

Western Canadian Undergraduate Philosophy Conference
2018 Program

10-11 AM: Madeleine Kenyon (University of Victoria):
"Repercussions and Responsibility: An Analysis of the Relationship Between
Privilege and the Moral Obligation to Whistle Blow"

11 AM-12 PM: Rashad Rehman (Western University):
"On the Border of Concrete Experience: 'Literary' and 'Mythic' Experience in
Lewis"

12-1 PM: Lunch Break

1-2 PM: Michael Caditz (Vancouver Island University):
"A Renewal of Philosophy"

2-4 PM: Dr Marie-Eve Morin's Keynote Speech (University of Alberta):
"Hyperbole or Ambiguity: Derrida and Merleau-Ponty on the Subject of the
Performative"

Abstract:

In this presentation, I want to put into question the separation between the constative and the performative along the passivity/activity or the spontaneity/receptivity line. In order to do so, I look at two different strategies. The first is found in Jacques Derrida's search for a "pure" performative. In his discussions of the gift or of the institution of a new law, Derrida will be interested in performatives that do not emanate from a subject within a determined context, but which themselves create a new law or context and hence so radically transform the subject that the latter cannot be seen as having preceded the performative. Unlike Derrida's radicalization strategy, Merleau-Ponty shows how passivity and activity, receptivity and spontaneity, are always intertwined at the levels of perception, habitual actions, and expression. While Derrida's pure performative requires us to relinquish the idea of a subject, Merleau-Ponty's theory of expression allows us to understand how actions can be creative and even emancipatory, while still being grounded in a 'subject' – Merleau-Ponty would say in a body – that is not characterized by spontaneity and self-consciousness, but by ambiguity.