



THE ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Abstract Book

4th Annual International Symposium on
Religion & Theology
27-30 May 2019, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Gregory T. Papanikos

2019

Abstracts
4th Annual International
Symposium on Religion &
Theology
27-30 May 2019, Athens,
Greece

Edited by Gregory T. Papanikos

First published in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research.

ISBN: 978-960-598-253-9

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8 Valaoritou Street
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www.atiner.gr

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 4th *Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology (27-30 May 2019)*, organized by the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER).

In total 18 papers were submitted by 18 presenters, coming from 12 different countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Egypt, France, Germany, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, Switzerland, UK, and USA). The conference was organized into 8 sessions that included a variety of topic areas such as Empathy and Moral Concerns, Religion and Conscience, Philosophical and Educational Issues and other. 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 6 divisions and 37 units. Each 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

**4th Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology
27-30 May 2019, Athens, Greece**

Scientific Committee

All ATINER's conferences are organized by the [Academic Council](#). This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academics, who contributed by a) setting up the program b) chairing the conference sessions, and/or c) reviewing the submitted abstracts and papers:

1. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER & Honorary Professor, University of Stirling, UK.
2. William O'Meara, Academic Member, ATINER & Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, James Madison University, USA.
3. Patricia Hanna, Head, Philosophy Unit of ATINER & Professor, University of Utah, USA.
4. Johan Buitendag, Professor, University of Pretoria, South Africa.
5. Elelwani Farisani, Chair of Department, Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa.
6. Tennyson Samraj, Professor, Burman University, Canada.
7. Meredith Drees, Chair, Department of Religion and Philosophy, Kansas Wesleyan University, USA.
8. Scott Rubarth, Associate Professor, Rollins College, USA.
9. Giuseppe Naimo, Academic Member, ATINER & Senior Lecturer, University of Notre Dame Australia, Australia.
10. Tiago de Lima Castro, PhD Student, UNESP, Brazil.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM
4th Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology
27-30 May 2019, Athens, Greece
Conference Venue: Titania Hotel, 52 Panepistimiou Street, 10678 Athens,
Greece

Monday 27 May 2019

07:50-08:40 Registration and Refreshments

08:50-09:20 (Room C - 10th Floor): Welcome and Opening Address by Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER.

09:30-11:00 Session I (Room D - 10th Floor): Religion, Empathy and Moral Concerns

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

1. Simon Glynn, Professor, Florida Atlantic University, USA. The Postmodern Constitution of an Ethics of Empathy.
2. Giuseppe Naimo, Senior Lecturer, University of Notre Dame Australia, Australia. A Metaphysical and Epistemological Critique of Psychiatry.
3. Claudia Simone Dorchain, Postdoctoral Researcher/Entrepreneur, Germany/France. Why we are in Need of Negative Theology - The Destructive Role of Religion Proves Martha Nussbaum Wrong.

11:00-12:30 Session II (Room D - 10th Floor): The Right to Sacred Place, Defining Religion and Understanding Pragmatic Wisdom (Phronesis) as Basis for Religious Dialogue

Chair: Giuseppe Naimo, Senior Lecturer, University of Notre Dame Australia, Australia.

1. Stephen Boyd, John Allen Easley Professor of Religion, Wake Forest University, USA. Collaborating to Defend Native American Human Rights and the Earth: Theological Resources.
2. Wendy Felese, Professor, Regis University, USA. Reorientation in the Field: Why Religion Matters.
3. Bob Robinson, Senior Fellow Emeritus, Laidlaw College, New Zealand. Φρόνησις: A Significant and Over-looked Dimension in Inter-religious Relations.

12:30-14:00 Session III (Room D - 10th Floor): Topics Related to Africa and South Africa: Education, Conflict and Hermeneutics

Chair: Scott Rubarth, Associate Professor, Rollins College, USA.

1. Johan Buitendag, Professor, University of Pretoria, South Africa. The Challenges of Theological Education in the 21st Century and in Africa.
2. Elelwani Farisani, Chair of Department, Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa. The Conflict between the Poor and the Wicked in Psalm(s) 9 and 10 and its Significance for the South African Context.

14:00-15:00 Lunch

15:00-16:30 Session IV (Room B - 10th Floor): Philosophy, Religion and Conscience

Chair: Johan Buitendag, Professor, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

1. Alan Hueth, Professor, Point Loma Nazarene University, USA. Preachers, Teachers, and Prophets: A Philosophical Exploration for a Christian Paradigm for Media Literacy.
2. Johan A Van Rooyen, Associate Researcher, University of Pretoria, South Africa. Why Religious Human Beings Need Evolutionary Epistemology! A Theological and Evolutionary Viewpoint of 'Why Humans Need to Embrace Evolutionary Epistemology.
3. Adina Portaru, Legal Counsel, ADF International, Belgium. The Need to Protect Freedom of Conscience of Medical Staff.

21:30-23:30 Greek Night and Dinner

Tuesday 28 May 2019

07:30-10:15 Session V: An Educational Urban Walk in Modern and Ancient Athens

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)

10:30-12:30 Session VI (Room B - 10th Floor): History, Music and Symbol: History of Papal Election in 1903, Extraordinary Performance in Music, Vocal Excellence and the Cross as a Symbol

Chair: Elelwani Farisani, Chair of Department, Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa.

1. Michel Tombroff, Artist, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA. Kronecker, Einstein and the Cross.
2. Alice Reininger, Independent Researcher, Austria. "Personae non Gratae" - The Successful Intervening of a Catholic State in the Papal Elections of 1903.

12:30-14:00 Session VII (Room B - 10th Floor): Philosophical Issues

Chair: Meredith Drees, Chair, Department of Religion and Philosophy, Kansas Wesleyan University, USA.

1. William O'Meara, Professor, James Madison University, USA. Kant and Moral Despair.
2. Andrew Ward, Lecturer, University of York, UK. Had Parfit Refuted Kant's Account of the Freedom Required for Moral Responsibility?
3. Antoine Rebourg, PhD Student, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland. Mental Muscle and Action in Strength of Will.

14:00-15:00 Lunch

15:00-16:30 Session VIII (Room B - 10th Floor): Special Topics

Chair: Tiago de Lima Castro, PhD Student, UNESP, Brazil.

1. Krzysztof Czerniawski, Adjunct Professor, University of Warsaw, Poland. Waismann, Church, and the Beginning of Alethic Pluralism.
2. Mohamed Almisbkawy, Assistant Professor, The British University in Egypt, Egypt. Western Metaphysics of Exclusion and its Impact upon Interpretation of Buddhist Logic.

21:00-22:30 Dinner

**Wednesday 29 May 2019
Mycenae and Island of Poros Visit
Educational Island Tour**

**Thursday 30 May 2019
Delphi Visit**

**Friday 31 May 2019
Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion**

Mohamed Almisbkawy

Assistant Professor, The British University in Egypt, Egypt

Western Metaphysics of Exclusion and its Impact upon Interpretation of Buddhist Logic

The most fundamental and influential concept of Buddhist logic is *catuskoti*. This principle postulates that there are four possibilities regarding any statement: it might be true (and true only), false (and false only), both true and false, or neither true nor false. Graham Priest the famous Australian logician argues that such principle could represent the contemporary developed of western logic namely many valued logic as such principle renders four values and A paraconsistent logic as its third value renders a contradiction. Whatever we argue in this paper that all such interpretations are merely western interpretation of such principle. As the many valued logics and A paraconsistent logic emerged within the domain of major western exclusionary ontological theory which in turn is founded upon non- contradiction and excluded middle principles ,thus such kind of developed logics surpass the laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle in some level while adopted some version of such laws in higher language level, whereas principle of *catuskoti* relies upon ultimately non-exclusionary ontological theory.

Stephen Boyd

John Allen Easley Professor of Religion, Wake Forest University, USA

Collaborating to Defend Native American Human Rights and the Earth: Theological Resources

Collaborating to Defend Native American Human Rights and the Earth: Theological Resources George Tinker, a Native American of the Osage Nation and Lutheran theologian, in his *American Indian Liberation* (2008), observed “American Indian poverty is and has always been a necessary condition for American wealth and well-being.” The historical effects of United States federal policy and judicial decisions substantiates Tinker’s claim. The missionary conquest of the Americas, coinciding with the rise of merchant capitalism, served to exterminate close to ninety percent of the indigenous population, perpetrating both physical and cultural genocide. The on-going violation of indigenous human, cultural, religious rights, coupled with concomitant environmental degradation constitutes an urgent ethical challenge for Non-Indian Christians and other US citizens. The paper offers a brief case study in which a multi-national mining company threatens a sacred ceremonial and food-gathering site of the Apache peoples, as well as devastating environmental harms the water, air, plant and animal life in Southeast Arizona. How might Non-Indian Christians join with Indian peoples to intervene in this, most recent, and other violations? This paper identifies theological resources that address Tinker’s call for “enlightened white resistance” include “the creation of new social spaces with Indians that encourage indigenous peoples to maintain the integrity of their communities and cultural values.” Among those resources are Mary Fulkerson’s, *Places of Redemption* (2007), identifying practices that create cultural “spaces of appearing” for members of groups routinely invisible to culturally dominant groups. Howard Thurman, a major inspiration to the US Civil Rights Movement, offers honest, if difficult, practices of cooperation for members of non-dominant groups (*Luminous Darkness and Disciplines of the Spirit*). Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s notion of “religionless Christianity” offers a theological frame that moves members of dominant groups toward intervention and cooperation with members of non-dominant groups (*Letters & Papers from Prison and Ethics*).

Johan Buitendag
Professor, University of Pretoria, South Africa

The Challenges of Theological Education in the 21st Century and in Africa

The paper would reflect on the challenges of theological education in the 21st century and in Africa. The paper would argue for a multi-and transdisciplinary approach towards the natures of university and of theology. What is integral to Newman's idea of a university is that theology is a branch of universal knowledge, because all knowledge forms one whole or 'circle' from which the various branches of learning stem. Religious truth is not only an aspect, but a condition of general knowledge. Therefore it is so important of pushing things up to their first principles. This is according to Newman a *sine qua non* for the idea of a university. Against this backdrop and the fact that the world has become merely a village, the following have emerged as driving forces of universities today: *reputation, impact* and *funding*. Academics must deliver a product that is saleable, or at least subject to quality control.

Is a university of Africa different to its counterparts in the developed world? Kofi Annan, a former Secretary General of the United Nations, strongly promoted the importance of universities for development in Africa: 'The university must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century.' This means that universities have to become agents of change and 'the critical source of equalisation of chances and democratisation of society by making possible equal opportunities for people.' The question arises how hospitable universities would be to theology in future. I want to provide my own answer to this question as a sort of synopsis of the thrust of my argument. Hospitability at a university depends in my view, upon:

1. the idea of a university
2. the scholarly contribution theology can make as an important perspective on understanding reality
3. the extent to which it can be methodologically accountable
4. the resilience it shows to immanent criticism
5. the fidelity it asserts to its subject-matter as science of God
6. the values it reflects and the social cohesion it inaugurates in society

In conclusion, I offer a definition of what theology at a public university is all about. The distinction between 'theology' and 'religious studies' needs to be emphasised once more. If this distinction is to be abolished, theology dissolves in the Humanities and has to comply with all the demands of the various academic disciplines that study religious

phenomena. These choices are solely based on my presupposition of dialogue as a prerequisite for a meaningful relationship between theology and science. I am of the opinion that *Theology is a scholarly endeavour of believers in the public sphere in order to make sense of multidimensional realities in a manner that matters*. Obviously, this definition has a number of ramifications, but that is the agenda for subsequent discussion.

Krzysztof Czerniawski

Adjunct Professor, University of Warsaw, Poland

Waismann, Church, and the Beginning of Alethic Pluralism

Alethic pluralism developed from linguistic pluralism of Wittgenstein, and it is in his *Philosophical Investigations* that we can find a suggestion that truth could be plural. But it is only a suggestion, and the first philosopher who really tried to build a theory of pluralist truth was not Wittgenstein, but Friedrich Waismann. In his article *The Many-Level-Structure of Language* (1946) Waismann divided language into different “language strata” and believed that in each stratum the word “truth” has a different sense. As examples of language strata Waismann gave material object statement, a sense-datum statement, a law of nature, a geometrical proposition, ethical statements, and others. In different language strata we use different systems of logic or concepts of verifiability, and different senses of truth. A physical law cannot be true in the same sense in which a description of the building is. According to Waismann: “Truth, when applied to a physical law, means roughly speaking: it is well established by observation; it brings widely different things into a close connection; it simplifies our theoretical system; it makes us ‘understand’ what seemed to be a mystery before; it is fruitful leading to new predictions and discoveries” (Waismann, *How I See Philosophy*, 1968, p. 98). The case of a simple perception is completely different – your statement that the light is on in your room is true because it says so-and-so, and so-and-so is as you say it is. Truth of this statement has nothing to do with things like simplification of matters or connecting very different things. Waismann also described purely formal concerns of mathematicians to conclude that this “is a very good case for the ‘coherence theory of truth’” (Waismann, *How I See...*, op. cit., p. 113). Therefore there is no doubt that he played with a contemporary idea that we can apply different theories of truth in different regions of discourse. For Waismann truth was “systematically ambiguous” and, using contemporary terminology, we can probably call his theory an example of a moderate pluralism, according to which there is more than one truth property, some of which are characteristic of all true sentences.

Waismann insisted that there are no possible logical connections between different levels of language. Alonzo Church, who reviewed the book of Waismann, could not agree with the idea of impossibility of a deductive logical connection between physical laws and experimental results. According to him: “It would seem to be quite essential to be able to make inferences in which the premisses are of mixed character, some belonging to a mathematical discipline (such as the theory of differential equations), other being physical laws” (Church, *Review: How I see*

Philosophy 1973, p. 665). Review of Church is so interesting, because he seems to anticipate the objection to the alethic pluralism based on the existence of mixed inferences, formulated by Christine Tappolet quarter of a century later.

Claudia Simone Dorchain

Postdoctoral Researcher/Entrepreneur, Germany/France

Why we are in Need of Negative Theology - The Destructive Role of Religion Proves Martha Nussbaum Wrong

„Religion creates culture, religion schools people in social skills such as empathy“ stated Martha Nussbaum in her famous study of 2003, *„Upheavals of Thought“*. The contrary seems to be true, with a quick glance at what religious wars today, even at the threshold of our home, create in terms of violence, hatred and barbarism, oftenly starting with a discussion about words and discriminating „infidels“.

In order to complete the somewhat fragmentary picture of what religion may or may not create in regard of culture Nussbaum paints, I would like to point out the hidden history of negative theology. Negative theology was a philosophical idea not exclusively claimed by certain schools, but a lineage commonly shared by those thinkers whose respect for the source of being was unrestricted by religious dogma. Starting with Plotin, Proklus and Dionysos Areopagita, then challenging mystics of the medieval age such as Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa, negative theology proved to be a philosophical „way without a way“ to describe the source of being above all confessional discussions. God, in their opinion, is neither good nor bad, neither white nor black, neither male nor female, the One is above all attributions, even the best, because attributions describe a being partially, which is not compatible with source which is one-and-all. Therefore, the „metaphysics of the One“ states that all religion basically means the same in different conventions of terminology, thus, that every war about words is useless, that culture is created not in the worship of a being superior, but in the worship of the divine source within mankind itself – a true humanist view.

In my opinion, we as a global society today with more and more open borders are in massive need of negative theology in order to cope with the potential of violence which is hidden within religion itself. If we intend to end religious wars, we must adopt the philosophical insights of the negative theologians and humanists of the past, and we must adopt them quickly, as there is few time left.

Elelwani Farisani

Chair of Department, Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa

The Conflict between the Poor and the Wicked in Psalm(s) 9 and 10 and its Significance for the South African Context

In many psalms including psalms 9 and 10, we encounter a struggle between the poor and the wicked. In all cases the oppressed seem to be the victim of the wicked who continue to oppress, exploit and discriminate against the defenseless poor. This struggle reflects what was going on in the community. Nevertheless, who are these two contending parties? Many scholars have tried to give attention to the above question; however, they remain divided on this issue. This paper will attempt to investigate the identity of both the poor and the wicked in psalm 9 and 10. I hope to establish as to whether the poor were just individuals or whether they represented the entire community of Israel. Furthermore, attention will be devoted to the question whether the enemies represented internal forces within Israel herself or foreign forces i.e external nations who threatened Israel and her faith. In the last section, the paper, will try to contextualize psalm 9 and 10 for South Africa today. It is here where the paper will start by looking at poverty in current South Africa. Then, it will round off this discussion by spelling out some theological implications of psalm 9 and 10 for the current South African context.

Wendy Felese
Professor, Regis University, USA

Reorientation in the Field: Why Religion Matters

Defining *religion* as a negotiation about “what it means to be a human in a human place,” David Chidester invites scholars of religious studies to critically examine and name what it is that we are actually teaching, writing about, and researching. Certainly, many colleagues in our field have called for the elimination of “religion” as an academic term for a number of legitimate reasons (the most compelling in my work is its restraining effect on adequately expressing Indigenous ontologies) and yet our field continues to grow and thrive as an intriguing, if befuddling, discipline. Comparative studies of religion certainly have an abhorrent legacy – being a field mobilized systemically as an efficient agent of empire, but also because even the most well-meaning among us still too often mangle, distort, and misapprehend much of what we encounter and then attempt to interpret, explain, and analogize. Nevertheless, I follow Chidester’s lead and argue for strategic retainment of the term *religion* so as to reverse the flow of production, authentication, and circulation of what counts as knowledge about “religion.” Chidester identifies a historical phenomenon – what he calls a triple mediation, whereby colonial agents absorbed, extracted and documented their perceptions of Indigenous cultural practices and then transferred that knowledge to the centers of empire, thus enabling our intellectual predecessors – “experts” of language, myth, and religion, to extrapolate cultural particularities for consumption. This extraction has continued uninterruptedly – today however, the pipeline flowing directly to imperial spaces (like universities), mainly requires *quotation* in order to function, albeit in circular fashion that feeds back on itself and reinforces the imperialist agenda. Indeed, this circularity has had a dominating effect within our field. I argue that Indigenous theorists quoting imperial theorists however, is the opening for an important strategic move: it is destabilizing to be sure, but also suggests alternative ways of both generating knowledge but even *establishing* what is considered knowledge. Paying attention to these triple mediations, we may not only recover, but reclaim what has been erased by the flow from periphery to center, and also “engage the challenge of combining critical reflection on our past...with creative possibilities for working through enduring categories in the study of religion to produce new knowledge.” This paper then, offers an analysis of the Inuit film *Qallunaat! Why White People Are Funny*, to demonstrate the effectiveness of an often subversive but invariably intriguing counter-production of.

Simon Glynn

Professor, Florida Atlantic University, USA

The Postmodern Constitution of an Ethics of Empathy

Arguing that “The Good”, as well as related concepts such as the ethical or moral, are, as are all concepts, derived from the language in which they are constituted, and as such are open, a la the Conventionalists and Deconstructionists to negotiation, the paper advocates for an ethics of Empathy, informed by Critical Reflective Analysis. However, so far from being a subjective and relative emotion, it is argued that empathy is a universal concomitant of the “putting of the self into the shoes of, and thus adopting the perspective of, the other”, which is ontologically inseparable from reflective self-consciousness, without which there would be no broadly credible notion of either moral sensibility, or of free choice, nor, therefore, of moral accountability.

Alan Hueth

Professor, Point Loma Nazarene University, USA

Preachers, Teachers, and Prophets: A Philosophical Exploration for a Christian Paradigm for Media Literacy

Problem: no concise, single textbook based on a Christian perspective of media literacy (ML) exists. ML includes the ability to understand the following: the messenger and their credibility (ethos) and ideology/worldview; the aesthetics and messaging (eliciting pathos in audience)—especially focused on Aristotle’s “thought”/theme; and the effects and moral/ethics of messages on individuals, culture, and society. Purpose of this paper? To share and get feedback on this approach for a book.

This paper will address the philosophical and religious/theological portions of a prospective media literacy book. It will be based on two fundamental, all-encompassing Christian principles: agape love and logos-truth. Agape-love will include a philosophical/scriptural exploration of the four different kinds of love – with an emphasis of agape as a corrective love related to the different Greek words for the concepts of “judgment” (perception, discernment, scrutiny, etc.) included in the New Testament. Logos-truth will consider the relevance of The Fall and human nature, powers and principalities, sanctification and stewardship, and other concepts of Christian identity, values, and behaviors related to media production/consumption. This invites the application of agape-love as primarily behavioral, and will include a relevant philosophical consideration of Aristotelian “pathos” versus Platonic reasoning in determining what’s best for achieving “the good.”

Logos-truth will also consider truths based on present-day ideologies and worldviews—including post-modernism and its affects on media content and media effects in the physiological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual dimensions of human experience. I will argue that values and beliefs are adopted through the socialization and enculturation processes of individuals and groups via media messages in pop culture media and news. I will describe how the media have a “curriculum” of their own, and serve as extensions of our educational systems. I’ll also reveal connections between Aristotle’s principles of pathos and elements of drama to Jacques Ellul’s classic propaganda theories.

The paper will conclude with the application of agape love and logos-truth as the foundational principle in ethical decision-making related to media consumption and production. I’ll utilize the Potter Box Model (PBM) approach for ethical dilemmas and decision-making – which focuses on the consideration of conflicting values, classic ethical principles, and the various loyalties/people who are involved in ethical

dilemmas. The principles include Aristotle's "golden mean," Kant's "categorical imperative," Bentham & Mill's (and Plato's) "utilitarianism," Rawls' "veil of ignorance" –and an examination of the limits and weaknesses of these principles compared to the Christian agape love.

Giuseppe Naimo

Senior Lecturer, University of Notre Dame Australia, Australia

A Metaphysical and Epistemological Critique of Psychiatry

Current health care standards, in many countries, Australia included, are regrettably poor. Surprisingly, practitioners and treating teams alike in mental health and disability sectors, in particular, make far too many basic care-related mistakes, in addition to the already abundant diagnostic mistakes that cause and amplify great harm. In part, too many practitioners also fail to distinguish adverse effects for what they are and all too often treat adverse effects, instead, as comorbidities. Diagnostic failures are dangerous, the result of which generates and perpetuates harms that are extremely costly in terms of patient welfare, in addition to the financial burden placed on everyone. In this submission I contend that the authority bestowed upon psychiatry is misplaced. Subsequently, this misplaced authority affects the governing and investigatory institutions reliant and informed by psychiatry. The examination process undertaken in this investigation traces the metaphysics of psychiatric disorders relative to the Diagnostic-Statistical-Manual (DSM) in its iterations and to the epistemological construction process that serves to underpin the fundamentals of psychiatric practice. There exists a crisis of confidence in psychiatric practice and I urge drastic reform be undertaken to arrest the ongoing damage.

William O'Meara
Professor, James Madison University, USA

Kant and Moral Despair

John E. Hare has summed up the fundamental antinomy of practical reason as expressed by Kant in the joining together of two plausible assertions which appear to be contradictory. These two plausible but seemingly contradictory affirmations are that the highest good is possible and that the highest good is not possible. For Kant, the highest good is that virtue will bring about happiness. The sense of contradiction, then, is this tension: (1) that virtue will bring about happiness, for example, in the Golden Mean of ethics for Aristotle by which practical wisdom leads a person to balanced fulfillment of appetites through such wise virtues as courage, temperance, justice, and friendship but (2) in contrast, such virtues do not guarantee satisfaction of one's desires because evil-doers can satisfy their appetites through evil habits which may likely crush the virtuous habits of good people. Kant's solution to this contradiction between (1) and (2) is to make the postulate of practical reason that God exists as the supreme cause of nature and humanity such that God's will ensures that virtue will cause happiness in the long run and that vice will not cause happiness in the long run

In his book, Hare makes a defense of Kant's purely rational argument for the categorical imperative, but Hare weakens his analysis by connecting Kant's ethics of reason with moral faith, by admitting that 'moral faith is consistent with some doubt about whether your continued well-being is consistent with your trying to live a morally good life. "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief" is a possible frame of mind. It is possible especially when . . . faced with a particularly glaring example of the suffering of the innocent and the triumph of the guilty."

My paper will explore the strengths and weaknesses of both Kant's argument for God and Hare's argument for a moral order.

Adina Portaru

Legal Counsel, ADF International, Belgium

The Need to Protect Freedom of Conscience of Medical Staff

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a foundational human right, since without it no other human right can be fully enjoyed. Despite this, Europe has witnessed a deterioration of this freedom, highlighted by the fact that several EU member states do not fully guarantee freedom of conscience including the right to conscientious objection based on religious grounds.

In a number of European countries, staying true to deeply held moral beliefs may have severe consequences: dismissal from employment, financial penalties leading to bankruptcy, loss of reputation due to negative media coverage, permanent unemployment and social discrimination.

Many such conflicts are visible in the cases of midwives or nurses, who conscientiously object to life ending medical procedures, such as abortions or euthanasia. My presentation seeks to address the context in which staff working in the medical sphere are facing an insurmountable conflict: either violate their deeply held convictions and the moral code which says they cannot take life, or risk their livelihood and careers by staying true to them. Such situations represent a challenge for society, individual human rights and democracy.

Lastly, the presentation will show the need for the protection of conscientious objections – at the national, regional and international level.

Antoine Rebourg

PhD Student, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland

Mental Muscle and Action in Strength of Will

What is it to exercise strength of will? My aim in this talk is to answer this question by clarifying what genuinely qualifies as *mental action*, and what does not, in such exercise.

Building on the popular 'mental muscle' view, developed prominently by Holton (2009) and supported by psychologists' 'strength model' of self-control (Baumeister, Vohs and Tice 2007), I contend that strength of will necessarily involves two key mental components.

The first is an agent's practical *commitment*, a mental state analogous to a muscle in two respects: (i) in regular circumstances, it spontaneously (that is, involuntarily) exerts its normative powers and yields action, but (ii) it is undermined by the emergence of a strong resistive force – a *temptation*. The second component corresponds (to press the muscle analogy) to the voluntary and perhaps effortful use of the muscle: it consists in the agent's actively controlling her psychological setup in order to rehabilitate her commitment's motivational force in the face of the temptation.

Much philosophical ink has been spilled on whether intentional control over one's mental states is possible and (if it is) how it is achieved. I set out to show that my dual model is consistent with two widespread assumptions on the matter: (i) one cannot intentionally form new mental states, but (ii) it is possible to intentionally bring it about that one entertains a previously entertained mental content (Strawson 2003; Mele 2009).

I assess the two possible forms that this control can take. Either it involves the agent's performing some exclusively mental action(s) such as reasoning or directing her attention; or it involves what Hieronymi (2009) calls *managerial control*: the agent performs bodily actions, for instance closing her eyes or leaving the room, so as to modify the environment's affordances in such a way as to 'prime' the conduct fitting her commitment.

Although I follow Vierkant (2013, 2014) in claiming that both forms of control constitute genuine exercises of strength of will, I reject his idea that managerial control of one's mind through overt action amounts to the will *extending* into the environment. More importantly, I argue that the bulk of the motivation involved in exercises of strength of will is imported from the commitment formed by the agent prior to experiencing the temptation, rather than from the control which she exercises on the spot. This squares well with the intuition, borne out by Baumeister and colleagues' empirical

research, that the mental muscle necessary for overcoming temptations must be built and trained before being efficiently put to work.

Alice Reininger
Independent Researcher, Austria

***“Personae non Gratae” - The Successful Intervening of a
Catholic State in the Papal Elections of 1903***

Religion and politics had an eventful relationship with each other over the course of centuries in Europe. In the period after the *Westfälischen Peace* in 1648 catholic rulers in Europe used their sovereignty to challenge the church and regarded their responsibility as a divine mandate. It was with this view that rulers justified the interference of the state into church matters.

In 1903 it was the Habsburger Franz Joseph I (1830-1916) who made use of the controversial right *“ius exclusivae”* to intervene in the elections of the new Pope. The *“personae non gratae”* against whom the veto was directed by state commissioned cardinals, was the favourite, Cardinal Rampolla. He was regarded as the *“deadly enemy of Austria”* and was also *“no real friend of Germany who he rather feared and no less hated.”* In 1888 as the first reports of Pope Leo XIII’s illness came filtering through, the accredited ambassadors in Rome began to show a strong interest in the future of the Vatican and the first alliances were forged.

Bob Robinson

Senior Fellow Emeritus, Laidlaw College, New Zealand

Φρόνησις: A Significant and Over-looked Dimension in Inter-religious Relations

The paper proposes the deployment of Φρόνησις [*phronēsis*] – whose semantic range traverses understanding, insight, practical wisdom, prudence, and even ‘mindfulness’ – as a hermeneutical lens through which to assess and even enhance inter-religious relations. The paper acknowledges: (a) the realities and challenges of understanding multiple religious traditions across sometimes daunting cultural and experiential boundaries; and that (b) there are those within, for example, the Christian, Hindu and Muslim (and other) communities who display indifference, reluctance or even opposition to intentional dialogue and cooperation across such religious divides. However, such conservatives deserve attention because of their numbers, activist inclinations and global influence, but they typically believe the practice of dialogue and even cooperation might or would compromise the faith that is central to their self-understanding. Nonetheless, implications of this Φρόνησις appear to challenge some of their central concerns and to point towards an alternative set of religio-theological starting points. In the presenter’s experience, persuasive reasons – including an appeal to the tangible virtues attached to Φρόνησις – can be advanced to help reluctant conservatives towards at least some forms of interfaith engagement. The semantic field occupied by Φρόνησις (and cognates) is traced from the Greek-Hellenistic world through to the Septuagint, Hellenistic Judaism and the New Testament. Drawing on his own exposure to global Hindu-Christian and Muslim-Christian encounter, the presenter then explores the positive and constructive consequences of an appeal to this Φρόνησις for the inter-religious praxis of Hindus, Muslims and Christians (and others):

- Φρόνησις and cognates offer pragmatic wisdom-driven reasons for dialogue (such as: enhanced understanding and the reduction of inter-communal tensions; the possibility of reciprocal anti-defamation; the promotion of communal harmony; joint responses to common social concern);
- Φρόνησις also further suggests some conditions for fruitful dialogue (acknowledgement of shared humanity and the ideal of community; sympathetic understanding of and openness to the other; the wisdom of the suspension of evaluative judgment; epistemic humility; patience with ambiguity including the tension between religious loyalty and empathetic openness to the other);

- The appeal is further enhanced by a narrative dimension provided by notable exemplars of the virtues of Φρόνησις: in the case of Hinduism, Mahatma Gandhi; in both the Christian and Muslim traditions by Jesus / 'Īsā (given his extraordinary exemplary prominence in the *Qur'an*).

The particular challenges of the fundamentalist and ideologically-driven exclusivist variants of Christianity, Hinduism and Islam are acknowledged and discussed. The paper concludes with a reminder and application of his findings to the presenter's own religious tradition (Christianity): the way in which Φρόνησις and its cognates occurs some 45 times in behavioural, ethical and relational contexts in the New Testament, and helps counter the notion that inter-religious engagement necessarily compromises Christian faith; the way in which Jesus himself displays the virtues of Φρόνησις in his surprising openness to Gentiles, Samaritans, and other "outsiders," and can act as an exemplar of the constructive and fruitful dialogue that is clearly needed in a painfully divided world.

Michel Tombroff

Artist, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

Kronecker, Einstein and the Cross

Two eminent scientists, the German mathematician Leopold Kronecker, and the German-born theoretical physicist Albert Einstein, made comments in which they refer to God in their respective rebuttals of the theory of transcendental and transfinite numbers and of the consequences of quantum theory. The apparent contradiction between the objective activity of science and the subjective experience of faith has been the subject of numerous commentaries over the centuries by scientists and philosophers, and a source of inspiration to many artists. In this paper, I present a brief review of this science vs. God dichotomy, starting with Voltaire's "God the watchmaker". I then describe my two recent artworks, *The Necessity of Chance* and *The Work of Man*, inspired by Kronecker's and Einstein's statements. Finally, I explain why I, an atheist, chose the Christian cross as symbol for these artworks.

Johan A Van Rooyen

Associate Researcher, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Why Religious Human Beings Need Evolutionary Epistemology! A Theological and Evolutionary Viewpoint of 'Why Humans Need to Embrace Evolutionary Epistemology

I put forward an understanding of evolutionary epistemology that rescues something of the old and venerable idea of freedom, and it means that we as theologians should grasp our very nature realistically, beyond any illusionism and utopian dreams. The author feels that scholars, especially theologians, should firstly take evolution seriously and secondly regard evolutionary epistemology as important as evolution itself, the reason being theologians should know that it is of paramount importance for their systematic-theological intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications, which is embarking on a way of thinking that regards evolutionary epistemology as a friend in their accommodation of their respective theological fields of interest. This accommodation is substantial as it will enhance their respective theological disciplines as 'an exhilarating vision of God'. Evolutionary epistemology takes a pragmatic view of humans. Evolutionary epistemologists question how humans really behave and what the true origin of their behaviour is. In contrast to this programme, many conceptions of humans are based on an idealisation of our species.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: Evolutionary epistemology takes a pragmatic view of humans. Evolutionary epistemologists question how humans really behave and what the true origin of their behaviour is. In contrast to this programme, many conceptions of humans are based on an idealisation of our species. I then put forward my own understanding of evolutionary epistemology and conclude that evolutionary epistemology rescues something of the old and venerable idea of freedom, and it means that we should grasp our very nature realistically, beyond any illusionism and utopian dreams.

Andrew Ward
Lecturer, University of York, UK

Had Parfit Refuted Kant's Account of the Freedom Required for Moral Responsibility?

In the chapter entitled 'Free Will and Desert' of his *On What Matters* (Volume I, Chapter 11), Derek Parfit launches two separate attacks on Kant's account of the freedom required for moral responsibility: what Kant calls 'transcendental freedom'. In his first attack, Parfit claims that Kant displays both muddle and straightforward error in supposing that the compatibilist's, hypothetical, sense of 'could have done otherwise' is not sufficient for capturing the freedom required for moral responsibility. In his second attack, Parfit contends that, even if (a) transcendental freedom is a requirement of moral responsibility and (b) the phenomena/noumena distinction is acceptable, Kant's own account of transcendental freedom is demonstrably inconceivable. I argue that neither of Parfit's attacks justifies his dismissal of Kant's account of the freedom required for moral responsibility and desert.