WHAT IS NEW AT CCPP

Seminar Series in July:
» On July 29 Nikolas Kompridis presented a paper at the CCPP Seminar Series: “Cosmopolitanism, Provincialism, Pluralism.”

Book Launch:
» On July 28 Danielle Celermajer (University of Sydney) launched Ethics and the Politics of Writing in Hannah Arendt, edited by Anna Yeatman, Phillip Hansen, Magdalena Zolkos and Charles Barbour (Continuum, NY, 2011).

She was joined by a panel of three of the book editors: Anna Yeatman, Magdalena Zolkos and Charles Barbour.

ACADEMIC EVENTS:
PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS, CONferences

Kelly Dombroski

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Simon Dougherty
» Presented at the Students of Sustainability Conference in Albury/Wiradjuri Country 6-10 July, organized by the Australian Student Environment Network. He spoke on a ‘Theories of Change’ panel about anarchist praxis. The conference was also attended by Jack Isherwood; Ethan Miller (who did a workshop on ‘Building a Solidarity Economy: Ideas and Strategies for Grassroots Economic Organising’); Hermann Ruiz; Anne O’Brien (who led a workshop on white privilege). Jack and Anne helped make the trip possible through the UWS Student Sustainability Group. Anne and Ethan performed musically as a band.

Katherine Gibson
» Presented an invited keynote lecture at the Institute of Australian Geographers Conference, University of Wollongong, July 4-6, entitled ‘Sustaining places: disclosing new development pathways’.

Nicholas Kompridis
» Has organized a presentation by Professor Lewis Gordon (Temple Univ) to speak at CCPP under the auspices of SPTW and CCPP on Africana Political Thought on August 10. Professor Gordon is a Fanon and CLR James specialist, and a major figure in the resurgence of Africana Philosophy.

Tim Rowse
» Delivered the Australian Anthropology Society’s Distinguished Lecture for 2011 in the Fred Alexander Theatre, State Library of Western Australia, Perth, on 4 July. His topic was ‘Themes in the History of Indigenous Political Thought’. He then participated in the four day conference that ensued, ‘Knowledge and Value in a Globalizing World’, hosted by the Department of Anthropology at the UWA. He was a speaker in the conference panel ‘Dichotomous Identities’ on 7 July.

NON-ACADEMIC EVENTS, MEDIA, POLITICS & ACTIVISM

Lyn Carson
» Carson is part of a team (with Straight Talk), which successfully tendered to deliver deliberative forums in Western Sydney within its Water in the Landscape program (a WSROC program funded by Environmental Trust). Dallas Rogers (who has been doing research assistance at CCPP) will be a member of the governance committee with oversight of the process. Total funding for the project is $330,000 (research consultancy funds to CCPP $26,000).

» The Museum of Democracy (Old Parliament House, Canberra) has launched its installation of the new Living Democracy exhibition which features an interview with Carson. It is now open to the public.

» Carson facilitated small group discussion at a large-scale event convened by CSIRO. These public deliberations enable citizens to discuss and build their understanding about climate change and clean energy technologies. Mirjam Van Der Heide came along as an observer and helped with registration. Valeria Pashkova participated in small group discussions.
ACADEMIC PROJECTS

Nikolas Kompridis

» His project with Chris Wiseman took a few more steps forward during his stay in Canada. They are now working on four films of 40-45 minutes in length, each of which will be dedicated to the exploration of a particular theme connected to the overall question of what it means to be a human being: 1) human/post-human; 2) the human/animal; 3) what is left of the “human” in the severely cognitively impaired; 4) the various efforts to identify some non-Western humans as less than human, with particular focus on indigenous peoples. Eventually the four films will be joined into one.

Magdalena Zolkos

» Participated in the meeting of the Centre for the History of Violence at the university of Newcastle 18-19 July. She was part of a group of over 30 researchers (6 from UWS) working on representations, history and theory of violence in order to discuss the possibly of applying for ARC centre of excellence in 2013.

AWARDS, DISTINCTIONS AND ACCOLADES

Katherine Gibson

» On behalf of J.K. Gibson-Graham, Katherine accepted the Australia-International Medal awarded by the Institute of Australian Geographers “in recognition of her outstanding contribution, as an Australian-American geographer, to the advancement of geography world-wide”.

Iain Hay, President of the IAG presents Katherine Gibson with the Australia-International Medal

POSTGRADUATE NEWS

» The Postgraduate Friday Lunch organized by the Candidate Support Network has officially started and included three meetings: on July 15 Gerda Roelvink spoke on ‘Writing a PhD Thesis’; on July 22 Brett Bowden spoke on ‘Writing a PhD Thesis’; and on July 29 Kelly Dombroski spoke on the topic ‘surving the CoC’.
Nikolas Kompridis
» Has sent off the page proofs for the author/critics exchange on Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future. It will appear in the October issue of Philosophy and Social Criticism (Vol. 37. 8).

Magdalena Zolkos

Kelly Dombroski
» Started a full-time fixed-term position at Macquarie last week, as a Lecturer in Human Geography (a 6 month contract). She is convening a large first year course called Geographies of Globalisation, and has a lot of support for teaching, tutoring, and marking, so should be able to spend at least 2 days a week on her thesis still!

» SHUT UP AND WRITE sessions at Peppertree Cafe, Bankstown on Tuesdays from 9am to 11am are going well. So far only students have come but staff welcome too. Peppertree Cafe is a Humanity Project social enterprise run by the Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service.

Abstract
Jonathan Littell’s novel Les Bienveillantes was published in France in 2006, winning prestigious literary prizes, and its German and English translations appeared in 2008 and 2009, respectively. However, the literary recognition of this novel and its commercial success have been inseparable from controversies, if not a public outrage. These were due to the particular structure of representation in Les Bienveillantes, i.e. the perspective of a Nazi officer, a fictional figure of Max Aue, who participated in SS-Sonderkommando massacres in Poland, Ukraine and Caucasus. In this chapter I propose a reading of Les Bienveillantes and its provocative effects that positions the novel at the junction of (a) patterns of inquiry explored with contemporary Holocaust literature and (b) the concept of trauma and ethics of witnessing. I argue that this novel speaks to two interconnected themes in literary approaches to the study of mass killing and mass trauma. The first one is idea of apocalyptic community understood in terms of destruction of any forms of socio-political and ethical togetherness. At the level of individual psychic fantasy life, this means that specific to Max Aue is a particular structure of desire, or a dream, that animates his totalitarian (and totalizing) actions and obsessions. The second theme is the close semantic association between the experience of trauma and the proximities of/to death and dying. In Les Bienveillantes the idea of “death” is not a marker of a biological “end of life,” and is not in any definite sense oppositional to “living,” but signifies complex pattern of figurations of the perpetrator, Max Aue, as an ethical witness.