working in the field of aesthetics. His thesis will develop an account of aesthetic experience and the meaning of art for life by drawing on and connecting the work of Jacques Rancière, Stanley Cavell and Michael Fried primarily.

Rubin, Jon

The Individuation of Bodies and the Holenmerism of Minds in Spinoza’s Ethics.

In Spinoza’s Ethics, if the attributes of Thought and Extension have equal powers of acting and existing, but the attribute of Thought has the power of thinking, does this mean that the attribute of Thought enjoys a privilege? With the Ethics’ trajectory to the wise man and the intellectual love of God, there is plenty of evidence for this claim. I will be arguing against this. Any attempt to privilege the attribute of Thought ignores the role that the attribute of Extension plays in individuation. Ideas think, but bodies space/place. Spinoza tells us that the essence of my mind is constituted by the body that I am. Without this body, there is no ‘me’, nor would there be any way to tell if an adequate idea was mine. This is why the eternity of the ideas of a mind after the death of its body is not a personal immortality. But at the same time, Spinoza’s analysis of the passions always starts with the body, 3p13dem. The body and the attribute of Extension thus play a surprisingly knotted double role. On the one hand, they ground the possibility of any ethical transformation actually being my ethical achievement (through a power of individuation that the attribute of Thought does not possess). On the other hand, this individuality (and finitude, 4a1) of my body as a part of nature is also the reason for the existence of passions: to imagine is to have an idea of an affection of my body, 2p17s.

Bio: Jon Rubin taught the graduate program, ‘The Philosophy and Ethics of Mental Health’, for eight years in the Medical School of the University of Warwick, before moving to Australia. He now lectures for the MSCP most recently on ‘Spinoza and Politics’. His research is currently split between Spinoza and Deleuze.

Sankar, Anisha
Radicalized Dialectics in Benjamin and Fanon: on Ruptures of History and Race
The dialectical tradition has for a long time been safely harbored by colonial Eurocentric presumptions. The importance of a radicalized dialectics, as part of a broader project of epistemic decolonization, asserts itself in the face of global political stagnancy of combative struggle and conflict at levels of class, race and nation. These ‘frozen dialectics’ come at a time where the logic of democratic capitalism imbues the polis with convictions in formalized liberal emancipation. In response to this crisis, this paper reflects on an imagined dialogue between Frantz Fanon and Walter Benjamin through the radicalized dialectical thread that runs through the work of each. Their union in conceptualizing historical consciousness points to a moment in both: Fanon’s remark that racism is the suspension of history, and Benjamin’s idea of dialectics at a standstill. Fanon’s diagnosis of the Manichaean colonial reality is transcended only by his allusion to an arguably Messianic desire as conceived by Benjamin. What this contributes to reclaiming of dialectical struggle is a reassessment of the temporality that dictates dialectical reason, and serves to emphasise the Messianic nature of Fanon’s decolonial vision. To support this imagined dialogue I use the work of Jean-Paul Sartre and George Ciccariello-Maher. I argue that the challenges posed to a singular, teleological and determinist dialectic will serve as the foundation for reclaiming a dialectical methodology that considers the complexity, multiplicity and open-ended creative potential of dialectic ruptures.

Bio: Anisha Sankar is a Masters student in sociology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. I have a previous MA from Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Catalonia in political philosophy. My research interests are based on areas relevant to the project of epistemic decolonization. I work with postcolonial and decolonial thought, political and social theory, Marxism and the dialectic tradition.

Scott, Nicola

In the bin: Waste and Tyza Stewart’s ‘Institute of Maggot Art’

This paper examines the work of contemporary Australian artist, Tyza Stewart, taking Stewart’s multi-disciplinary exhibition, ‘Institute of Maggot Art’ (held as part of The Green Room emerging artist series at the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane in 2016), as case study. Drawing on queer theory, queer ecology, and discard theory, I present a reading of Stewart’s ongoing self-portraiture project as a potential site for thinking through capitalist progress narratives, and their dependency on the perceived separation of waste and value, the human and non-human, and the agent and the acted upon. Examining a multiplicity of bodies and spaces - recorded and painted, human and animal, individual and institutional – represented and/or occupied by Stewart, I suggest how these works expand and complicate the above categorisations by necessitating a perception of their relationship to gender, identity, and language. Referencing the writing of theorists such as Guy Schaffer, Jack Halberstam, Jane Bennett, and others, I argue that by animating the borders created between different forms of waste and the social realms that produce these, Stewart’s expanded approach to self-portraiture articulates the limitations and ambivalences of these categorizations, within the contemporary art institution and world beyond, while finding points of permeability and possibility for new understandings of identities, bodies, and agency.

Bio: Nicola Scott is a Brisbane-based artist, writer, and radio presenter. She graduated from the Queensland College of Art with a Bachelor of Fine Art, Honours (First Class) and previously produced the No Brow Art Show on 4ZZZFM Community Radio.

Sheaf, Daniel
Murdoch University

David Foster Wallace, Martin Heidegger and the Isolated Subject

In David Foster Wallace’s fiction, he presents the reader with a contemporary world where human beings are reduced to solipsistic monads whose thinking is caught-up in endless self-
reflection. Wallace’s fiction exposes the emptiness of recursive self-reflection and at the same time attempts to re-think what it means to be a ‘human being’ in the modern world. I will address Martin Heidegger’s discussion of human existence in order to illuminate and problematize the modern understanding of reflection and subjectivity exposed by Wallace’s fiction. I shall examine confluence of various processes of individualisation at work during the 1960s and 1970s and how these processes came to enforce a new form of individualism which merged with personal identity by the 1980s and which continues to inform our thinking today. Subsequently, the contemporary individual takes itself as an isolated object. Following Heidegger, I will show that the subject which takes itself as object presupposes a self-reflective distancing which is, ultimately, an impossible position based on a cultural-theoretical presupposition which we unquestioningly accept. I want to suggest that the notion of ‘personal identity’, as it is presented in neoliberal capitalism, relies on an ‘inward’ turn toward an isolated ego. This is based on the mistaken assumption that human ‘lived-experience’ can be reduced to some objective ‘state’, which can be reflected upon. In other words, in reflection, human lived-experience is supposedly reduced to an object isolated from the ‘outside’ world.

Bio: Danny Sheaf is currently a PhD candidate at Murdoch University. Danny’s research concerns a philosophical engagement with the fiction of David Foster Wallace. He is particularly interested in the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger and Jan Patočka as a way of engaging with contemporary issues.

Stapleton, Erin K
University of Melbourne

Rethinking Erotic Transgression

Georges Bataille writes that eroticism cannot exist without transgression, which for Bataille is configured around violation. In The Accursed Share, Bataille locates transgression in the marriage contract, where women’s bodies are subject to violation in service of the communication between men. However, as Foucault has observed, Bataille’s transgression also works by exposing boundaries. It is a movement across the edge, and an articulation of limit, and subjugation and violation of women is not a limit in culture. The violation of women’s bodies is the central point around which power relations, and cultural and linguistic relations are organised. It is the most sanctioned interaction our world owns. We consider it the most natural form of relation, and therefore, it cannot constitute transgression. In this paper, I will be arguing for an alternate conceptualisation of eroticism, that seeks to locate transgression not in the violation of one body by another, but, with reference to the work of Luce Irigaray, in forms of female sexuality that culture excludes.

Bio: Erin K Stapleton teaches in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. She completed her PhD with the London Graduate School at Kingston University in 2014.

Stendera, Marilyn
Monash University

Temporality, Phronesis and the Enaction of Meaning: Heidegger in Dialogue

The roles ascribed to phronesis in Heidegger’s early thought are varied and contested. The anglophone pragmatist tradition shaped by Dreyfus positions it as the unifying key that brings together Heidegger’s conceptions of practice, sociality and authenticity—an influential reading that still shapes how Sein und Zeit is read, especially those who approach phenomenology from starting points in the philosophies of mind, science and cognition. Other well-known readings focus on phronesis as a locus of tension in the early period’s crucial yet seemingly unstable account of temporality, or as an anchor for situating Heidegger both within and against Aristotelian and hermeneutic traditions. This paper will take up one of the common themes of these discourses—of phronesis as juncture, as a point of both pressure and intersection—and
argue that uncovering the full dialogical potential of Heidegger’s account here requires us to bring together the threads of purposiveness, temporality, virtue and historicity around which diverse interpretations have coalesced. Phronesis adds a vital depth to the way in which the early Heidegger sets out the inexorable connection of time and practice, one that is enlivened rather than undermined by tensions like those generated by Heidegger’s varying discussions of the Augenblick. Drawing out the shared structures of temporality, purposiveness and phronesis opens up a space for discourses as diverse as virtue ethics, the philosophy of biology, the philosophy of mind and contemporary cognitive science to become co-interlocutors of Heideggerian phenomenology in analysing how we enact and respond to meaning.

Bio: Marilyn Stendera’s research focuses on phenomenology, especially its conceptualisations of time and intersections with philosophies of mind/cognition; she’s also interested in virtue ethics, debates about content/representations, and the so-called analytic/Continental distinction. She recently received my PhD from Melbourne (on Heideggerian temporality and cognitive science); I’ve since been a tutor and RA.

Taheri, Amir and Chris L. Smith
University of Sydney

The Locus of Metaphysics or the Unmotivated Sign: From the Architecture of [L]anguage to the Language of [A]rchitecture

This paper focuses on a particular nexus of the philosophy of pragmatism and architecture. The nexus is the intense conjunction of the North American pragmatist Charles Sanders Pierce and the architect, educator and theorist Peter Eisenman. This paper will focus on Eisenman’s engagement with the idea of the unmotivated sign, and particularly his text ‘The Diagram and the Becoming Unmotivated of the Sign’ from the book Diagram Diaries (1999). Eisenman commences this paper with a quizzical account of Pierce’s semiotics. For Eisenman, it is the act of the indexical sign becoming unmotivated in relation to any number of physical and temporal referents that might open up new ways of creating and reading of architectural space. In order to make his case, Eisenman focuses on the semiotics of the diagram, influenced by a rather hybrid set of discourses in addition to the semiotic theory of Pierce. He would incorporate concepts from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and perhaps most intensely Jacques Derrida. Eisenman does so to propose another strategy of ‘reading’ and another kind of ‘writing’ (other than the default definition associated with the indexical sign). Eisenman arrives at an unmotivated indexical sign as one that is no longer defined by function and purpose or even geometric ordering and composition. It is a kind of indexical sign that requires the typical modes of interpretation such as geometry and even semiotics to become secondary, aiming to produce objects that have more to do with purely formal/spatial position(s), superposition(s) and, in his own words, ‘misreading(s)’. This paper will explore Eisenman’s version of the unmotivated sign in respect to one iconic house of the architect: House II from (1969-1970). Not content to see Eisenman’s manipulation of Pierce’s semiotics as an interdisciplinary foray, this paper will suggest the manner by which Eisenman’s deployment of Pierce may indeed foster a deeper appreciation of Pierce’s concepts.

Bios: Dr Chris L. Smith is an Associate Professor in Architectural Design and Techne in the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Sydney. Chris is concentrating upon an ARC* project focussed on the architectural expression of scientific ideals in bio-medical laboratories and a book soon to be published titled Bare Architecture: a Schizoanalysis (London, Bloomsbury: 2017).

Amir Taheri is a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Sydney. Amir is researching the links between the philosophy of language, the linguistic turn and the architecture of Peter Eisenman. His dissertation is titled; The Relationship between Diagram and Design Process in the work of Peter Eisenman: An Integral Semiotics Analysis of the Early Houses.
**Tarpey, Francis**  
La Trobe University

**Resistance, Utopian Desire and Fragility**

This paper explores both the strength and fragility of resistance and utopian desire as it comes up against a purportedly reconciled global present through reflecting on the Gezi Park Protests that took place in Turkey in the summer of 2013. Whilst protests falling under the moniker of Gezi occurred throughout 79 of Turkey’s 81 provinces and beyond, they began in Istanbul, in a park adjacent to Taksim Square where the “Monument to the Republic” stands. But Istanbul, a “cosmopolitan city” in a “modern democratic republic”, today seems in ruins. This time of terror is where I begin, before moving to a historical overview of the protests with particular focus on the beginnings and practices of the movement and victims of the clash between the state and the people. In order to contextualise the protests—a task more difficult than one might expect—I then move towards an exploration of Istanbul’s “place” in space and time as it relates to the geopolitical history of the development of democracy and the broader governmental practices of the present against which the protests appeared. Finally, we return to the protestors themselves and further explore their engagement with the dominant terms of the present. Through a discussion of their modes of affiliation and transgressive identification we can understand how the events of Gezi were performatively utopian, cracking the consistency of what passes for democracy today and rendering visible the already-existing intrusion of other modes of living and acting together (politically) into this supposedly self-sustaining present.

Bio: Francis Tarpey is a PhD candidate and casual tutor in Gender, Sexuality & Diversity Studies at La Trobe University. Their work focuses on gathering the haunting remains of various sites of resistance and utopian desire and mobilises them against a seemingly sovereign present committed to its own reproduction.

**Toiviainen Leila**  
University of Tasmania

**The Rapprochement of Aesthetics and Ethics in Nietzsche’s Philosophy**

Nietzsche wrote about aesthetics and ethics in a personal way not generally encountered in Western philosophy. He engaged with art as the thing that enriched and gave meaning to life more than anything else in human experience. He argued that because of the superiority of this standpoint life should be viewed as an aesthetic, rather than an ethical phenomenon because this artistic, expanded perspective better captures the complexities of life than a narrowly ethical outlook on how we should live. In this paper I examine the reasons for his claim that human lives are an integrated blend of both ethical and aesthetic phenomena, that these two perspectives are compatible and enrich each other. I will also investigate some arguments against a rapprochement between aesthetics and ethics, in particular those put forward by Marguerite La Caze in Generosity and Wonder (2013). My paper is in four parts: I first outline the chronology of Nietzsche’s life and works and then turn to three key ideas in his aesthetical-ethical philosophy that remain of interest today. These are the role of language in our ways of viewing the world, the importance of leadership in the promotion of positive arts and values and the significance of leisure for the development of an individual. I conclude that Nietzsche’s attempt at a rapprochement between aesthetics and ethics, while not entirely successful, nevertheless gives us an ideal worth striving for.

Bio: PhD on Nietzsche’s Zarathustra 2000, supervisor Marguerite La Caze. Currently adjunct researcher in philosophy, UTAS, member of editorial board of Nursing Ethics. Member of Australian Association for Professional and Applied Ethics.

**Turner, Kirk**  
Deakin University
The Illusions of Consciousness and The Prospect of Human Extinction

In the context of resistances to the historical ‘blows’ to ‘human self-love’ enumerated by Freud (Copernicus decentering the Earth; Darwin removing the barrier between humans and animals; his own efforts in showing how the unconscious subverts the supposed mastery of the conscious ego), Lacan’s early formulations and probings on the topic of subjectivity in his second seminar include, in a not uncharacteristic, but yet somewhat bizarre, digression, an envisionment of ‘science fiction’ involving the extinction of the entire human population and a recording device which continues to operate following the event. Specifically, Lacan questions what consequences this has for our understandings of consciousness (including subsequent philosophical objections); what ‘status’ the recording instrument would possess; and what a ‘repopulating’ society would make of the recorded images once they had learnt to access and, ostensibly, interpret them. In exploring this scenario, along with what Lacan describes as his ‘materialist definition of the phenomenon of consciousness,’ we will tease out exactly how he begins to separate subject, ego and unconscious; his definitions of the imaginary function and the mirror relation; his delineation of the ‘real object’ in terms of both real and imaginary space; and his ruminations on the possibility of objective as well as subjective illusions. What we will begin to appreciate is how the notion of the human becomes a psychical assemblage pieced together to experience a fragile unity. What the ‘limit’ example of extinction will make clear is the extent to which the material world is involved in reinforcing this.

Bio: Kirk Turner is currently a PhD candidate in the Philosophy department at Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia). His research concerns conceptual variations and the problematics of meaning in respect to the oeuvre of Jacques Lacan, specifically the development of his core notion of fantasy through his weekly seminar and enigmatic articles.

Učník, Lenka

Foucault’s care of the self as neoliberalist critique

In recent years, in part following the 2014 publication of Foucault and Neoliberalism, there has been some discussion concerning Foucault’s sympathies towards neoliberal ideologies. In this edited work Zamora suggests that Foucault was highly attracted to economic liberalism because he saw in it much less normative and authoritarian a form of governmentality than what was offered by the socialist and communist left. He especially saw in neoliberalism a ‘much less bureaucratic’ and ‘much less disciplinarian’ form of politics than that offered by the postwar welfare state. The main point of interest regarding Foucault’s neoliberal sympathies lies in a particular reading of his late 1970s and early 1980s lectures on governmentality and, to some extent, some positive comments Foucault about Hayek and Becker’s work. In this paper I want to argue that despite the possibility of some positive sympathies towards Hayek’s and Becker’s early, theoretical conceptions Foucault’s concerns are fundamentally opposed to the neoliberal model. Rather than focus on an imagined engagement between Foucault and modern neoliberalism I will look to Foucault’s last lectures on practices of the self and compare these with the neoliberalist account of the self. I will show that despite some superficial similarities regarding constant creation, or re-imagining, Foucault’s account of the self in these final lectures already holds the tools to critique the neoliberal model of self and society.

Bio: Having been awarded her PhD in Philosophy from UNSW for her thesis titled "Ethics, Politics and the Transformative Possibilities of the Self in Arendt and Foucault", Lenka has gone on to publish a paper of the same name. Her interest now is to explore the intersection between conceptions of self and political engagement to both critique and understand the current prevailing systems.

Utley, Fiona
University of New England

The Flavour of Mortality
This paper offers an analysis of the role of death in Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, through the lens of his developing understanding of institution of being. My first task is to outline his scattered references to death, highlighting their significance for understanding Merleau-Ponty’s claim that time is the very model of institution. Next, I discuss two specific claims made by Len Lawlor: that what prevents Merleau-Ponty from making death into a theme is the interpretation of the “barbaric principle” of nature as tranquility, and that despite this lacking of thematisation, for Merleau-Ponty, “life is able to institute itself only on the basis of ‘death’”. I argue that what is missing in Lawlor’s account is a distinct articulation of what has been referred to as the “strange form of temporality” we experience in confronting death. This leads to the final section of the paper where I present a reflection on the dread of death and the significance of this not only for Merleau-Ponty’s thinking of death, but for understanding institution of being. It is revealed to me that what is instituted is instituted by an anonymous self who I clearly am. As subjectivity in the face of my own mortality, I quake not at the thought of non-being, but in the presence of anonymous being and its power, its challenge to me.

Bio: Fiona Utley has a PhD in Philosophy and is a Senior Lecturer at the University of New England. She has published several articles and chapters on Merleau-Ponty and issues of trust, selfhood and intercorporeality.

van Rompaey, Chris

The Concept of Beauty in Alexander Baumgarten’s Aesthetica

Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-62) is best known for his use of the name ‘aesthetics’ to designate a field of study that has remained an important part of philosophy ever since. Integral to Baumgartian aesthetics is the idea of beauty, and the term appears frequently in the Aesthetica from the opening paragraph onwards. Defined as the ‘science of sensate cognition’, aesthetics involves among other things the ‘art of thinking beautifully’. But what does it mean to think beautifully? The position I adopt in this paper is that the relation of beauty to thought lies at the core of Baumgarten’s project, and that the elucidation of what is at stake here is crucial to any assessment of the ongoing relevance of his work. Some would argue that Kant’s third Critique has rendered any rationalist explanation of taste obsolete, and the prevalence of this view no doubt accounts for the fact that the Aesthetica remains untranslated into English. Others have sought to question subjectivity as the absolute ground of aesthetic judgement and see the re-examination of the pre-Kantian corpus as a potential corrective. I’ll be drawing on the early stages of a translation of the Aesthetica that I am currently undertaking to show that ‘thinking beautifully’ for Baumgarten involves subjective as well as objective processes and that Kant’s dismissal of his ‘futile’ attempt to provide a rational explanation of the basis of taste is overly harsh.

Bio: Chris van Rompaey completed a PhD in Literary Studies at Deakin University where he subsequently taught for a number of years. He recently began work on a translation of Alexander Baumgarten’s Aesthetica.

Voss, Daniela

Deakin University

Transindividuality and Technics

In the recently translated book On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects (1958, engl. 2017), Simondon develops the idea of a ‘transindividual technical relationship.’ In order to think this relation adequately, Simondon contends, one cannot take as the starting point human being as an individual; in other words, one cannot start with the thought of a human essence. Instead, Simondon offers a theory of individuation, or rather, of interlacing, pluriphased processes of vital, psychic, collective and technical individuation. Only in this way is it possible to think of a coupling between human beings and technical objects. The paper focuses on Simondon’s idea of
a transindividual technical relationship, while contrasting his optimistic view with Bernard Stiegler’s overall pessimism regarding our relationship with technical objects. It further argues that Stiegler, albeit the main heir of Simondonian thought, falls behind Simondon’s relational account of individuation.

Bio: Daniela Voss is Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation. She has published articles on the philosophy of Deleuze, Maimon, Spinoza and Simondon. She is the author of Conditions of Thought: Deleuze and Transcendental Ideas (EUP, 2013) and co-editor with Craig Lundy of At the Edges of Thought: Deleuze and Post-Kantian Philosophy (EUP, 2015).

Walker, Briohny
University of Tasmania

Precarious Time: The Problem of Futurelessness

I will argue that increased precariousness alters subjective experiences of time, and that this has profound ethical and political consequences. To experience heightened precariousness damages a subject’s ability to extend a concept of themselves in into the future. In doing so, precariousness disrupts capacities for plan making, and consequently, the development of political projects. What results is a sense of futurelessness that impacts identity coherence and political agency. To make sense of this, I will discuss distinctions and intersections between existential precariousness and political precarity, with reference to Judith Butler. Using this framework, I will investigate the specificities of contemporary Australian futurelessness, focussing on economic precarity and environmental precariousness. I will suggest that this sense of futurelessness is more than a form of confusion. Rather, it relates to the loss of imagined capitalist futures, such as those of constant growth, stable employment, home ownership and environmental stability. The work of Mark Fisher and Lauren Berlant is valuable in discussing the affective significance of this loss. A potential way forward can be found in “queer temporalities”. José Muñoz engages with conceptions of queer temporalities in his work on “queer futurities”, which he describes as “a realm of potential”. Jack Halberstam talks of failure and forgetting, suggesting that by breaking linages of information, we might also open up possibilities for change. I will engage queer temporalities to explore connections between time, agency and identity construction, seeking new ways of conceiving of, and drawing affiliations between, subjectivities across time.

Bio: Briohny Walker is a PhD student at the University of Tasmania in Philosophy and Gender Studies, with interests in feminist philosophy, queer theory, queer ecology and Anthropocene ethics. She completed her undergrad at the University of Queensland, and while in Brisbane co-founded Brisbane Free University.

Wallace, Christopher
Monash University

‘At the End There is the End’: On the Exhaustion and Ends of Place in Heidegger, Pippin and Another Benjamin

The paper will focus on three ways of thinking place. The first, the idealism of Robert Pippin, conceives of place as, in following Wilfrid Sellars, a ‘space of reasons’. What is an after effect of normative contestation within this space, which determines both the law and what figures in terms of such law. Place is for Pippin ideal in the sense that thinking determines both itself and its other, which suggests a totality in which consciousness, as the transcendental unity ofapperception, is primary and absolute. Heidegger, conversely, in his attempt to both counter the absolutism of all and any Hegels, and maintain a ‘standing reserve’ that informs the possibility of sustenance/transition, draws a distinction, in the work of art lectures, between ‘earth’ and ‘world’. In a process that Heidegger names the ‘worlding of the world’, the ‘world’ figures via a confrontation with the ‘earth’ in which the latter, despite only figuring in the
former to the extent that it is ‘worlded’, nonetheless withdraws in that very process, which establishes the finitude of any ‘world’ and the logical priority of the ‘earth’. A third thinking of place, as the now, is found in the work of Andrew Benjamin. For Benjamin, the ‘pure danger’ that is climate change renders each and every beginning, as drawn from an end, suspect, by denying that the end is the end. Consequently, the thinking of place that belongs to both Pippin and Heidegger suggest forms of nostalgia in which the ‘myth of the given’ remains at play as either a ‘space of reasons’ or ‘earth’. Both hold open and onto what no longer is and, in turn, evince a logic of continuity that informs a collective failure to respond to climate change. Both positions, in maintaining the possibility of a beginning in every end, are thinkers of the best (or at least not the worst) rather than the worst. The paper will work through all three positions, and the consequences that can be drawn, for both philosophy and human kind, from their differences.

Bio: Christopher Wallace recently completed a PhD on the politics of time in Kant and Hegel at Monash University under the supervision of Andrew Benjamin.

Walls, Rachel
Charles Sturt University

Art and Absurdism

The Venice Biennale is a honey-pot for culture vultures. This year’s offerings both within and outside the framing of the Biennale paid homage to the audience, breaking the fourth wall to wink and nudge – and destroy the artifice of high art. This has been almost universally undertaken through absurdist comedy, manifest under the theme of ‘fake news’. Artificial events, histories, and futures roll together with truths that are difficult to pick apart. This writing will focus on the subjugation of ‘the real’ via a rainbow of hackneyed deus ex machina-style interventions: the artist sneaks past the art establishment to tell shitty jokes to a tired public. Ultimately, this interrogation of the value of art is provocative, and highly valuable in an era of severe economic austerity. From formal pavilions to dramatic exhibitions, this paper will explore the silly side of offerings in Venice in 2017.

Bio: Rachel Walls is an artist and lecturer at Charles Sturt University, where she teaches into Television Production and Animation programs. Her work outside the tertiary domain currently sits within the realm of abstract animation, site-specific installation, and environmental projection.

Williams, Anita
Murdoch

The Neoliberal and Psychologised Subject

Chandler and Reid (2016, 3) state the neoliberal subject is ‘a subject that is permanently called upon to live in accordance with [the] unknowability’ of the world. In this paper, I will argue that the neoliberal subject is the psychologised subject and, as such, has a longer historical trajectory than neoliberalism. There are two important aspects of the neoliberal self. First, as Chandler and Reid point out, the subject cannot know the world, this stems from our Cartesian heritage. Second, arising from the modern psychological tradition, the subject cannot know herself. The neoliberal subject leads to a problem: at the same time as being solely accountable for her own problems, she is unable to solve the difficulties she faces. The neoliberal and psychologised answer is the same: subjects need to purchase and develop techniques to master the self. Through various techniques, the subject is taught to adapt to the world as it is given and shy away from critique, which is positioned as pessimism. In order to bolster what little critical space there is, I will conclude by suggesting that we need to find common ground between the diverse and proliferating critiques of the neoliberal and psychologised subject, which might be done by reflecting upon the tradition of thinking from which our contemporary ideas sprang.
Bio: Anita Williams is an Adjunct Lecturer in Philosophy at Murdoch University, Perth, Australia. Her research questions the increasing psychologisation of thinking and experience; drawing on the phenomenology of Jacob Klein, Patocka, Husserl and Heidegger. She is the author of Psychology and Formalisation: Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology and Statistics (2017).

Willis, Anne-Marie

A Design and Philosophy Dialogue

What can Philosophy bring to Design? What can Design bring to Philosophy? Designed things fill our worlds, they are our worlds; so thoroughly are we modernised, affluent people, nested within the designed, within the naturalised artificial, that we would not survive if returned to the places of dwelling of our early human ancestors. If Philosophy is taken as enquiry into existence, and if the conditions of existence are increasingly designed, then ‘design’ should be a major topic of philosophical investigation. In fact, design, named as such, is rarely engaged by philosophers. Yet designed things and designing practices have been addressed in philosophy, past and present, indirectly or without naming them as such. Viewing the situation from the other side, i.e., design’s engagement with Philosophy, is a different story, in which ideas from philosophy, as well as from Cultural Theory, Anthropology, Psychology, Mathematics, Biology and many other science and humanities disciplines are serendipitously taken up by designers, and selectively appropriated by design scholars. This paper will attempt a dialogue between design and philosophy, addressing three inter-related contexts: first, the worldly pervasiveness of design; second, the state of thinking on design ‘from the inside’, and third, ‘the conditions of now’ that are unable to be addressed by current thinking and practices of designing. The paper will argue for the need to develop ‘Design-Philosophy’ and consider which which Philosophies resonate with design and the designed, including reference to the work of Heidegger, Levinas, Bruno Latour, Isobel Stengers, Tony Fry and Bernard Stiegler.

Bio: Anne-Marie Willis is a design theorist, and most recently Head of Design Theory at the German University in Cairo. She is a co-founder of the journal Design Philosophy Papers, and editor of the forthcoming Design Philosophy Reader (Bloomsbury 2018). She is currently based in Launceston, Tasmania. She has published books and papers on cultural theory and visual culture, and held lecturing positions at several Australian universities.

Wise, Gianni
University of Sydney

Realism and Truth: Victims of a Met-Reality in Cinema and Video-Art

This paper examines the emergence of cinematic style in recent video installation art. It charts the emergence of cinéma vérité as a representation of reality and the movements towards the adoption of a cleaner cinematic style in recent video art, documentary and cinema production. In doing so it argues that meaning itself is lost in a meta-reality. It does so through an explication of the video production of the artist Richard Mosse, The Enclave (2013), set in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I question whether Mosse’s installation encourages a deeper reflection on the assumed ‘truthfulness’ of photographic and filmic representations of conflict by artists. Can this form of aesthetically produced cinematic production can actually bring the viewer closer to the ongoing horror and suffering of the Congolese people. I propose that meaning is in danger of being lost by the mediated image beneath high production values and clever editing. Paradoxically the very perfection and seamlessness of the digital image may hide or suppress deeper meanings. Central to this is the question of ‘realism’ and whether it can be documented. It is suggested that this realism has suffered further in contemporary digital art and film. As Jean Baudrillard has argued, the plethora of competing imagery causes an implosion of the representation of the actual event into hyperreality. Ways for artists to work are offered through an examination of Jacques Rancière’s proposal for an affective politicised
art practice -- one that avoids the pitfalls of a didactic critical position that realism can produce in favour of rupture and ambiguity. I do so through a discussion of Harun Farocki’s work.

Bio: Gianni Wise was conferred his PhD, SCA, USYD, 2017. His thesis title was Paranoid Fixations: art and political discourses since 9/11. His research interests include Art Cultural Theory, Art and Activism, Critical Art Practices, Art and Production of Post-capitalist Subjectivity, Contemporary French Philosophy. He has presented in a number of contexts and in international online journals. He is a practicing installation artist with an extensive exhibition history.

Zabbarjadi Sar, Hora
University of Queensland

A Husserlian Analysis of the Horizon-Structure of Experience in Case of ‘Hermeneutical Injustice’ and ‘Epistemic Marginalization’

The notion of epistemic injustice, developed by Miranda Fricker (2007), is a situation in which the social experiences of the powerless are not probably integrated into collective understandings of the social world, and as result that specific group are unfairly disadvantaged as participants in a collective form of life. But in in its very core, both types of epistemic injustice, testimonial and hermeneutic injustice, have identity-constructive power in common. As the primary harm of hermeneutical injustice, the affected subject suffers from a hermeneutical lacuna in situating and making sense of their social experiences. Husserlian phenomenology as a method to study consciousness as experienced from the first-person perspective, enables us to reflect on the ways we experience things in the surrounding world. This paper aims to analyze the fundamental structure of experience of hermeneutical harm. Drawing upon Husserl’s (1973) notion of ‘horizon-structure of experience’ or perception and its intersubjective status, I intend to explain how ‘the subject of social understanding’ as a participant of a shared world-horizon requires an orientation, in order to thematise the world itself as a life-world for herself. This orientation is the outcome of the intersubjective triangulation of self-other and the world. In other words, it is the contents and meanings of our experience that represent things around us, all extant in space and time. Doing so, I can reflect more explicitly on Fricker’s suggestion, on how hermeneutical injustice is considered as a ‘harm in one’s essential attributes of personhood’ (Fricker, 2007, p.58). In this manner, epistemic fairness is not just a virtue, but intrinsically is ‘a priori’ for the existential and ontological constitution of subjectivity at a transcendentals intersubjective level.

Bio: Hora Zabarjadi Sar, was born in Tehran, Iran in 1981. She received her B.A. degree in Continental Philosophy from Allame Tabatabayee University, Iran, in 2005. After moving to Australia, she is awarded MA and then MPhil in Education from Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia in 2011 and 2016 respectively. Now she is doing her PhD, focusing on Husserlian phenomenology at University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.

Zahra, Sameema
University of Queensland

Risking Life vs. Giving Life: Revisiting Simone de Beauvoir

"...it is not in giving life but in risking life that man raises himself above the animal; this is why throughout humanity, superiority has been granted not to the sex that gives birth, but to the one that kills.’(Beauvoir, 2011, 76) Beauvoir calls it the key to understanding female oppression that she is the sex that gives life and not the one that risks and superiority lies with the latter. The reason behind this is that superiority is granted on the basis of values in the human realm and not on the grounds of service to the species. The question is how are values given in the human realm; what is valued more and why? Beauvoir’s answer is through the concept of risk. It is through risk that values are created because risk leads to transcendence. But what do we mean by risk? Can any kind of risk create values? Or does risk involve risking something
fundamental to life or maybe life itself? Above all are there multiple ways of taking risk and are they all equally capable of bringing transcendence? This paper will discuss what entitles any action to be counted as risk and why, according to Simone de Beauvoir, motherhood or giving life is excluded from the realm of risk. It will question this exclusion and ask if there is any possible way in which motherhood can be lived as a risk? I will argue that in a non-patriarchal society motherhood can become a choice and can create values and thus be equated with risk.


Bio: Sameema Zahra is doing her PhD in philosophy in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, University of Queensland. Her research area is phenomenology and existentialism. She is working on violence and its role in subjectivity. She has done her Masters and MPhil in philosophy from India. Her research interests include existentialism and phenomenology, feminism, ideas of social and political justice specially with an understanding and respect for diversity and differences. She also has a very keen interest in literature, Urdu and English, and how philosophy is expressed best in works of poetry and fiction.