

## International Merleau-Ponty Circle

### Fall 2011 Newsletter

1 November 2011

The Thirty-Sixth Conference of the International Merleau-Ponty Circle was held at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, USA, September 15-17, 2011. The Conference Director was Prof. Susan O'Shaughnessy and the conference's primary theme was "Flesh, Truth, Sacred Life." There were twenty-one individual papers presented and approximately fifty registered participants with additional local faculty and students attending. Keynote lectures were given by Dr. Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, École Normale Supérieure/Archives Husserl de Paris on the topic of "Merleau-Ponty's Critique of 'Explanatory Theology,'" and Prof. Richard Kearney, Charles B. Seelig Chair of Philosophy, Boston College on the topic of "The Sacred: a world beneath the world." The full program is posted at the Archive link on the International Merleau-Ponty Circle website: [www.uri.edu/artsci/phl/impc](http://www.uri.edu/artsci/phl/impc).

The sixth annual Martin C. Dillon Memorial Lecture was given by Keith Whitmoyer, New School for Social Research, titled "Merleau-Ponty and the Permanent Dissonance of Being: The Temporal Extension of the Transcendental Field in *Phenomenology of Perception*." The session was introduced and moderated by Prof. Lawrence Hass, Austin College, TX. 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 honorarium for the lecture is made possible through the generous contributions of Circle members to the M. C. Dillon Endowment Fund. Beginning with this year's conference, fall, 2011, the winning M. C. Dillon paper will be published in *Chiasmi International*.

Susan O'Shaughnessy did a magnificent job organizing this conference beginning from months of planning, fundraising, creation of the conference website and online registrations, and communications with the General Secretary, Associate General Secretary, and membership. All of these pre-conference matters were accomplished with meticulous and prompt attention to detail. The Morrie Jones Conference Center on the Concordia College campus was a wonderful facility for the meetings and throughout the conference, the technology was flawless thanks to the care and skill of Prof. Bryan Luther, Concordia College. Paper abstracts were provided along with the conference program and, for the first time, many conference papers were made available to all registrants on a USB flash drive. Welcome greetings were made by Provost Mark Krejci and Dean Jim Aageson, Concordia College. Sessions ran on schedule and yet each day maintained an atmosphere of warmth and cordiality typical of the spirit of the Circle. Throughout the conference Susan and her many student helpers were wonderful hosts: calm, quick-thinking, and graceful as they attended to all the many details that must be managed in the course of a conference from transportation to refreshments and hospitality.

On Friday afternoon, a special music recital was performed on the theme of "Merleau-Ponty and Early 20th Century French Music" in the Christiansen Recital Hall, Hvidsten Hall of Music, Concordia College. The lead performer was Tim Isley, Chapel Hill, NC, long-time member of the Circle, performing on the harp. He was accompanied by Concordia College music faculty: Amy Mercer, piano; Deb Harris, flute; and, Russ Peterson, bassoon. The program included three pieces by Claude Debussy with additional musical selections from André Jolivet and Carlos Salzedo. Tim Isley introduced the program with remarks on Merleau-Ponty and music and provided additional oral program notes as the recital unfolded. The membership expresses its deep appreciation to Tim for his knowledge, talent, and preparation and for a wonderful recital.

The membership also expressed its very deep appreciation to Prof. Susan O'Shaughnessy at the Saturday business luncheon and again at the conference banquet Saturday evening. Indeed, the International Merleau-Ponty Circle is extremely grateful to her, her husband Bryan, and to the Concordia College students for their hard work to create this wonderful conference. We are also grateful to the offices and administrators who supported their efforts: Dr. William Craft, President of the College; Dr. Mark Krejci, Provost and Dean of the College; and, Dr. James Aageson, Dean of Arts and Sciences.

At the business luncheon, election of officers was held as required by the By-Laws. Prof. Galen A. Johnson, University of Rhode Island, was re-elected to a third three-year term as General Secretary of the organization. Prof. Larry Hass announced his decision not to be a candidate for a third term as Associate General Secretary and Leonard Lawlor, Edwin Earle Sparks Professor of Philosophy at Pennsylvania State University, was elected to a three-year term as Associate General Secretary. A heartfelt "thank you" was expressed to Larry Hass by the General Secretary on behalf of the membership for his service, his wise leadership, and his deep Merleau-Ponty scholarship. Congratulations and thanks also were offered to Larry for his most recent editorial work on the Mike Dillon papers, soon to appear from Ohio University Press titled *The Ontology of Becoming and The Ethics of Particularity* by M. C. Dillon and edited by Lawrence Hass.

At the business luncheon, the membership voted to accept the invitation to hold next year's conference, the Thirty-Seventh Annual Conference of the International Merleau-Ponty Circle, at Fordham University, Lincoln Center, New York City, NY. The dates are September 20-22, 2012, and the theme of the conference will be "Self & Others, Silence & Solitude." Professor Ann Murphy will be the conference director. Conference keynote speakers will be Gail Weiss, Chair and Professor of Philosophy and Human Sciences, George Washington University, and Lisa Guenther, Department of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University. 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 in the program. The deadline for paper and panel submissions is **June 1, 2012**. Paper submissions are limited to a maximum of 4500 words so they can be read in no longer than 30 minutes. For further information, go to the Call for Papers on the Merleau-Ponty Circle website ([www.uri.edu/artsci/phl/impc](http://www.uri.edu/artsci/phl/impc)).

At the business luncheon, an invitation to host the fall, 2013 conference was extended by Prof. Jessica Wiskus, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, and the membership voted to accept the invitation contingent upon receipt by the General Secretary of a formal letter of support from the Dean, Jim Swindal. An informational report was offered by Dr. Stefan Kristensen, Université de Genève, Suisse, regarding his pending invitation to host the 2014 Circle conference at the University of Geneva.

Respectfully submitted,

Galen A. Johnson, General Secretary

Leonard Lawlor, Associate General Secretary