

The International Merleau-Ponty Circle

December 2017 Newsletter

The 42nd Annual Meeting of the International Merleau-Ponty Circle was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, November 2-4, 2017, on the lovely University of New Mexico campus. The conference theme was “The Significance of Place” and the Conference Director was Professor Ann Murphy, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of New Mexico who also hosted us at Fordham University’s Lincoln Center campus in New York City in 2012. Twenty-four presentations were delivered over the three days to 59 registered participants hailing from Canada, Australia, and the United States. The first of two keynote addresses was given by Gayle Salamon, Associate Professor of English and the Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies at Princeton University. Her paper was entitled “Everywhere and Nowhere: Phenomenological Anonymity and Transgender Comportment in Public Space.” Rosalyn Diprose, Professor of Philosophy at the University of New South Wales was our second keynote speaker. She presented: “Speaking and Hearing of Place: Merleau-Ponty and Sound Making Sense of the World.”

The M. C. Dillon lectureship is awarded annually to the best graduate student conference paper submission chosen by the conference director(s) together with the General Secretary, Associate General Secretary, and co-editors of *Chiasmi International: Trilingual Studies Concerning Merleau-Ponty's Thought*. The 2017 annual Martin C. Dillon Memorial Lecture, “Poietic Transspatiality: Merleau-Ponty, Normativity, and the Latent *Sens* of Nature,” was given by Martina Ferrari, Philosophy, University of Oregon. She also won the Dillon prize in 2015 for her previous paper, “The Immemorial Time of Gender: Merleau-Ponty’s Polymorphic Matrix of Original Past” which she presented at Worcester Polytechnic University. The honorarium for the lecture is made possible through the generous contributions of Circle members to the M. C. Dillon Endowment Fund. The winning M. C. Dillon paper will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Chiasmi International*.

We are very pleased to announce a new, extremely generous, annual donation to the M.C. Dillon fund from Joanne (Joey) Dillon that will fund the Saturday Business Lunch for all graduate students who appear on the annual conference program, the end-of-conference Banquet for the graduate students who present papers, and the annual fee for the International Merleau-Ponty Circle website: <https://merleauponty.org/> We hope to be able to thank Joey in person at a future IMPC conference! Donations to the M.C. Dillon Fund can be made on our website. Checks can also be made out to the International Merleau-Ponty Circle and sent to: Gail Weiss, 6713 N. 25th St., Arlington, VA, 22213, USA.

The conference program included an invited talk by our 2016 conference director, Rajiv Kaushik of Brock University: “Light and Dark: Waking and Sleeping: Merleau-Ponty and Heraclitus,” an invited talk by Associate General Secretary, David Morris, of Concordia University on “Merleau-Ponty and Mexica Ontology: Time as Templacement” and concluded with an invited talk by David Abram, Alliance for Wild Ethics entitled: “Reflections on the Perception of Place.”

We also held our second graduate student mentoring session on the job market over a pizza lunch on Friday. It was organized by our conference director, Ann Murphy, and was led by Whitney Howell (Lasalle University), Laura McMahon (Eastern Michigan University), Jennifer McWeeny (Worcester Polytechnic Institute), and Shiloh Whitney (Fordham University). We are very grateful to Whitney, Laura, Jen, Shiloh, and the graduate students who attended for participating in this session. We are looking forward to continuing the Friday graduate student mentoring lunch tradition in future years.

At the Saturday Business Meeting, Talia Welsh presented important information regarding the 43rd annual conference, which will be held at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga from November 8-10, 2018. The theme of the conference will be “The Normal and the Abnormal,” taking its inspiration from Merleau-Ponty’s extensive interdisciplinary research and his attention to the subtleties of embodiment. Jenny Slatman, from Tilburg University in the Netherlands will be one of the keynote speakers. The other keynote will be announced at a later date. Paper submissions directly pertinent to the conference theme are particularly encouraged, but papers on any area of current research in Merleau-Ponty studies will be considered for inclusion on the program. Completed papers will be given strong priority. The deadline for paper and panel submissions is **June 15, 2018**. Paper submissions are limited to a maximum of 4,500 words/30 minutes reading time. Please format papers for anonymous review and send with a cover letter to conference director Talia Welsh at mpc2018chattanooga@gmail.com.

Additional information regarding the 2018 conference can be found at the new 2018 IMPC conference website: <https://www.utc.edu/philosophy-religion/merleau-ponty.php>

At the business meeting, we also voted to accept two pending invitations for the 2019 and 2020 conferences. Shiloh Whitney will host the 44th conference of the Circle in fall 2019 at Fordham University in New York City on the theme: “Affect, Emotion, Feeling.” Don Landes will host the 45th conference on the theme: “The Phenomenology of Perception: 75 Years Young” at the University of Laval in Quebec City in fall 2020. We will share more details about the 2019 and 2020 conferences as soon as they become available. We also discussed the possibility of meeting either at Penn State Harrisburg under Glen Mazis’ directorship in 2021 or at Emory University where Susan Bredlau will serve as conference director. Jack Reynolds has also offered to host us in 2022 at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. This latter proposal was met with a great deal of enthusiasm though we agreed that we will need to be flexible with the dates for an Australia conference given the great distance, time, and expense involved in getting there for many of our members. Our Assoc. General Secretary, David Morris, has designed a survey so that we can get a better sense from our membership of: 1) what dates would be best for a 2022 Melbourne conference and 2) whether the 2019 IMPC Conference Director, Shiloh Whitney, needs to reserve rooms for participants at a NYC hotel or whether conference participants are more likely to make lodging arrangements on their own. If you hope to attend either of these conferences, please provide us with your feedback on these issues.

Here is the link to the survey. Thank you, in advance, for your input!

<https://form.jotform.com/73244510291247>

Though we have a wonderful line-up for the next few years, we encourage those of you who are interested in serving as a future conference organizer to contact the General Secretary, Gail Weiss (gweiss@gwu.edu), or Associate General Secretary, David Morris (David.Morris@concordia.ca) to learn more about the process. As we announced at the business meeting, we are currently beginning the final year of our initial three-year term in these positions. We are both willing to serve as the IMPC General Secretary and Associate General Secretary for another three-year term (2018-2021), and we will also be including a call for nominations (including self-nominations) for these positions with the 2018 conference program announcement this summer. Nominees willing to serve will be asked to submit a biographical statement of interest that will be sent out prior to the 2018 meeting.

On behalf of this year's participants, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to Prof. Murphy, conference director extraordinaire! Ann Murphy was a superb host and her seasoned skills as a second-time IMPC conference organizer were clearly on display. She put together a wonderful program that included extremely creative and thought-provoking responses to the conference theme, "The Significance of Place." We all felt fortunate to be able to discuss place in such a beautiful space: the gorgeous Bobo Room in the Hodgkin Hall Alumni Center on the University of New Mexico campus. We especially appreciated Ann's reminders to stay hydrated as we adjusted to the high altitude in Albuquerque as well as the liberal supply of water that was provided for us to drink throughout the conference (note: we went through six and half cases of water in three days)! We also enjoyed the spectacular views from the Apothecary rooftop bar during the opening night reception at the Central Parq Hotel and our delicious final banquet at Zacatecas Tacos and Tequila. The company, the food, the drinks, and the service at Zacatecas were all outstanding, and the banquet offered the perfect ending to three stimulating days of discussion!

We are especially grateful to the University administrators, faculty, and units that made this year's conference possible including: the UNM Office of the Provost, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Philosophy Department. We are also indebted to the UNM student volunteers who helped to make the conference such a grand success: Haley Burke, Duncan Cordry, Cara Greene, Kylie Musolf, Mariah Partida, Justin Pearce, Brendan Rome, and Mike Russo. A final special thanks is in order for the numerous behind-the-scene duties performed by the Philosophy Department Administrator, Mercedes Nysus, and the UNM Alumni Office Administrative Assistant, Kathie Scott.

Please consider submitting a paper (or volunteering to moderate a session) for the 2018 conference at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga next November. We look forward to seeing many of you there next year!

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year,

Gail Weiss, General Secretary

David Morris, Associate General Secretary