



THE ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Abstract Book

3rd Annual International Symposium on
Religion & Theology
28-31 May 2018, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Gregory T. Papanikos

2018

Abstracts
3rd Annual International
Symposium on
Religion & Theology
28-31 May 2018
Athens, Greece

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 3rd *Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology (28-31 May 2018)*, organized by the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER).

In total 18 papers were submitted by 25 presenters, coming from 12 different countries (Austria, Canada, Chile, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Singapore, South Africa, UK and USA). The conference was organized into 8 sessions that included a variety of topic areas such as religious conflict, feminism in religion, and more. A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with ATINER's Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of ATINER's many publications.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of ATINER and other academics around the world with a resource through which to discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. ATINER was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world could meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

It is our hope that through ATINER's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world regularly meet to discuss the developments of their discipline and present their work. Since 1995, ATINER has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published nearly 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into seven research divisions and 37 research units. Each research unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of ATINER for putting this conference and its subsequent publications together. Specific individuals are listed on the following page.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

3rd Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology 28-31 May 2018, Athens, Greece Organizing and Academic Committee

ATINER's conferences are small events which serve the mission of the association under the guidance of its Academic Committee which sets the policies. In addition, each conference has its own academic committee. Members of the committee include all those who have evaluated the abstract-paper submissions and have chaired the sessions of the conference. The members of the **academic committee** of the 3rd Annual International Conference on Religion & Theology were the following:

1. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER.
2. Nicholas Pappas, Vice President of Academic Membership, ATINER & Professor of History, Sam Houston University, USA.
3. William O'Meara, Academic Member, ATINER & Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, James Madison University, USA.
4. Patricia Hanna, Head, Philosophy Unit of ATINER & Professor, University of Utah, USA.
5. Steven Kepnes, Professor of World Religions & Jewish Studies and Director of Chapel House, Colgate University, USA.
6. Angela McCarthy, Academic Member, ATINER & Senior Lecturer in Theology, University of Notre Dame Australia, Australia.
7. Tennyson Samraj, Professor, Burman University, Canada.
8. Maria Magoula Adamos, Associate Professor, Georgia Southern University, USA.
9. Robert Bishop, Associate Professor, Wheaton College, USA.
10. Laima Geikina, Professor, University of Latvia, Latvia.
11. Miguel Lopez-Astorga, Associate Professor, University of Talca, Chile.
12. Maitreyee Sharma, Associate Professor, Pandu College, India.
13. Stephen Milford, Minister in Church, Baptist Union of Great Britain, UK.

The **organizing committee** of the conference included the following:

1. Olga Gkounta, Researcher, ATINER.
2. Hannah Howard, Research Assistant, ATINER.
3. Despina Katzoli, Researcher, ATINER.
4. Eirini Lentzou, Administrative Assistant, ATINER.
5. Konstantinos Manolidis, Administrator, ATINER.
6. Vassilis Skianis, Research Associate, ATINER.
7. Kostas Spyropoulos, Administrator, ATINER.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM
3rd Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology,
28-31 May 2018, Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

Conference Venue: Titania Hotel, 52 Panepistimiou Street, 10678 Athens, Greece

Monday 28 May 2018

08:00-08:45 Registration and Refreshments

08:45-09:30 (Room C - 10th Floor): Welcome and Opening Address

Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER.
Nicholas Pappas, Vice President of Academic Membership, ATINER &
Professor of History, Sam Houston University, USA.

09:30-11:00 Session I (Room D - 10th Floor)

Chair: Tennyson Samraj, Professor, Burman University, Canada.

1. Hanoch Ben-Pazi, Associate Professor, Bar-Ilan University, Israel. Religion, Ethics, and the Ethical Danger of Religion.
2. Maitreyee Sharma, Associate Professor, Pandu College, India. Religious Conflict and Possibility of Dialogue: An Indian Philosophical Perspective.
3. Alice Reininger, Sen. Scientist, Staff Science, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria. The Freemasons and the Roman Catholic Church in the 18th Century; the Beginning of a Conflicting Relationship Marked by Misunderstandings, Conspiracy Theories and Campaigns of Defamation.

11:00-12:30 Session II (Room D - 10th Floor)

Chair: Maitreyee Sharma, Associate Professor, Pandu College, India.

1. Tennyson Samraj, Professor, Burman University, Canada. Understanding Euthanasia in the Context of Capital Crimes: Unusual but not Cruel.
2. Sokthan Yeng, Associate Professor, Adelphi University, USA. Spirits Speaking Female: Luce Irigaray and Theravadin Buddhist Women.
3. Vinicio Busacchi, Associate Professor, University of Cagliari, Italy. On Daisaku Ikeda's Buddhist Conception of Human Being.

12:30-14:00 Session III (Room C - 10th Floor):

Chair: Miguel Lopez-Astorga, Associate Professor, University of Talca, Chile.

1. Robert Bishop, Associate Professor, Wheaton College, USA. Determinism as a Contextual Feature of Reality.
2. Igor Makarov, Independent Researcher, Israel. Reform Science: Its Logic and Structure.

14:00-15:00 Lunch

15:00-16:30 Session IV (Room C - 10th Floor)

Chair: Robert Bishop, Associate Professor, Wheaton College, USA.

1. Leyla Danae Torres Bravo, Professor, Universidad de Talca, Chile. Social Darwinism and Eugenics: An Analysis from Feminism.
2. Evgenia Cherkasova, Associate Professor, Suffolk University in Boston, USA. Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard on Truth, Subjectivity, and Existential Responsibility.
3. Ryan Quandt, Graduate Instructor, University of South Florida, USA. Leibniz's Translation of the *Phaedo*.

16:30-18:30 (Room C - 10th Floor) ATINER's 2018 Series of Academic Dialogues: A Symposium Discussion on the Challenges of Teaching at Higher Education Institutes in a Globalized World

Chair: Nicholas Pappas, Vice President of Academic Membership, ATINER & Professor of History, Sam Houston University, USA & Patricia Hanna, Head, Philosophy Unit of ATINER & Professor, University of Utah, USA.

Invited Speakers:

1. **Robin Root**, Professor, City University of New York, USA. *"Teaching Global: Meanings and Methods"*.
2. **Peter Siska**, Professor, University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Slovakia. *"Spatial and Temporal Comparative Analyses of Teaching Effectiveness and its Future in Higher Education"*.
3. **Tennyson Samraj**, Professor, Burman University, Canada. *"The Challenges Involved in Teaching Post-Modern Minds"*.
4. **Changming Duan**, Professor, University of Kansas, USA. *"How to Integrate a True International Perspective in Teaching Psychology?"*
5. **Mark Ludorf**, Professor, Stephen F. Austin State University, USA. *"Addressing Student Heterogeneity in the Classroom"*.

21:00-23:00 Greek Night and Dinner

Tuesday 29 May 2018

07:45-11:00 Session V: An Educational Urban Walk in Modern and Ancient Athens

Chair: Gregory A. Katsas, Vice President of Academic Affairs, ATINER & Associate Professor, The American College of Greece-Deree College, Greece.

Group Discussion on Ancient and Modern Athens.

Visit to the Most Important Historical and Cultural Monuments of the City (be prepared to walk and talk as in the ancient peripatetic school of Aristotle)

11:15-13:00 Session VI (Room D - 10th Floor)

Chair: Laima Geikina, Professor, University of Latvia, Latvia.

1. Magdel Le Roux, Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa. The Battle at Hazor and Jael's Deadly Hospitality.
2. Steven Kepnes, Professor, Colgate University, USA. Scriptural Reasoning and Jewish, Christian, Muslim Dialogue. (*Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning session*)
3. Stephen Milford, Minister in Church, Baptist Union of Great Britain, UK. The Problem with Sandra the Orangutan: The Unfortunate Consequences of Ontological Relational Thinking.

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Session VII (Room D - 10th Floor)

Chair: Stephen Milford, Minister in Church, Baptist Union of Great Britain, UK.

1. Laima Geikina, Professor, University of Latvia, Latvia. Interreligious Dialogue and Sustainable Development in the Context of Contemporary Education.
2. Yvette Prinsloo Franklin, Adjunct Faculty, University of Tennessee, USA. The Ought and the Caring Teacher: A Philosophical Exercise in Praxis.

15:30-17:00 Session VIII (Room C - 10th Floor)

Chair: Maria Magoula Adamos, Associate Professor, Georgia Southern University, USA.

1. Jennifer Ang, Associate Professor and Head of Common Curriculum, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore. Bad Faith and Self-Forgiveness.
2. Bjorn Freter, Independent Scholar, Germany. Dangerous Thought. On Western Thinking and the Need to Decolonise through Desuperiorisation.

20:00- 21:30 Dinner

Wednesday 30 May 2018
Mycenae and Island of Poros Visit

Thursday 31 May 2018
Delphi Visit

Friday 1 June 2018
Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Jennifer Ang

Associate Professor and Head of Common Curriculum, Singapore
University of Social Sciences, Singapore

Bad Faith and Self-Forgiveness

Primo Levi's 'grey zone' describes situations of moral compromises, complicity, and collaboration that blur the line between victims and persecutors, masters and servants, simple prisoners and privileged ones. He points out that in a totalitarian system where there is concurrent guilt on the part of the collaborators, we not only need to recognize that it is difficult to pass a moral judgment but also remember that no one who did not live through the experience is authorized to judge them. Giving serious consideration to Levi's argument, this paper investigates the phenomenon of self-forgiveness and unforgiveness as responses from morally tainted individuals who were complicit in the activities or made moral compromises through the phenomenological structure of shame and guilt by Jean-Paul Sartre.

Hanoch Ben-Pazi

Associate Professor, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Religion, Ethics, and the Ethical Danger of Religion

In a fascinating article that engendered debate, the sociologist Charles Liebman argued that extreme views should be seen as the religious norm and not as the taking to an extreme of the religious norm, which is itself “moderate.” With that, Liebman added his voice to the philosophical tradition that has expressed concern about the destructive and violent power of religions. The history of the Western world provides a great deal of evidence to support that argument, both in the relationship of religion to its adherents and in its attitude toward other religions and their adherents.

In his polemical book about religion, Sam Harris described belief in this way: “A belief is a lever that, once pulled, moves almost everything else in a person’s life.... There seems, however, to be a problem with some of our most cherished beliefs about the world: they are leading us, inexorably, to kill one another.” (Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*, 12).

Most of the modern philosophers that attempted to relate to religion faced this challenge. And it seems that that rules laid down by Kant in his *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* are worthy of serving any philosophical discussion on the topic of religion.

I would like to offer, in this lecture, two possible models for establishing religion as a basis for tolerance. One, building on Moses Mendelssohn’s response to Kant, sees the variety of hues as evidence of God’s revelation and God’s goodness, and thus also of the tolerance taught by religion. The other model, building on Emmanuel Levinas, sees religion as being required to withstand the text of atheism. Religion is a definition of ethical responsibility as the human being faces the infinite: “the concept of God [as] possessed by the believers of positive religions” (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, transl. Alphonso Lingis, 77). In positive terms, he writes, “To relate to the absolute as an atheist is to welcome the absolute purified of the violence of the sacred” (ibid.). He adds in this context that the meaning of atheism encompasses the possibility of liberation from relationship with the other: “Only an atheist being can relate himself to the other and already *absolve himself* from this relation” (ibid.).

Robert Bishop
Associate Professor, Wheaton College, USA

Determinism as a Contextual Feature of Reality

We are used to thinking of determinism as being a characteristic of reality (e.g., the supposed physical determinism of macroscopic physics or metaphysical determinism in free will debates). I will discuss some reasons to think that physical determinism actually depends on contextual conditions (i.e., it emerges through a set of conditions in specific contexts) and some possible implications for how we think about free will.

Vinicio Busacchi

Associate Professor, University of Cagliari, Italy

On Daisaku Ikeda's Buddhist Conception of Human Being

Non-substantialist philosophical perspectives on the human being, as Paul Ricoeur's theory of the *capable human being*, suggest that human identity is a process. We are born as an individual, and to be a person we have to become that. The specific case of Ricoeur's philosophy underlines the conflictual/dialectical character of this process – a process that essentially is hermeneutical and historical-narrative. The continuous search for meaning through reflection, study and dialogue, the continuous process of interpreting yourself, the continuous telling and reinterpreting personal experience transform the life in a journey... readdress all personal experiences, even those which feel painful or uncomfortable. However, which is the ontological root of such a philosophical anthropology? Is there any 'root'? Does the conception of the Christian philosopher (as Ricoeur is) reveal a certain orientation towards relativism? It is true that in his book *Oneself as Another* (1990) he reinterprets the idea of identity as a process actualizing the Aristotelian conception of Being as a Power/Act dynamic. For Ricoeur, the first factor that describes the self is *to act*. This, essentially, defines the primacy of the ontological dialectic of Power/Act as a dialectical of expression and not of power. Nevertheless, this dynamic conception of 'substance' raises doubts about the spiritual source of the process, because Aristotle's conception is *naturalistic*.

A different non-substantialist perspective is developed by the Buddhist philosopher Daisaku Ikeda. Ikeda's doctrinal, theoretical and practical research and work mirrors the specific 'logic' of the Lotus Sutra interpretation realised by the thirteenth-century Japanese monk Nichiren Daishonin (1222-1282). It is the 'view' of a humanistic religion in action, of an active humanism that conceives human emancipation by transforming sufferings, developing inner power and perfecting society. Nichiren said: "You must never think that any of the eighty thousand sacred teachings of Shakyamuni's lifetime or any of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions and three existences are outside yourself. Your practice of the Buddhist teachings will not relieve you of the sufferings of birth and death in the least unless you perceive the true nature of your own life" (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. I, p. 3)¹. Clearly, this is a vision of self-empowerment and emancipation that recognises the character of 'process' in becoming a person (a person who is freed from sufferings and illusions and freed from selfishness). However, which is the ontological/

¹ See: < <http://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/wnd-1/Content/1>>.

metaphysical root of such a conception? Is there any way to put in parallel Ricoeur and Ikeda's views?

The author will analyse whether or not a philosophical-theoretical productive connection can be established between the two models. At the same time, it will offer some reflection concerning the practical and pragmatic consequences of a non-substantialist and anti-relativistic perspective on the human being.

Evgenia Cherkasova

Associate Professor, Suffolk University in Boston, USA

Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard on Truth, Subjectivity, and Existential Responsibility

Both Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard spoke at length about a certain kind of truth that goes beyond empirical evidence and rational speculation: the inner truth which is “sustained in the existing individual’s committed, passionate relation to it.” Like Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky is convinced that existential truth is not about accepting certain facts or ideas as true but of *existing* in a certain way. And also like Kierkegaard, he makes his reader question the very dichotomy between the objective truth and the allegedly unreliable “mere subjectivity.” This paper uncovers strong parallels between Kierkegaard’s notions of “subjective truth” and “passionate inwardness” and Dostoevsky’s artistic depiction of the interplay between objectivity and subjectivity in his crowning novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Bjorn Freter
Independent Scholar, Germany

Dangerous Thought: On Western Thinking and the Need to Decolonise through Desuperiorisation

African thought is continuing the process of freeing itself from colonial usurpation, however Western thought has never consciously release African thought. Western thought did not itself recognise its own injustice, and, even worse, it did not want to recognise this injustice as an injustice. This is a strange testimonial for Western thought. Was it not this thought that brought forth the Enlightenment, the idea of human rights, equality before the law, and so much more? How could the Western thinkers fail so hard?

Western thought, as I will try to show, is infused with a permanent tacit assumption of superiority, a diffuse conviction of being the one and only thought that truly counts. It is from this assumption of superiority, entirely in accordance with Western textbook dialectics, that the idea of inferiorisation directly and necessarily emanates. When one entity is considered superior, others must be considered inferior. Anyone who thinks in this manner has good conceptual reason to make the leap from one to the other. However, it is extremely important, on the one hand, to note that we are speaking here of the conceptual and not of the phenomenal. This thought shows only that the plain and arbitrary positing of one's own greatness simultaneously means the positing of the other, i.e. the one which is not great. We must take note of the fact that the conceptual necessity tells us virtually nothing about the phenomenon to which it is applied.

He who superiorises also inferiorises, he who superiorises that which is his own inferiorises all that is not his own, the other. And this goes further still: when someone superiorises but is not right about his own superiority, he inferiorises nevertheless, he still becomes active as one who inferiorises! He who superiorises can be mistaken, but he nevertheless brings this thought into the world.

And here comes that which I believe fundamentally characterises Western thought just as much as its rationality or logic: Western thought is contemptuous. I define contempt as a normative inferiorisation of the other because this other is not the same as oneself, not the same as that which is considered one's own, simply because it is different.

In my view, Western thought, to this day, has not sufficiently recognised this dangerous contempt as the danger that it is! When we take a look around in contemporary contexts this danger remains real. The foreign, the other, is (re)stigmatised. Western thought is and remains dangerous. We must finally take this seriously and critically evaluate our value as a normative authority.

We Western thinkers must understand that our central task must be the desuperiorisation of our thought. Desuperiorisation as our part of the process

of decolonisation and our response to globalization. The first step in this direction lies in the development of elative ethics. The term elative is used from the perspective of grammatical functionality: the elative is an absolute superlative, and not a relative superlative that expresses greatness in comparison, but rather one that refers to greatness in absolute terms. When we say, for example, that there is the most beautiful weather today, we are referring to this beauty with an absolute superlative, without needing to relate this beauty to something less beautiful: we celebrate this beauty as beauty *sui generis*. Comparisons are completely irrelevant here.

We must understand that it is possible to value ourselves, even to the greatest extent, without devaluing others. We Western thinkers must fight this superiorisation, we must desuperiorise ourselves. The desuperiorisation must be the West's project that flanks the decolonisation of Africa.

Laima Geikina

Professor, University of Latvia, Latvia

Interreligious Dialogue and Sustainable Development in the Context of Contemporary Education

We live in a world complicated by globalization, pressure of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), plurality of worldviews and post-secular times. As UNESCO mentioned education for sustainable development provide learning and teaching environment where “individuals are encouraged to be responsible actors who resolve challenges, respect cultural diversity and contribute to creating a more sustainable world”. Religion as an integral part of intercultural education or education in general is not disputable in this context. This mean a need to promote *religious competence* of students and to engage students in a critical dialogue with the participants from other religious or non-religious groups and to decide on their own religious or spiritual commitment. It will open a space for intercultural dialogue as this is defined in *The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* (Council of Europe) “an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with differed ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on mutual understanding and respect”. Only if an open dialogue between the students from the diverse religious and non- religious backgrounds occurs, students can learn to become more aware of the diversity amidst them and grow in a greater understanding of a world. Latvia will implement the new national curriculum (NC) for primary and secondary education on 1 September 2018. NC development provided a unique opportunity to integrate *religious competence* and *religion* and *religions* as content in all grades for the first time in Latvia. The main task of the religious component is to provide basis for understanding religious and cultural diversity and diversity of society in general. This will help “to live together” in the community of diverse individuals who will grow with a more coherent vision and aspirations grounded in their particular worldview. This vision become a source for sustainability of social and civic developments in a society.

Steven Kepnes
Professor, Colgate University, USA

Scriptural Reasoning and Jewish, Christian, Muslim Dialogue

In this paper, I aim to introduce Scriptural Reasoning (SR) as a form of interfaith dialogue and assess its successes and limitations. SR is a practice of group reading of the scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that aims to build sociality among its practitioners and release sources of reason, compassion, and divine spirit for healing separate communities and for repair of the world. Thus, SR theory aims at a scripturally reasoned triadic response to the problems of the world that is motivated and sustained by the healing and divine spirit of scripture. Participants in SR practice come to it as both representatives of academic institutions and particular “houses” (churches, mosques, synagogues) of worship. SR has been practiced in England, the US, Israel, and Turkey. Its successes include bringing not only academics but laity together in conversation. It is limited however to traditions where scripture is highly valued. It, however, remains a highly promising new avenue for interfaith dialogue.

Magdel Le Roux

Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa

The Battle against Hazor and Jael's Deadly Hospitality

The story of the fourth judge (Judges 4 & 5) is full of surprises, just like the previous stories (Judges 1-3). In the dominant body ideology related to good order, an Israelite man without any blemish was the epitome of a pure, ideal or whole body. Contrary to the "expected literary depiction", it is again the "unwhole, different-functioning bodies" which are depicted as "producing survival for the corporate body" (Van der Merwe & Coetzee 2009). Deborah, an Israelite lawgiver and prophetess, and Jael, a Kenite woman, are used in an unexpected way. The juxtaposition of different-functioning bodies serves as a counterculture rhetoric in the form of a hidden polemic. Much attention has been paid to the roles of Deborah and Barak in the battle against Hazor, but Jael's role has elicited limited reflection by scholars and has been overshadowed by her "questionable" hospitality. A socio-rhetorical approach will make it possible to identify rhetorical techniques that the writer uses to highlight social relations, regulations and ideologies in the text (Van der Merwe & Coetzee 2009:678). Archaeological excavations at Hazor the last 25 years provide valuable background information to this battle.

Igor Makarov
Independent Researcher, Israel

Reform Science: Its Logic and Structure

The proper interpretation of Hegel's *Science of Logic* in modern terms has shown it to be actually the Systems Theory long sought for, *an intuitive logical program* suitable for a *systemic reorganization* of any field of modern science or any body of knowledge with a potential systemic structure, the program generating a new science – *a reform science*. Its method, '*systemic intuition*', is based on dialectical logic; every stage of research consisting of two phases – *an analytical speculation* about the current stage of research and *the statement of the concept* intuitively suggested by the above speculation and opening the next stage of research. Reform science is a thoroughly *theoretical* science: it cannot be developed or verified experimentally; on the other hand, it takes into account all achievements and the whole experimental base of modern science and can provide a valid explanation to every experimental fact; reform science realizes the goals that modern science has been unable to achieve. Reform science is actually its unique research; its progress being characterized by *its state* in every particular field. Reform science consists of three parts named *Medium*, *Population* and *Associations*, each with a different logic, that of *transition*, *reflection* and *evolution*, respectively. Reform science has a *structure* common for all branches of science, which allows us to introduce a *classification of concepts*, thus purifying, perfecting and organizing the whole science.

The structure of the reform science is represented by three tables of concepts corresponding to the respective parts of research. Reform science is able to sort out the existing concepts, right and generalize them, find the proper meaning to them and when necessary introduce new concepts. Application of the reform science method in the field of particle physics has resulted in the reform of that field, making it possible to solve actually all its cardinal problems, such as the existence of ether, the origin of matter, the essence of nuclear interaction, the nuclear structure of the atom, etc. Application of the same method in the field of politics has generated the framework of a new science – *the reform politics*, which makes it possible to understand the true essence of the past and the present, recommend the true solutions to national, international and global crises, elucidate the true sense of formerly unclear concepts and predict the future of civilization.

Application of the same method to economics has made it possible to complete in rough the work initiated by Karl Marx, thus creating a new science – *the reform economics*. The latter depicts the structure of the global economy as a system consisting of two *dual global centers* with different ideologies, *commercial-social* and *social-commercial*, as well as a *neutral center*, competing with each other and in that process streamlining production,

reducing prices and adapting to each other, thus presenting an increasingly perfect realization of the ideal market system and transforming the market economy into *a global communal economy*, with the commercial interests becoming increasingly social and the social interests commercial.

Stephen Milford

Minister in Church, Baptist Union of Great Britain, UK

The Problem with Sandra the Orangutan: The Unfortunate Consequences of Ontological Relational Thinking

Sandra the orangutan from Buenos Aires Zoo has been granted 'non-human person' status along with associated rights. In a similar move, the town council of Trigueros del Valle (Spain), voted to grant cats and dogs the status of 'non-human residents' for the same purpose. These two incidents are prime examples of the practical consequences of recent shifts toward relational ontology (Barth, Grenz, Shults). Nowhere is this recent shift evident than in the highly critically acclaimed theological anthropology: *Eccentric Existence* (2009). Here the post-liberal Yale theologian David Kelsey attempts to radically challenge the classificatory and evaluative use of the term 'person' so as to argue that it is *personal* that comes before person (cf. Zizioulas). Kelsey contends that it is God who personalises human beings by personally relating to them, thereby creating persons out of non-persons. Members of the class *person* (classificatory force) are deemed to have unqualified dignity and respect (evaluative force). He therefore urges us to speak of "personal identities" rather than "identities of person."

Although there are theological upshots to this move, some of the consequences are troubling. In particular, the challenge of innate personhood. In Kelsey's construction persons are secondary creations: the result of distinctive relationships not substantive entities. As such persons may be created, and consequently, destroyed through relation. While Kelsey contends that such personalising relations are fundamentally theological, Sandra is evidence of a worrying anthropological use of such ontological relation.

This paper will explore the implications of relational ontology, particularly as it relates to Kelsey's construction of personhood. The paper will critique personalising relationships, demonstrating both the advantages and the challenges. Ultimately, the paper will ask if any limit can be placed on ontological relations and if so, what guidelines can be used to help direct these limits.

Yvette Prinsloo Franklin
Adjunct Faculty, University of Tennessee, USA

The Ought and the Caring Teacher: A Philosophical Exercise in Praxis

Care, an often nebulous concept that has an ethical, ontological, phenomenological, epistemological, and language analysis ripple effect, is by no means a new topic to those involved in philosophy of education. In this paper the author draws on the work of five contemporary philosophers to explore the connection between teaching and care to (re)focus our understanding of *why* we care, the process that brings us to caring action, and *how* we care, to enhance normative practices of in the classroom. Using the framework developed by German philosopher Björn Freter, ¹ the author points out that, despite normative uncertainties, teachers process their concern, volition, and practice ² to care so that that what ought to be for students can be sought. In the light her concern with the intersection of social justice concerns and education, the author engages in an exercise of praxis in an attempt to foster teaching that promotes things as they ought to be through Freter's conceptual work regarding the "existential experience of and the existential need to exercise care." ³ This theoretical exploration of caring is extrapolated into classroom practice through the vehicle of Nicholas Burbules and Susanne Rice's concept of communicative virtues, ⁴ Nel Noddings' work on caring as a relational dialogue, ⁵ and Barbara Thayer-Bacon and Bacon's philosophical investigation into a model of caring educator. ⁶ First,

Burbules and Rice offer a way to consider what traits foster teacher engagement in Freter's progression of appeal, concern, will, and action and posits that these "virtues" ("tolerance, patience, respect for differences, a willingness to listen, the inclination that one might be mistaken, the ability to reinterpret or translate one's own concerns in a way that makes them comprehensible to others, the self-imposition of restraint in order that others may 'have a turn' to speak, and the disposition to express one's self honestly and sincerely" ⁷) are something that can be acquired and practiced, an important consideration for teacher education. Nel Noddings' application of care to the school space is harnessed and reinforces the movement through attentiveness, listening to the expressed needs (as opposed to assumed needs) of students, and after listening and reflecting, responding. ⁸ Thayer-Bacon and Bacon bring caring into sharper focus with a model of caring educators that suggests that caring can be practically enacted when the whole student is taken into account. Echoing the relational and dialogical nature of care,

Thayer-Bacon and Bacon suggest teachers are accepting, trusting, receptive, approachable, welcoming, offer engaged learning, and foster

supportive learning environments. They propose that caring teachers focus on promoting classroom dialogue, student-centered pedagogy, acknowledge the fallibility of student and teacher, allow for student input into curriculum, and promote student control in the learning process. 9 The author concludes with her own empirical fieldwork and philosophical conceptualization of personal experiences with pedagogical practices of care as an educator in primary, secondary, and tertiary educational settings.

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Leibniz's Translation of the *Phaedo*

In the “Discours de métaphysique,” Leibniz inserted a large passage from the *Phaedo*, lines 97b-99c. It is intended to support Leibniz's criticisms of the overly materialistic philosophies of his contemporaries. The intelligence exhibited in the world requires ontological concepts, like perfection and final causes. Read in the middle of the ‘Discours’, the passage sounds Leibnizian—misleadingly so. It is, in fact, Leibniz's translation, so it is not surprising the text seems slanted. In my presentation, I take up the philological task of analyzing Leibniz' French with the original Greek, which, to my knowledge, has not been done. It is illuminating in a few ways. First, it clarifies how Leibniz interpreted Plato with respect to his contemporaries (why does Leibniz cite Plato as a corrective, for example?). Second, it offers another avenue for interpreting the ‘Discours’—an excessively dense and concise text. And, third, Plato's dialogue challenges Leibniz's metaphysics during this time, which become apparent in the tension between the original Greek and Leibniz' translation.

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The Freemasons and the Roman Catholic Church in the 18th Century; the Beginning of a Conflicting Relationship Marked by Misunderstandings, Conspiracy Theories and Campaigns of Defamation

“... Condemnatio Societatis, seu conventicularum vulgo De liberi muratori, aut Des franc masons, sub poena excommunicationis ipso facto incurrenda, eius absolutio, excepto mortis articulo, summon Pontifici reservata ...” With these words Pope Clement XII condemned the Freemason in the papal bull *“In eminenti apostolatus specula”* of 28th April 1738. He threatened anyone belonging to this association with excommunication regardless of their social ranking. Despite this the freemasons enjoyed a large increase of their numbers through enlightened thinkers, including even the clergy. 21 years after the foundation of the Great Lodge in London in 1717 and the declared beliefs to the “Old Charges”, formulated by Andersson, the misunderstandings had become insurmountable. From the very beginning the Freemasons were challenged with conspiracy theories and defamation campaigns. Direct, ubiquitous attacks, hundreds died after painful questioning by the Inquisition. Tolerance and human understanding – above all the latter concept- should have had some meaning in the Christian conscience, and a society which set its goals towards attaining these concepts should surely be spiritually supported. Did not Christian charity mean love one’s neighbour, whether friend or foe, to forgive one another and to support one another in times of difficulty?

Freemasonry was never conceived as a religion. It never stood to oppose the Christian community, on the contrary the Freemason alliance obliged all its members to attend church regularly; as for example, written down in the Draskovich Observance, a freemason document from the second half of the 18th century in Croatia. However the point about its secretiveness caused an uproar and opposition and led to huge suspicions about them. In the following 250 years the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards the Freemasons never changed. Only in the last few years after the Lichtenauer Manifesto has the wall began to crumble.

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Understanding Euthanasia in the Context of Capital Crimes: Unusual but not Cruel

Understanding euthanasia in the context of capital crimes necessitates the need to rewrite the rules of punishment. Lex talionis posits that incapacitation removes the criminal from society and puts an end to criminal behavior. Incapacitation, be it jail term or capital punishment are good examples to demonstrate how the state is determined to put an end to criminal behavior. People find themselves incarcerated or handed death sentences when the state realizes that they cannot succeed in stopping criminal behavior. If the object of capital punishment or life-imprisonment is to put an end to criminal behavior, then incarceration concurrent with euthanasia gives the criminal the option to choose death by choice (euthanasia) than accept penalty by death (capital punishment). However since euthanasia cannot be considered as a punishment, we must first replace capital punishment with life-imprisonment concurrent with euthanasia. Life-imprisonment concurrent with euthanasia gives the criminal the option to exit life if to exist is solitary confinement is unbearable. Incapacitation, not retribution should be the basis of the state to remove and stop criminal behavior. Current laws related to the laws of punishment (lex talionis) stipulates that only the state can administer criminal punishment. However, lex talionis also states that punishment cannot be cruel or involve torture. This paper, posits both capital punishment and life-imprisonment as cruel options, in that one involves physical torture, and the other involves mental torture. Incarceration must include the option to end the criminal's life if life-imprisonment is unbearable. Many argue that the 'right to die' is a 'human right' (Minelli, 2007). It is necessary to rewrite the rules of punishment and look at the possibility of allowing the criminal to chastise himself or herself. This suggestion would make sense when it comes to capital punishment or life imprisonment. No one should 'be killed' if they want to live or 'be forced to live' if they want to die. Euthanasia is an unusual option but not a cruel choice.

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Religious Conflict and Possibility of Dialogue: An Indian Philosophical Perspective

Religion primarily announces equal essence of mankind and strives to bring social harmony. However, in the long history of human civilization, the term religion is not consistently associated with peace, harmony and understanding. From ancient period to the recent times one can witness numbers of conflicts and violence in the name of religion. Such instances of conflict contradict the core philosophy of religion. A true religion is essentially humanistic in approach. Religion has its relevance for the human race not merely in principles, but in practice.

Diversity of religion is a natural aspect of civilization and promoting peace and harmony is essential aspect of religion. The concept of harmony in diversity is found in the Vedas – the earliest authoritative texts of Indian philosophy. The famous Vedic quote “*ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*” implies that truth is one and sages call it by various names. The same philosophy has been echoed in many different religious traditions of India.

In the age old tradition of Indian philosophy, it is believed that concord alone is the correct way and attitude. The present time demands the necessity to go into the core beliefs and practices of religion with a rational and analytical approach.

The present paper attempts to examine the elements responsible for disharmony and conflicts, and discuss the inherent possibility of interfaith dialogue from the Indian philosophical perspective.

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**Social Darwinism and Eugenics:
An Analysis from Feminism**

This presentation firstly seeks to explore the main debates on women and the female condition underlying the philosophical, medical and political speeches related to social Darwinism and eugenics. To do that, I review some of the dominant acceptance and rejection discourses present in Mediterranean countries of Europe and their reception in Latin America from the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century. Secondly, I analyze the possible philosophical –epistemological and ethical–connections that open the discussion and controversy in a broader sense, that is, within the political culture linked to the construction of citizenship and social progress, which is considered as something referring to civilizatory models of the local elite that, in short, seek exclusion and extermination of otherness.

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**Spirits Speaking Female:
Luce Irigaray and Theravadin Buddhist Women**

Tensions around Buddhist Feminism remain because Asian Buddhist women often lack a voice in the conversation. Efforts to create a space for female leadership, especially in Theravadin communities, are sometimes cast as another form of Western colonialism. Despite these roadblocks, Buddhist women have successfully used spirit possession as a means to gain agency. Although this tactic does not fit well with the goal of liberal feminists who aim at gaining equality through the reinstatement of Buddhist nuns, I suggest that Luce Irigaray's approach allows us to understand how Buddhist women successfully use mimesis to challenge patriarchy. In this paper, I will explore multiple ways Theravadin women play with female stereotypes and use them to challenge matrimonial hierarchy, patriarchy within Buddhism, and narratives of cultural imperialism.