



THE ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Abstract Book

9th Annual International Symposium on
Religion & Theology
27-30 May 2024, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Mark Fagiano & Olga Gkounta

2024

Abstracts
9th Annual International
Symposium on Religion &
Theology
27-30 May 2024, Athens, Greece

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Mark Fagiano & Olga Gkounta

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 9th Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology (27-30 May 2024), organized by the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER).

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 only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of ATINER and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can 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 can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a new references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this conference (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to ATINER's mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

Table 1. *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2016-2024*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2024	46	18	Fagiano and Gkounta (2024)
2023	42	17	O'Meara and Gkounta (2023)
2022	41	18	O'Meara and Gkounta (2022)
2021	18	11	Papanikos (2021)
2020	24	10	Papanikos (2020)
2019	18	12	Papanikos (2019)
2018	18	12	Papanikos (2018)
2017	25	14	Papanikos (2017)
2016	45	22	Papanikos (2016)

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 can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their

disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, ATINER has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 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.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

Editors' Note

These abstracts provide a vital means to the dissemination of scholarly inquiry in the field of Religion & Theology. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the conference.

ATINER's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world in order to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and once they are back in their institutions and countries to implement what they have acquired. The 9th Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 18 different countries (Austria, Canada, China, Cyprus, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye, UK, USA), which brought in the conference the perspectives of many different country approaches and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue into the future. With our joint efforts, the next editions of this conference will be even better. We hope that this abstract book as a whole will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience.

Mark Fagiano & Olga Gkounta
Editors

**9th Annual International Symposium on Religion &
Theology, 27-30 May 2024, Athens, Greece**

Organizing & Scientific Committee

All ATINER's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of ATINER, who contributed by reviewing the submitted abstracts and papers.

1. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER & Honorary Professor, University of Stirling, U.K.
2. Patricia Hanna, Vice President of Academic Affairs, ATINER & ex-Dean & Professor Emerita, University of Utah, USA.
3. Mark Fagiano, Deputy Head, Philosophy Unit, ATINER & Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA.
4. William O'Meara, Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, James Madison University, USA.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**9th Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology, 27-30 May
2024, Athens, Greece**

PROGRAM

Monday 27 May 2024

08.30-09.15

Registration

09:15-10:00

Opening and Welcoming Remarks:

- Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER.

10:00-11:30 Session 1

<p>Session 1a Moderator: Mark Fagiano, Deputy Head, <u>Philosophy Unit</u>, ATINER & Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA.</p>	<p>Session 1b Moderator: Tennyson Samraj, Professor, Burman University, Canada.</p>	<p>Session 1c Moderator: Eleonora Papaleontiou-Louca, Associate Professor, European University Cyprus, Cyprus.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peter Vranas, Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA. <i>Title: Permission-Prohibition Configurations.</i> 2. Martyna Koszkalo, Professor, University of Gdańsk, Poland. <i>Title: John Duns Scotus's Analysis of the Structure of the Will in the Light of 14th Century Philosophical and Theological Discussions.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stephan Unger, Professor, Saint Anselm College, USA. <i>Title: The Ancient Roots of Classical Liberalism.</i> 2. Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva, Assistant Professor, Pennsylvania State University, USA. <i>Title: War, Peace, and the Search for Meaning: Tolstoy and the Crisis of Our Times.</i> 3. Jianjun Zhang, Professor, Philosophy Department & Director, Institute for Modern Logic and Application, Nanjing University, China. <i>Title: The Pragmatic Nature of Generalized Logical Paradoxes and the RZH Criterion for Paradox Resolution.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Patrick Downey, Professor, St. Mary's College of California, USA. <i>Title: From Private Bodies to a Shareable Body Politic. A Theological Solution to a Foundational Political Problem.</i> 2. Zeev Herzog, Professor Emeritus, Tel Aviv University, Israel. <i>Title: Was Monotheism the Dominant Religion in the Kingdom of Judah? A View Through an Archaeological Lens.</i> 3. Sanaa Riaz, Associate Professor, Metropolitan State University of Denver, USA. <i>Title: Spirits and Social Agency.</i>

11:30-13:00 Session 2		
<p>Session 2a Moderator: Natasza Szutta, Associate Professor, University of Gdańsk, Poland.</p>	<p>Session 2b Moderator: Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva, Assistant Professor, Pennsylvania State University, USA.</p>	<p>Session 2c Moderator: Robert Aleksander Maryks, Professor, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Side Emre, Associate Professor, Texas A&M University, USA. <i>Title: On the Cusp of Divine Truths and the Everlasting Quest for Knowledge: Diagramming Esoteric Knowledge in Sixteenth Century Ottoman Sufi Literature.</i> Silvia Gullino, Assistant Professor, University of Padua, Italy. <i>Title: The Origin of Soul's Passions and Vices: The Influence of Platonic and Aristotelian Doctrines on Evagrius Ponticus' Thought.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Xavier Pavie, Professor, ESSEC Business School, International College of Philosophy, Université Paris Nanterre, France. <i>Title: Non-Standard Philosophy, A Necessity for a New Era of Innovation.</i> Cong Cong, Chair Professor, Nanjing University IAS & Co-Director, Nanjing-Birmingham-Phoenix Shakespeare Centre, China. <i>Title: Politics and Philosophy of the Aged: Senior Rulers More Sinn'd against than Sinning.</i> Eric B. Litwack, Honorary Research Fellow, The University of Sheffield & Faculty, Philosophy and Information Studies, Syracuse University in London, UK. <i>Title: The Aesthetics of Humanoid Robot Design: The Psychological and Ethical Dimensions.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Olivier Hamel, Professor, University Toulouse 3, France. <i>Title: Dentistry and Spirituality; A French Perspective.</i> Hanna Herzog, Professor Emerita, Tel Aviv University, Israel. <i>Title: Religious Resurgence Between Inclusion and Exclusion: Gender Perspectives of the Israeli Case.</i> Eleonora Papaleontiou-Louca, Associate Professor, European University Cyprus, Cyprus. <i>Title: The Role of Teachers in the Development of Children's and Adolescents' Spirituality According to Maslow.</i>

13:00-14:30 Session 3	
<p>Session 3a Moderator: Olga Gkounta, Researcher, ATINER.</p>	<p>Session 3b Moderator: Ori Soltes, Teaching Professor, Georgetown University, USA.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mark Fagiano, Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA. <i>Title: Moral Education: From Thought Experiments to Embodied Experience.</i> Jevgenija Sivoronova, Researcher, Daugavpils University, Latvia. <i>Title: Academics' Meanings of Knowledge Sources.</i> Montserrat Sobral Dorado, PhD Candidate, National University of Distance Education 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Joseph Bush, Professor Emeritus, Wesley Theological Seminary, USA. <i>Title: God's Oikos: Fifty Years of Ecumenical Thinking about Ecology and the Economic Trinity.</i> Nadja Furlan Stante, Professor, Science and Research Centre Koper (ZRS Koper), Slovenia. <i>Title: A Call for Women's Engagement</i>

<p>(UNED), Spain. <i>Title: An Approach to Eroticism through our Aesthetic Experience with the Odyssey.</i></p>	<p><i>in Environmental Interreligious Peacebuilding.</i></p> <p>3. Jonathan Milevsky, Educator, Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Canada. <i>Title: Yos'l Rakover Talks to God: Seeing Zvi Kolitz' Famous Novel through the Lens of Joseph Soloveitchik's Philosophy.</i></p>
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14:30-15:30 Lunch

15:30-17:00 Session 4

Moderator: Mohammad Ashraf Adeel, Professor, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, USA.

1. **Martin Peterson**, Professor, Texas A&M University, USA.
Title: A Compromise Between Utilitarianism and Duty Ethics?
2. **Thomas B. Ellis**, Professor, Appalachian State University, USA.
Title: Just Athens and Jerusalem? What about Benares? Ulysses, Abraham, and Uddhava at the Cross-cultural Roads.
3. **Hatice Zeynep Coskunkan**, Master's Graduate, Koç University, Türkiye.
Title: The Value of Insatiable Curiosity.

17:00-18:30 Session 5

Moderator: Alberto Merzari, PhD Student, University of Padua, Italy.

1. **Samir Roy**, Professor, National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training & Research (NITTTR), Kolkata, India.
Title: The Missing Link between the Strong AI Thesis and Searle's Chinese Room Argument.
2. **Aylon Cohen**, Lecturer, Freie Universität – Berlin, Germany.
Title: How does the Body Signify Meaning? Gesture, Affect and Signification in the Work of Norbert Elias.
3. **Johannes Wirtz**, Teacher, Gymnasium (German High School), Erzbischöfliche Ursulinenschule Hersel, Germany.
Title: Is Classical Music Superior to Pop Music? On the Structure of the Evaluation of Music.

20:30-22:30

Athenian Early Evening Symposium (includes in order of appearance: continuous academic discussions, dinner, wine/water, music)

Tuesday 28 May 2024

09:00-10:30 Session 6

Session 6a

Moderator: Anita Leirfall, Associate Professor, University of Bergen, Norway.

1. **Tennyson Samraj**, Professor, Burman University, Canada.
Title: Naming and meaning delineated in the Context of the Essence/Existence Distinction.
2. **John Lizza**, Professor, Kutztown

Session 6b

Moderator: Zeev Herzog, Professor Emeritus, Tel Aviv University, Israel.

1. **Robert Aleksander Maryks**, Professor, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland.
Title: Recovering Forgotten Religious Tumults: Crisis of Civic Values in Early Modern Poland-Lithuania.
2. **Ori Soltes**, Teaching Professor, Georgetown

<p>University of Pennsylvania, USA. <i>Title: A Prescriptive Metaphysics of Death.</i></p> <p>3. Reinhard Neck, Professor Emeritus, University of Klagenfurt, Austria. <i>Title: A Critical Discussion of Some Theories of Justice: G.A. Cohen versus John Rawls.</i></p>	<p>University, USA. <i>Title: Shaping God in Modernity: From Descartes to Spinoza.</i></p> <p>3. Anthony Nderitu, Teacher, Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, UK. <i>Title: Hallmarks of Religious Extremism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.</i></p>
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10:30-12:00 Session 7	
<p>Session 7a Moderator: Jacek Dobrowolski, Professor, University of Warsaw, Poland.</p> <p>1. Anita Leirfall, Associate Professor, University of Bergen, Norway. <i>Title: On the Perception of Forces. Some Kantian Reflections.</i></p> <p>2. Andrew Ward, Honorary Life Fellow in Philosophy, University of York, UK. <i>Title: The Judgment of Taste: Hume versus Kant.</i></p> <p>3. Alberto Merzari, PhD Student, University of Padua, Italy. <i>Title: A Philosophy for Leisure: From Aristotle to Keynes, Goethe, and Heidegger.</i></p>	<p>Session 7b Moderator: Anthony Nderitu, Teacher, Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, UK.</p> <p>1. Mohammad Ashraf Adeel, Professor, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, USA. <i>Title: Revelation and Virtue.</i></p> <p>2. Robert Bishop, Professor, Wheaton College, USA. <i>Title: Contextual Emergence and Consciousness.</i></p>

<p>12:00-13:30 Session 8 Moderator: Montserrat Sobral Dorado, PhD Candidate, National University of Distance Education (UNED), Spain.</p> <p>1. Jacek Dobrowolski, Professor, University of Warsaw, Poland. <i>Title: Nietzsche: Romanticism, Modernity and Modernism – A New Reading.</i></p> <p>2. Natasza Szutta, Associate Professor, University of Gdańsk, Poland. <i>Title: Is Phronesis an Expert Skill?</i></p> <p>3. Petros Satrazanis, PhD Candidate, University College Dublin, Ireland. <i>Title: Costas Axelos' Planetary Thought: Challenging Boundaries and Embracing Enigma.</i></p>

13:30-14:30 Lunch

<p>14:30-16:00 Session 9 Moderator: John Lizza, Professor, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, USA.</p> <p>1. Cristina Rossitto, Professor, University of Padua, Italy. <i>Title: The "Appetite" (Orexis) in Animals and Man According to Aristotle's De Anima.</i></p> <p>2. James Downey, Associate Professor, Hollins University, USA. <i>Title: On Truth Relativism.</i></p> <p>3. Swagata Ghosh, Assistant Professor, University of North Bengal, India. <i>Title: Nature of Vedic Ethics and its Critique as Soteriology.</i></p> <p>4. Katherine Cooklin, Professor, Slippery Rock University, USA. <i>Title: Foucault on Subjugated Knowledge and Emancipatory Aims.</i></p>

17:00-20:00 Session 10

Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk

The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes transportation costs and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by ATINER exclusively for the conference participants.

20:30-22:00

Dinner

Wednesday 29 May 2024
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Mycenae Visit

Thursday 30 May 2024
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Friday 31 May 2024
Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Mohammad Ashraf Adeel

Professor, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, USA

Revelation and Virtue

This paper investigates Socrates' attitude toward divine *logos* or revelation, compares it with Abraham, and then relates it with Socratic, Aristotelian, and Kantian conceptions of virtue. The basic purpose is to explore whether accepting revelation as a source of knowledge is compatible with freedom- and reason-based views of virtue. I provide an affirmative answer to this question.

Section I examines some textual evidence from early Platonic dialogues to draw a distinction between "riddling" divine *logos* or revelations and straightforward or non-riddling ones received by Socrates. It is argued that treating them both equally by subjecting them to the method of hypothesis seems to nullify the distinction between the secular and the sacred. Section II investigates Socratic, Aristotelian, and Kantian conceptions of virtue. Section III compares these conceptions of virtue to bring out their common elements, that is, they are all freedom- and reason-based conceptions of virtue. In section IV we return to the topic of revelation, pointing out that both Socrates and Abraham seem to have received both types of revelation, riddling as well as straightforward. The Quran also seems to note a similar distinction. It is argued there that Socrates and Abraham, though they may engage in cross-examination of some riddling revelations, do not doubt their veracity, and seem to accept them on the basis of divine testimony. Insofar as it is rational to accept ordinary testimonial knowledge, it should also be rational for the recipients of divine revelation to accept divine *logos* as testimony. It is concluded, therefore, that accepting divine revelation and acting upon it is compatible with Socratic, Aristotelian, and Kantian conceptions of virtue.

Robert Bishop
Professor, Wheaton College, USA

Contextual Emergence and Consciousness

Contextual emergence is a recently developed account of ontological emergence grounded in scientific explanation that: 1) does not violate the inherent unity of the world; 2) does not assume that a brute new law or causal power must be posited if no reductive explanation exists; and 3) does not presuppose foundationalism. This account is grounded primarily in the sciences rather than in logic or metaphysics, emphasizing the ontological and explanatory fundamentality of multiscale stability conditions and their contextual constraints. Such conditions often operate globally over interconnected, interdependent, and interacting entities and their relations. Contextual emergence also focuses on the conditions making the existence, stability, and persistence of emergent systems possible. After a brief introduction to contextual emergence, I will argue for how context and emergence are important for understanding consciousness, whether one pursues panpsychist, emergent persons, neural networks, or other approaches to explaining consciousness, and why evolutionary development is important to take into account.

Joseph Bush

Professor Emeritus, Wesley Theological Seminary, USA

God's Oikos: Fifty Years of Ecumenical Thinking about Ecology and the Economic Trinity

The last fifty years have seen increasing global awareness about the fragility of the natural world in response to human industry and activity. The same period of time has presented a challenge to ecumenical theologians to articulate an understanding of Trinitarian theology that speaks to this environmental crisis. A watershed event fifty years ago was the 1974 World Council of Churches' (WCC) Study Conference in Bucharest that resulted in a call for a "just and sustainable society"-- which call was echoed the following year at the WCC General Assembly in Nairobi. In recent years, we have seen the promulgation of the papal encyclical, *Laudato si*, which draws on Orthodox thought, particularly that of Patriarch Bartholomew. This paper compares the Trinitarian conceptions of six western theologians who have strived to articulate ecologically relevant theology during this half-century: Norman Pittenger, Jürgen Moltmann, Matthew Fox, Leonardo Boff, Sallie McFague and Elizabeth Johnson. While there are disparate influences informing their respective positions on our common Trinitarian tradition, this paper highlights the confluence of two streams of thought in particular within their writings: a doctrine of perichoresis flowing from the East and a "process" philosophy of organism with its headwaters in the West.

Aylon Cohen

Lecturer, Freie Universität – Berlin, Germany

**How does the Body Signify Meaning?
Gesture, Affect and Signification in the Work of Norbert
Elias**

This paper investigates the relationship between the domain of things we call ideas, which philosophers, political theorists, and intellectual historians have claimed as their privileged object of study, and the domain of empirical history. The English word “idea” originates from the Greek word *eidos* (εἶδος), meaning something that is seen. But if ideas can be seen, where do they exist and how exactly do we see them? Despite sophisticated developments in the study of ideas, I argue that many political philosophers remain tethered to a mentalist vision that portrays ideas as immaterial objects existing in a metaphysical domain, which we can only access via logocentric practices associated with language, speech, and reason. According to this mentalist picture, ideas are related to but ultimately separable from the world of matter and the body, which is believed to be mute and ultimately incapable of signifying meaning without the linguistic apparatus of speech.

The paper proposes to rethink the relationship between the study of ideas with the concrete embodied practices of actors. To do so, the paper engages with Norbert Elias’s account of bodily etiquette and emotional communication. According to Elias’s work on etiquette and manners, bodily actions are not logically prior to signification, as if an act’s meaning only emerges once a gesture’s movement ends. Rather, Elias claimed that forms of embodiment acquire their meaning in and through social interactions with others. When a subject bows, for instance, such non-verbal actions generate meaning by signaling to the actors in a particular interactive context their relative status and standing. Analyzing Elias’s account of bodily communication with his often overlooked theorizing on bodily affect, the paper explores gestures such as bowing or hugging are affectively invested with political and philosophical meaning, such as submission or comradeship.

Attending to the affective sensations evoked by bodily practice, the paper argues that forms of embodiment can produce visceral and felt forms of signification that in certain social contexts cannot be conveyed by words. Focusing on the body’s affective practices discloses how

philosophical principles are made somatic and lived as embodied structures of feeling.

Accordingly, this paper aims to rethink the place of the body in the study of the ideas by attending to the material body's its capacity to generate conceptual meaning. Doing so, I propose, will help us rethink the relationship between matter and meaning and explore how the non-linguistic practices of the body can have signifying effects.

Cong Cong

Chair Professor, Nanjing University IAS, China

**Politics and Philosophy of the Aged:
Senior Rulers More Sinn'd against than Sinning**

This paper analyzes how the elder King Lear is passively or deliberately disjuncted from the outside world, resulting in his loss of judgment and decision-making capability, thus leading to the major mistakes of his senior ruling. It illustrates that elderly people like King Lear were the victims, not the perpetrators, who are "More Sinn'd Against Than Sinning", and that their destructive mistakes were made due to being cut off from real social contact and the authentic sources of information as a result of blind idolatry of the nation as well as the people around them. Based on these discussions, the tragic pity and fear of everlasting humanity is examined from the political and philosophical dimensions.

Katherine Cooklin
Professor, Slippery Rock University, USA

Foucault on Subjugated Knowledge and Emancipatory Aims

Foucault equivocates on power when he calls for an emancipation of subjugated knowledge. I argue that if we take seriously Foucault's thesis that power is productive, then the practice of genealogy emancipates neither subjugated knowledges nor those marginalized by a dominant discourse. This is important because many commentators have argued that Foucault's theory supports liberal emancipatory aims. Drawing on Foucault's use of genealogy, I will show that this claim is not borne out by Foucault's theory.

Hatice Zeynep Coskunkan
Master's Graduate, Koç University, Türkiye

The Value of Insatiable Curiosity

What an epistemic subject is curious about is always unknown to them, at least partially. However, the object of curiosity is sometimes not only unknown *but also* unknowable to the epistemic subject due to their limited mental faculties and cognitive abilities. With this observation in place, we can distinguish between two kinds of curiosity. Assuming that curiosity is satisfied by knowledge, it is possible for an epistemic subject to satisfy their curiosity when the object of curiosity is unknown but still knowable to them. Let's say that this kind of curiosity is *satiabile*. On the other hand, when an epistemic subject is curious about an unknowable object, their curiosity would be characterized as *insatiabile* since it is impossible for them to satisfy it.

In this paper, I raise the question of whether insatiable curiosity has any value. With the philosophical interest in curiosity over the last twenty years, some virtue epistemologists have started considering curiosity one of our intellectual virtues and proposing certain considerations regarding its epistemic value. Most have suggested that curiosity can be viewed as valuable even if it does not lead to knowledge. What is important to notice here is that curiosity that does not lead to knowledge cannot be equated to insatiable curiosity. The unknowability of an object is just *one* of the *possible* reasons explaining why curiosity does not lead an epistemic subject to the knowledge of *that* object. Hence, I believe, the value of insatiable curiosity deserves special attention and a separate investigation in its own right.

Here, I aim to show that a Humean account of curiosity supports an affirmative answer to the question of whether *insatiabile curiosity* has any value. In the section titled "Of curiosity, or the love of truth" in Book II of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume seeks to elucidate the inextricable connection between curiosity and pleasure, which can be read as reflecting his position regarding the value of curiosity. He appears to maintain that curiosity is valuable *only* insofar as it gives pleasure to an epistemic subject, and that there are two conditions that curiosity needs to fulfill in order to be pleasurable: it needs to (i) fix the epistemic subject's attention, and (ii) exert their genius.

Hume is widely accepted as skeptical about the idea of causation. At the end of his philosophical inquiry, he concludes that no human being can come to know, given their limited epistemic abilities, if there is a principle of causation operating in nature. Here, I suggest taking

Hume's curiosity about causation as an example of insatiable curiosity and reconsidering the *Treatise's* section in light of his *own* insatiable curiosity. By appealing to Hume's own curiosity about causation, I show that insatiable curiosity can be as efficacious as satiable curiosity in fixing an epistemic subject's attention and exerting their genius. Ultimately, I argue that insatiable curiosity can be regarded as *instrumentally* valuable in virtue of promoting pleasure within the Humean framework.

Jacek Dobrowolski
Professor, University of Warsaw, Poland

Nietzsche: Romanticism, Modernity and Modernism - A New Reading

Nietzsche's views on modernity are well known: he was a declared opponent of anything modern, and his diagnosis of modern life was clear: nihilism. He defined himself to be untimely, which also meant an act of denial and rejection of the driving idea of modern time: to up to date by disavowing the past. Nietzsche's own tendency to look back to past in search of the archaic and instinctive forms of life seems decisively anti-modern. However, upon closer look we shall find a deeper and more complex relationship between the philosopher and the modern. In my paper I will attempt to: 1. show how Nietzsche's understanding of the modern, and the following critique, was narrow and simplified; and how his own criticism of the modern relies on the assumptions that modern life established itself, with special focus on the concept of will to power. 2. Trace the connections between Nietzsche and romanticism – although he was against the romantics, he also was one of them – a late one, to be sure, but what he and the earlier romantics had in common was a vast array of analogies. By showing how Nietzsche emerged from the romantic outlook on the spiritual I will try to describe his version of an idealism. 3. Finally, I will demonstrate how Nietzsche can be inscribed into a larger narrative of the modern history, and what is that he represents within it.

James Downey
Associate Professor, Hollins University, USA

On Truth Relativism

One way truth relativism has characterized itself, from ancient times, is as the assertion that there is no such property as being true.

A simple reply, and one refutation of this view, I hold, is that this assertion predicates of itself the property of being true, as does any assertion. Thus, this assertion implies a contradiction, in asserting that there is no such property as being true while implying that there is the property of being true, and therefore since it implies a contradiction this assertion is necessarily false. This position has been argued for decisively, I believe, by others.

Here I argue that, in addition, there is an even simpler refutation of this version of truth relativism. I argue that any assertion that P is same proposition as that P is true. Thus the assertion that there is no such property as being true is the same proposition as that it is true that there is no property of being true. The view is itself a contradiction.

Patrick Downey

Professor, St. Mary's College of California, USA

From Private Bodies to a Shareable Body Politic: A Theological Solution to a Foundational Political Problem

The political problem besetting all nations, tribes, and families, as illuminated by Plato in the fifth book of his *Republic*, is the problem of our own private body with its own particular pleasures and pains. This problem we might label the "irrational love of one's own." The reasonable philosopher loves reality just because it is, but we love things only if we can convince ourselves that they are "ours" or an imaginative extension of "ours." The resulting problem, that can only be medicated, but not cured, is that the "body private," whether our own, our family, tribe, or nation, always lies underneath any level of "body politic" and threatens the bloodshed and disintegration of civil war. This is also the political problem the Bible deals with throughout, beginning with Adam and Eve's fall from rationally shareable bodies ("the two were one flesh") into unshareable bodies whose now shameful "privacy" must be hid behind a bloody rather than bloodless veil. The blood is the sign of always threatening civil war, whether murder between brothers, feuds within tribes, or later, war between nations. The scarlet thread of blood tying the entire Bible together, Old and New Testament, reminds us that however far our loves are pushed out beyond our private body to family, tribe or nation, they remain irrational because unshareable. Only by loving the creator God who first loved us, can we rationally love anything of our own, but it must be loved as gift rather than as a possession. Such a love renders all bodies and nations truly shareable, and achieving this shareability is the paradoxical plot of the Bible, wherein the Word becomes flesh in a particular body amidst a particular people and nation. Yet even with His own nation and His own Son, this Lord is not "partial" and demands justice towards widows, orphans, and sojourners, because the irrational love of *only* our own can become rational solely through the resurrection of this particular body, king of this particular nation and these particular people. His body, along with all other bodies, can thus now retain their particular wounds and history, while yet remaining shareable. Likewise, all nations will share in the nation of Israel, in the same way all distinct languages will share an understanding through the inner rational word that we see illustrated in Pentecost. Without the resurrection, however, this shareability of bodies and nations remains merely a useful fiction, as Plato saw, and the equally fictitious

“rationality” of some sort of deductive universalism will not go away. Reading Scripture in terms of Plato’s “irrational love of one’s own” therefore raises questions for both a Protestant and Catholic understanding of nations, questions that neither can answer adequately without this philosophical and exegetical attention.

Thomas B. Ellis

Professor, Appalachian State University, USA

Just Athens and Jerusalem? What about Benares? Ulysses, Abraham, and Uddhava at the Cross-cultural Roads

Certain trajectories in twentieth-century Continental philosophy employ what I call “ethnotropes” in conceptualizations of subjectivity, particularly the use of the “Greek Hero” and the “Jewish Nomad” in the work of Emanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, John D. Caputo, and Marc C. Taylor. For these authors, Ulysses and Abraham serve as ethnotropic substitutes for the transcendental subject and the deconstructive subject respectively. They do this in order to critique Edmund Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology. The worry is that Husserl’s phenomenology cannot account for the true alterity of the other and as such does violence to the other. This paper ultimately argues that the ethical critique of Husserl’s transcendental ego begun by deconstruction does not go far enough. I argue that the completion of this ethical critique is not realized in Jewish deconstruction but rather a philosophical presentation of a particular strand of Hindu devotion in the work of the twentieth-century Hindu philosopher, Jarava Lal Mehta.

In the fifth meditation of his *Cartesian Meditations*, Edmund Husserl establishes the status of the other as an analogical other, that is, the other is like me. Accordingly, the other does not radically transcend the transcendental ego’s intention. Like Ulysses traveling afar only to return to home unscathed, and perhaps even augmented and edified, the transcendental ego’s encounter with the other is not disrupting of the authorial, and by a certain extension, imperial intention. The other is known in advance as simply another “me.”

Levinas, Derrida, Caputo, and Taylor all appeal to Abraham as a potential foil to the Husserlian commitment to a triumphal ego. All four authors see the Jewish Nomad, that is, Abraham, as an antagonist for the Greek Hero, Ulysses. These authors employ the Jewish notion of the messianic as a structure in subjectivity that is forever awaiting the arrival of the other. The Jewish Nomad, having never reached the other, never returns home from its “intentional” forays abroad. The messianic ethically critique’s the transcendental ego’s seeming impatience with an other that has yet to appear.

The messianic does not go far enough. The messianic remains tied to an ethically suspect metaphysics of presence: the messiah is always still to come (to presence). Considering resources beyond just Jerusalem

and Athens, one finds an alternative in Benares. For Mehta, the Hindu tradition of *viraha bhakti* (love-in-separation) completes the ethical criticism of Husserl's phenomenology. Unlike the Continental messianic, the Hindu devotee realizes that the other, that is, Krishna, is not only absent but is in fact withdrawing, that is, the negative messianic. The *viraha bhakti* model shows that the other is not just delayed, but is in fact structurally withdrawing. Importantly, the Hindu tradition notes that Krishna withdraws in order to heighten the devotee's, that is, Uddhava's longing for him, read here as a heightening of the transcendental ego's ethical concern for a structurally withdrawn other. Accordingly, Mehta's Hindu, negative messianic completes the ethical critique of Husserl's heroic phenomenology begun, yet left incomplete by the Continental messianic.

Side Emre

Associate Professor, Texas A&M University, USA

**On the Cusp of Divine Truths and the Everlasting Quest
for Knowledge: Diagramming Esoteric Knowledge in
Sixteenth Century Ottoman Sufi Literature**

The Dā'ire-i Cihānnümā (The Diagram of the Cosmos, composed between 910/1504 and 922/1516 C.E.) is an extraordinarily complex Sufi treatise written by Muḥyī (d. ca. 937/1530), an unknown Khalwati dervish, possibly of the Sunbuli-Cemali branch, who lived in Ottoman Rumelia. Inspired by Ibn al-'Arabī's *Kitāb al-Tadjiyyāt*, the *Futūhāt al-Makkiyya* and, most visibly, the *Inshā' al-dawā'ir*, Muḥyī drew on a vast intellectual heritage of medieval Islamicate mystical literature including works by Persian theosophist Ḥaydar-i Āmulī (d. 787/1385), the Persian Sufi poet Mullā Muḥammad Shīrīn Maghribī (d. 810/1407-8) and the Persian Akbarian Shaykh Naṣr Allāh Rūyānī (d. 1430 C.E.). These works evolved from their Akbarian and Persian inspirations and did not have a scientific or astronomical orientation. They were written in Anatolian Turkish and showcased a synthesis of diversified esoteric and mystical knowledge appealing to readers in Sufi networks, disciples on the path, and beyond, in the Ottoman Empire. In this presentation, I will examine the esoteric subject matter in the text and diagrams of various manuscript versions of the *Dā'ire-i Cihānnümā* and argue that visualized mystical cosmologies conceptualized by Ottoman Sufi diagrammists are a genre of their own, which I call *diagrammatic visual cosmologies*. Diagramming, and its culture, remain an unexplored field of study in historical Sufism studies of the early modern Ottoman Empire. My forthcoming book, and articles, on diagrammatic mystical cosmologies in the Ottoman world aims to introduce this intriguing field to a diverse range of scholars, present visual materials, i.e., circular diagrams, as indispensable communicators of mystical, theological, and esoteric knowledge, and thus address a vast lacuna in modern-day literature in Ottoman historical and Global Sufism studies.

Mark Fagiano

Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA

Moral Education: From Thought Experiments to Embodied Experience

This paper critically examines the efficacy of traditional moral education methods, specifically thought experiments and abstract ethical principles, in cultivating virtuous character and guiding moral behavior. Drawing upon the work of philosophers like Nozick and Aristotle, the paper questions the transformative potential of thought experiments, arguing that they often remain detached from embodied practices and fail to instigate meaningful behavioral change.

It also explores the historical and conceptual underpinnings of moral education, highlighting the ancient understanding of "ethos" and "moral," which emphasize the role of habituation and context-specific practices in shaping character and moral discernment. Contrasting these insights with contemporary moral psychology, neuroscience, and social psychology findings, the paper challenges the prevailing notion that mere reflection on abstract principles leads to moral development.

In response to these limitations, the paper explores the emerging role of technology, specifically Extended Reality (XR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), in moral education. It suggests that immersive, experiential technologies can provide students with simulated, visceral experiences of ethical dilemmas, thereby facilitating deeper engagement, emotional investment, and critical reflection. However, it also cautions against the potential pitfalls of reducing moral complexities to mathematical frameworks, emphasizing the importance of preserving nuance, empathy, and context in ethical deliberation.

Ultimately, the paper advocates for a more holistic approach to moral education that integrates embodied experiences, contextual understanding, and reflective practices, while critically engaging with emerging technological tools. It calls for a renewed focus on cultivating virtues through habitual practices and fostering meaningful interpersonal relationships as central to moral development and flourishing.

Nadja Furlan Stante

Professor, Science and Research Centre Koper (ZRS Koper), Slovenia

A Call for Women's Engagement in Environmental Interreligious Peacebuilding

In a broader context, this presentation focuses on the need to address environmental issues and include women's voices and actions in the context of interreligious dialogue - more specifically, to create a venue for women's engagement in environmental peacebuilding through interreligious encounters and dialogue. First, the phenomenon of religious environmental peacebuilding is introduced as an emerging field that views conflicts over environmental resources (environmental injustice) as an opportunity for the conflicting parties to cooperate with one another and ultimately work toward a lasting and sustainable peace. A brief overview of two examples of good practices of women's movements for environmental peacebuilding (*Navdanya* and the *Green Belt Movement*) and their contributions are briefly analyzed. From this perspective, the question arises: is Western Christian ecotheology listening to the ecotheological perspectives and practices of the Global South? Furthermore, it addresses the importance of including women's voices and actions (from the Global South and the Global North for mutual enrichment), which are often left out of interreligious dialogue, but could also find their place in religious (environmental) peacebuilding. This presentation follows the ecofeminist thesis that the exploitation of the earth (ecological crisis) is closely linked to the marginalization, exploitation, and abuse of women. From this perspective, perceptions and critical perspectives of environmental injustice and the importance of women's engagement in environmental interreligious peacebuilding are brought together.

Swagata Ghosh

Assistant Professor, University of North Bengal, India

Nature of Vedic Ethics and its Critique as Soteriology

The present paper deals with the idea of understanding Vedic ethics as a code of righteous living, in the light of Mīmāṃsā philosophy, and to reflect upon the possibility of such methods as a means of attaining liberation. In other words, the Vedas provide us with prescriptive codes of right and wrong actions. It commands us about performatives and non-performatives, in order to lead a good life. We know that human endeavours are primarily based on attaining the desired, and to prevent the unwanted ends. Hence, the entire effort of human actions lies in the fact that we want to attain the cessation of sufferings. This paves the way for studies in Soteriology, and the question arises that could the Vedas be considered as a literature on Soteriology.

The paper consists of two parts, that is, the linguistic analysis of the Vedic statements based on grammar and semantics. It is aimed at depicting the manner in which Vedic sentences act as prescriptive ethical codes. The next part deals with the questions raised by the opposing schools, like Sāṃkhya, against the idea of considering Vedas as a supreme sanction of means, leading beings to their salvation from empirical sufferings, and its plausible responses.

Silvia Gullino

Assistant Professor, University of Padua, Italy

The Origin of Soul's Passions and Vices: The Influence of Platonic and Aristotelian Doctrines on Evagrius Ponticus' Thought

For later Platonist, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Christian thinkers the platonic theory of pleasure and pain (discussed, along with others, in Plato *Laws* I, 633B–644C and *Republic* IX, 580D–581A) prepared the way for complex ethical theories, which discussed the links between virtues and vices, the soul's passions and their therapy.

Evagrius Ponticus' thought - also called Evagrius the Solitary, a Greek monk and an important Christian author, whose theory of passions is closely linked to Platonism - can be interesting in order to examine the Christian treatment of passions and vice in relation to the capital sins.

As a matter of fact, this philosopher devoted himself, among other things, to the encoding of the spiritual exercises necessary to fight against the emotions. But he was, above all, the author of a *Practical Treatise*, in which he theorized the deadly sins in detail, inquiring about what Origen had called "first movement" - as stated by the Stoics - and trying to determine the best way to achieve *apatheia*.

Evagrius identified the existence of eight thoughts (*logismoi*), which attacked the man: the thought of the gluttony (*gastrimargia*), of fornication (*porneia*), avarice (*philargyria*), anxiety (*lype*), anger (*orgies*), listless depression (*akedia*), vanity or conceit (*kenodoxia*) and pride (*hyperephania*). In Later Christian thinkers these eight thoughts became the seven Sins, encoded after a series of adjustments.

The eight *logismoi* of Evagrius were connected to passion and vices. Nevertheless, these *logismoi* were not considered passions *tout court*, neither vices, as evidenced by their name "bad *logismoi*" or *propathe*.

The purpose of my work is to examine the treatment of *pathe* and *logismoi* in Evagrius Ponticus, in order to emphasize how he wanted to distinguish two kinds of Evil, differentiating between *pathe* and *propathe*.

In opposition to a common tendency to read the Evagrian system primarily in Stoic terms, I would like to show Evagrius' connection with Plato and Aristotle, concerning the aforementioned subject.

Olivier Hamel

Professor, University Toulouse 3, France

Dentistry and Spirituality; A French Perspective

The presentation delves into the intricate relationship between dentistry and spirituality. We explore the impact of spirituality and religiosity on oral health, examining the rituals, beliefs, and practices that directly influence dental well-being. Additionally, we investigate the role of "alternative dentistry" in improving access to oral healthcare.

This exploration also considers how religiosity and spirituality affect the quality of life for dentists, with insights into the existence of specialized religious dental networks. These networks bridge the personal faith of dentists with their professional practice.

Furthermore, we introduce the concept of "religious competence," enabling dentists to adapt their care to align with their patients' religious beliefs. This entails adjustments in treatment plans, materials, therapeutic approaches, and professional attitudes. A person-centered approach is essential for harmoniously blending secularism and respect for diverse religious traditions. We insist on the particularity of the concept of French secularism.

In summary, our study underscores the multifaceted ways in which religiosity and spirituality impact oral health and the practice of dentistry.

Hanna Herzog

Professor Emerita, Tel Aviv University, Israel

Religious Resurgence between Inclusion and Exclusion: Gender Perspectives of the Israeli Case

Over the last decades there has been much talk in Israel about the return to religion and the processes of religious resurgence (religionization) taking place as a result of the rising political power of national religious and ultra-Orthodox groups. My central argument is that the integration of these two principal religious groups into major fields affecting the social agenda is associated with contradictory processes of gendered inclusion and exclusion.

For many years, Israel has been considered a largely secular state though there has never been a complete separation of religion and state in Israel. First, and foremost on the symbolic level. Israel was established as Jewish state. There is no way to separate religion and nationality. Religious traditional symbols penetrates into all aspect of the Israeli culture and have been reinterpreted and negotiated. For years Jewish religious groups existed on the margins of the political and cultural arenas. Though the Israeli nation building was embedded in religious sentiments of the return to Zion, the project itself was conceived as a secular project that contradicted the idea that the return to Zion would be realized with the arrival of the Messiah. Religious Zionists sought an integration of religion and nationalism. However, being religious, they were on the margins of the dominant national secular modern ideology.

The occupation of the West Bank in 1967 opened new frontiers. Through the project of settling in the West Bank, young national religious people could become the new pioneering idealists, realizing the Zionist ideas of settling the land and at the same time being more religious than the ultra-Orthodox since they were following the *halachic* command (*mitzvah*) to settle the land of Israel (*Eretz-Yisrael*). The national religious groups thus became more Zionist and more orthodox in their ways of life. The ultra-Orthodox, who previously did not subscribe to the Zionist ideology could easily join the political discourse as it ceased to talk about the State and was reframed in terms of religious claims about returning to the Land of Israel.

The more the issue of the settlements in the Occupied Territories became central to the Israeli political debate, the more both groups have become prominent actors in the political scene.

The inclusion of these two groups at the center of the Israeli socio-political order opened paths to religionization. Religionization is the process whereby religion becomes hegemonic in enacting laws and shaping values, the arts, norms, language, and patterns of behavior in diverse social sites, including religionization in the military.

Religionization is no one way route. It involves inclusion of religious groups that were marginal in the past within major social institutions such as military, academia, and mostly the Knesset, Israel parliament decisions. In all of these fields. However one of the major results of religionization is excluding and or marginalized other groups, mainly women.

Zeev Herzog

Professor Emeritus, Tel Aviv University, Israel

Was Monotheism the Dominant Religion in the Kingdom of Judah? A View through an Archaeological Lens

Monotheism is assumed to have been the declared, ruling religious faith of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah during the First Temple Period. According to this view, the universe was ruled by one God, who had to be worshipped in the single temple, located in Jerusalem. Yet both Biblical and archaeological documentation challenge this view. Numerous Old Testament statements describe the wrongdoings of kings of Israel and Judah, who erected “high places” (*bamot*) throughout the land, and worshipped foreign deities like Baal and Asherah.

A unique temple uncovered at Tel Arad dating to the 8th century BCE provides the clearest evidence of the presence of temples outside Jerusalem. The possible presence of two stelae and the apparent find of two incense altars may hint at a duality of deities worshipped in the temple. Inscriptions in the cult center of Kuntillet Ajrud and in the cemetery of Khirbet el-Kom mention YHWH and his Asherah, suggesting that God had a consort. Moreover, sacrificial altar stones revealed at Tel Beer-sheba were made of hewn blocks in contradiction of biblical law.

Confronting the biblical documentation and the archaeological data in ancient Israel provides us the opportunity to unveil the reality of the cult practices carried out in the cities and fortresses of the land. A scrutiny of the accumulating archaeological data will be presented to substantiate the role and the degree of strict monotheistic faith in the daily life of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva

Assistant Professor, Pennsylvania State University, USA

**War, Peace, and the Search for Meaning:
Tolstoy and the Crisis of Our Times**

The ongoing war in Ukraine and the broader geopolitical crisis raise profound questions about the nature of war, peace, and the human capacity for violence. Leo Tolstoy, a titan of Russian literature, grappled with these very questions in his masterpiece, *War and Peace*. This paper argues that Tolstoy's insights on war, power, and the interconnectedness of humanity offer a critical lens through which to understand the complexities of the current situation.

- **The Fallacy of Heroism:** Tolstoy, through *War and Peace*, deconstructs the romanticized image of war heroes, exposing the senselessness of violence and the suffering of ordinary people. This is particularly relevant in a world where information about the true cost of war is readily available.
- **The Interconnectedness of Humanity:** Tolstoy emphasizes the shared humanity of all people, regardless of nationality. This challenges the "us vs. them" mentality often exploited by war rhetoric and highlights the possibility of peaceful coexistence.

Beyond Historical Parallels: This paper will go beyond simple historical parallels and explore how Tolstoy's works pose timeless questions about the human capacity for violence, the search for meaning in times of crisis, and the possibility of overcoming conflict.

Significance: By engaging with this literary giant, we gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of war and the psychological forces that perpetuate it. His insight offers a beacon of hope for fostering empathy, challenging propaganda and ultimately striving for peaceful solutions.

Methodology: This paper will employ close readings of relevant passages from *War and Peace*, along with references to contemporary philosophical and political works on war, nationalism, and the human condition.

Martyna Koszka

Professor, University of Gdańsk, Poland

**John Duns Scotus's Analysis of the Structure of the Will in
the Light of 14th Century Philosophical and Theological
Discussions**

In my presentation I will show the development pattern of a concept that can be described as the two-level nature of the will. The starting point is an experience described by Plato concerning the inconsistent desires of an agent. Plato's description resonates with Augustine, whose suggestive account of the internal struggle of the will, and not only between the will and the intellect or between the will and feelings, became a point of reference and inspiration for the later scholastic tradition. In Scotus's philosophy, we find an extensive analysis of volitional acts, both of the first and second order. I will examine his views on the state of *non velle*, which found application in the Scotist indeterministic theory of the will. This concept proved particularly useful in defending the freedom of the redeemed, who, according to Scotus, are not determined by a necessary desire for the highest good. Scotus argued that the causal nature of this state is non-deterministic, and it allows to build a model of God's will that tackles the problem of the possibility of sin and condemnation. Such a metaphysics of volitional acts gave rise to debates concerning the interpretation of the notion of hatred (Henry of Harclay) and the possibility of performing a positive *nolle* act directed toward the most perfect good (Ockham). Lastly, I will show how the concept of *non velle* was applied in the ethical theories of the 14th century, especially in the debates about the state of hesitation before making a decision (Buridan, Kilvington).

Anita Leirfall

Associate Professor, University of Bergen, Norway

On the Perception of Forces: Some Kantian Reflections

In his works, Kant makes different and conflicting statements concerning the question whether we can perceive forces (powers) or not. In the *Prolegomena*, he writes that force, action, and reality, among other things, are wholly independent of experience. They contain no sensory appearance. Instead, they seem to refer to things in themselves. Contrary to this, in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Kant states that repulsive forces, but not attractive forces, are immediately given with the concept of matter. It is puzzling that Kant here maintains that we perceive the impenetrability of matter only in relation to touch, that is, via the sense of touch.

In my talk, I shall discuss two main questions that emerge from these passages in Kant: i) How to reconcile the necessity that Kant attributes to forces, or powers, is *a priori*, that is, not empirical, with the claim that we can *feel* such forces (powers)? What kind of *feeling* is this? ii) Do we feel these forces (powers) directly, or immediately, or as a result of their effects, that is, as empirical representations?

Kant typically takes perception to involve sensory representation of objects, and never identifies it with more intellectual representations like cognition. It is therefore an empirical awareness, involving empirical intuition (i.e., singular, immediate representations of objects: A19/B33, A320/B377). At several places Kant argues that we *cannot* experience forces, for instance at 4:315 of the *Prolegomena* he writes: “[O]ur concepts of substance, of force, of action, of reality, etc., are wholly independent of experience, [and] likewise contain no sensory appearance whatsoever, and so in fact seem to refer to things in themselves.”

Yet, at several other places, Kant argues that we *are* able to feel forces (powers). At 4: 510 in the *Metaphysical Foundations* Kant states that through *touch* we can perceive impenetrability, that is, perceive the repulsive force whereby matter fills space. In the *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctiveness of Natural Theology and Morals* (1764), he writes that “whenever I judge that I am touching [*berühre*] a body I do so by reference to the resistance which the impenetrability of that body offers. For I find that *this* concept originates ultimately from the sense of touch.” (*Inquiry* 2: 287-88)

The challenge, however, is that Kant does not tell us *how* we are acquainted with these forces and he does not explicitly claim that we can perceive attractive force. In my paper I shall discuss these apparently contradicting statements about perception of force by elaborating on his concept of touch as a special kind of feeling [*Gefühl*].

Eric B. Litwack

Honorary Research Fellow, The University of Sheffield & Faculty,
Philosophy and Information Studies, Syracuse University in London,
UK

The Aesthetics of Humanoid Robot Design: The Psychological and Ethical Dimensions

Recent work in robotics has produced highly realistic androids that both look and act increasingly like human beings. Examples include Hanson Robotics' Sophia, and the robots produced by Hiroshi Ishiguro at Osaka University. Not only do such humanoid machines represent a great design achievement; they also may come to pose something of a stimulus to our natural tendency to anthropomorphize the non-human for a variety of reasons. This tendency is already salient in our relations with animals and nature, and it causes us to question the nature of mind and personhood.

In the case of highly realistic androids, a new and potentially more jarring dimension is added: we are here presented with simulacra of our very bodily and behavioral selves. Such machines are specifically designed to overcome what Masahiro Mori has termed 'the uncanny valley' – the point at which we are jarred by a near-perfect android. It is at once an experience of the uncanny and of realistic excellence in technological aesthetics, in which design and social psychology merge. It is likely that we will be increasingly presented with such technology over the course of this century, and it will, I hold, challenge our definition of the boundaries of mind and humanity. In so doing, our tendency to anthropomorphize beings relevantly similar to ourselves will likely problematically blur the age-old distinction between the human and the mechanical, between ourselves and the products of our technology. I hold that we are unlikely to resolve this philosophical case of the problem of other minds to a satisfactory consensus, just as we currently are already in the grips of a debate over whether or not an AI that can pass the Turing Test (in some version) possesses genuine consciousness, and even if what we call 'consciousness' is required for the attribution of intelligence and possible moral and legal status. As such, we would do well to consider pragmatic and social questions in this matter as much as technological efficiency and market appeal.

John Lizza

Professor, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, USA

A Prescriptive Metaphysics of Death

Much of the debate over whether brain death is death has focused on whether the loss of all brain functions entails the loss of the integration of the human organism as a whole. However, there has been growing recognition that the legal definition of death is not a matter that can be settled by such biological considerations alone and that metaphysical considerations about our nature, along with ethical considerations about how the brain dead should be treated, are relevant to the choice of criteria for determining death. In this paper, I show how some of the leading proponents and opponents of brain death acknowledge the relevance metaphysical and ethical considerations and how this may provide some common ground in working towards a consensus on brain death.

Robert Aleksander Maryks

Professor, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland

Recovering Forgotten Religious Tumults: Crisis of Civic Values in Early Modern Poland-Lithuania

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a complex polity that thrived from 1569 to 1795, hailed as “the state without stakes,” is an early modern symbol of religious tolerance. Yet, this tranquil image conceals tumults – urban outbreaks of religious violence most often initiated by Jesuit students. My paper seeks to excavate these forgotten tumults, probing the intricate interplay between various Christian denominations and other religious communities. I will explore societal reactions to religious violence through an interdisciplinary methodology, scrutinizing the delicate balance of unity, coexistence, and religious freedom tested by these crises.

At the heart of our inquiry lies the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), prominent agents in education and the Counter-Reformation, paradoxically emerging as defenders of tolerance and religious freedom. Their teachings and writings, infused with humanistic principles, provide a rich tapestry to study the role of religion in shaping civic values.

My investigation transcends mere historical exploration, aiming to draw parallels between past and present. The insights gathered could inform contemporary strategies for managing societal tensions and fostering unity in our diverse global landscape. The approaching 300th anniversary of the notorious Tumult of Toruń (1724) lends urgency to my endeavor, accentuating the importance of understanding these historical events as windows into the complex dynamics of religious and cultural coexistence that continue to resonate today.

Alberto Merzari

PhD Student, University of Padua, Italy

A Philosophy for Leisure: From Aristotle to Keynes, Goethe, and Heidegger

There is a paradox we rarely confront: the civilization that has most insisted on the values of work, activity, and enterprise is also the one that has created, and is increasingly creating, the conditions for the widespread and stable enjoyment of leisure time. "I look forward in days not so very remote," John Maynard Keynes wrote in 1930 in his *Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren*, "to the greatest change which has ever occurred in the material environment of life for human beings. [...] There will be ever larger and larger classes and groups of people from whom problems of economic necessity have been practically removed." Nearly a century later, this goal seems within reach, at least from a technological standpoint. Now, let's imagine a world where all the relevant political and economic barriers are overcome and a huge amount of leisure time becomes a norm for everyone. Are we truly prepared for that?

Leisure time requires its own form of *paideia*, as Aristotle teaches in the seventh book of his *Politics*, and our business-centric world, which is as brimming with time as it excels in its exploitation, is neglecting this kind of education completely. One scenario for our imminent future – a scenario that is already unfolding, at least in the West – is that most of this potential "free time" effectively remains untapped, while we continuously find new needs and thus new ways to consume it productively. The second scenario is that we begin to take leisure seriously, that is, we make peace with the idea of not sacrificing the present time to meet needs that we ultimately recognize as unnecessary. This possibility distresses us as much as it entices us. It distresses us because the anxiety for the scarcity of time is the sentiment that colors our cultural ethos and education, urging us to always invest the present moment for a better future; it entices us because our busy life harbors nonetheless a constant regret over the fleeting present – a regret that, however, we struggle to channel constructively.

Embracing the leisure offered by technological advances without it becoming a source of discomfort necessitates a paradigm shift. It means developing a new rapport with the "present," the "useless," the "contentment." It calls for an education that detaches our sense of well-being, or *eudaimonia*, from the perpetual accrual of desires, acquainting us with the richness of empty time. Ultimately, it demands

that we apply the same rigor that we have used to explore the experience of anxiety to understand the experience of boredom, recognizing in it possibly an even more intrinsic aspect of the human existential condition.

Jonathan Milevsky

Educator, Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto,
Canada

**Yos'l Rakover Talks to God: Seeing Zvi Kolitz' Famous
Novel through the Lens of Joseph Soloveitchik's
Philosophy**

Almost from the time of its publication, Zvi Kolitz's 'Yosel Rakover Talks to God,' ostensibly the final words of a Hasidic Jew fighting the Nazis during the Warsaw uprising, has been a problematic text. Initially, the reason was because of the uncertainty over its authorship, and later, the discovery of its fictitious backstory. The text has nevertheless received the attention of prominent historians, philosophers, literary critics, authors, and faith leaders. On the whole, the text has been interpreted as an expression of humanism, with the differences between these perspectives largely pertaining to the role of faith in the text.

For Thomas Mann, it is a human and religious document, whereas for Immanuel Levinas, the book describes a world from which God has been completely withdrawn. This paper will suggest that the work is better understood by reference to the philosophy of Joseph Soloveitchik. In a separate text, which has largely been overlooked, the author (and my great uncle) Zvi Kolitz engages with Soloveitchik's thought. As I will show, Kolitz's treatment of Soloveitchik's conception of 'tzimtzum,' the self-minimizing of God which Soloveitchik links to the scrupulous performance of the law, better accounts for Rakover's version to devotional sentiment and his commitment to armed struggle.

In this position, I will show that Kolitz differs with those such as Lawrence and others, who see Hermann Cohen as the greatest influence on Soloveitchik. In contrast to this view, Kolitz identifies Kierkegaard as the greater influence on Soloveitchik's thought. My presentation will draw heavily on Kolitz's 'Confrontation' as well as on Soloveitchik's 'The Halakhic Man.'

Anthony Nderitu

Teacher, Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, UK

Hallmarks of Religious Extremism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

This presentation explores the extremist tendencies in the SDA Church as it exists today with a presence in most countries in the world. It seeks to demonstrate that the SDA Church has built a structure that might be considered extremist and out of the ordinary by many mainline churches.

From a small army of disappointed Millerites 160 years ago, the SDA Church has worked hard to establish itself as a church, with 20 million members worldwide, while claiming to be a defender of the faith of Jesus and defenders of the commandments of God. As a church that operates with a claimed divine mandate “to spread the Adventist message to all the world in this generation”, the words of Ellen G White, the key prophet in the SDA Church provide impetus in sustaining the continued effort. With a theology that has historically (and continuously) associated the Roman Catholic Church with the beast in the books of Daniel and Revelation, the SDA Church feels it has made some credible and notable strides in the world. This competition for souls has led the SDA Church to engage in practices that have extremist tendencies in Africa. The posturing as a remnant has continued to give the SDA Church a confusing image: it sees itself as a big fish in the big pond while in real life, it is a very small fish in a big ocean.

Reinhard Neck

Professor Emeritus, University of Klagenfurt, Austria

**A Critical Discussion of Some Theories of Justice:
G.A. Cohen versus John Rawls**

Among theories of justice, John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (HUP 1971) is undoubtedly the most prominent one; in addition, it is the one that found its way into the philosophical and economics discourse just from its start. However, it did not remain uncontested from philosophers as well as from economists, as the famous example of the critique of Harsanyi shows, who argues for the utilitarian social welfare function instead of the Rawlsian difference principle formalized in the Maximin social welfare function. Although Harsanyi did not start from a normative alternative to Rawls, the consequences of the two theories are profoundly different; for example, Harsanyi's social welfare function in general favors a more unequal distribution of incomes than Rawls's.

In this paper we consider another critique of Rawls's theory of justice, namely that by G.A. Cohen, which he dealt with in his book *Rescuing Justice and Inequality* (HUP 2008). In contrast to Harsanyi, Cohen criticizes Rawls's for not being sufficiently inequality-averse to deserve to be called a theory of justice because for Cohen equality is the very essence of justice. He therefore denies the possibility that an unequal distribution of utilities can be justified by being advantageous for the least favored member of the society. Although Cohen accepts the argument that such inequalities may be efficient in the sense of the Pareto principle, he strongly contradicts the claim that they may be just. Instead, according to him one should distinguish conceptually between justice and other virtues related to more general principles beyond social justice.

The paper consists of two main parts. In the first part, we explain the points of disagreement between Cohen and Rawls, compare and criticize both positions from the point of critical rationalism. Our main point here is the rejection of Cohen's critique as essentialist, misguided and analytically deficient. This is also shown by some examples and general arguments from the principles of horizontal and vertical equity well established in economics and law. On Rawls, our verdict is less negative, although we do not find his justification of the normative theory convincing either. In the second part of the paper, we link the (virtual) debate between Cohen and Rawls to social choice theory and attempt at formalizing Cohen's arguments in terms of a social welfare

function. Although reducing Cohen's theory to the proposal of a particular social welfare function is at least as problematic as for the theory of Rawls, we argue that this exercise serves to make clear some of the main points of disagreement between the two philosophers, thus showing the usefulness of mathematical arguments in the context of a philosophical discourse.

Eleonora Papaleontiou-Louca

Associate Professor, European University Cyprus, Cyprus

The Role of Teachers in the Development of Children's and Adolescents' Spirituality According to Maslow

According to Maslow, even if people are 'naturally good', they still need a good society in which to develop: And 'society is good when it promotes the full development of human potential to the fullest extent of the development of human nature' (1970a, p. 7). Furthermore, Maslow stresses the need to have a value system to guide the education of children and young people. The choices that a child, adolescent or young person should make, in general, should focus on the concept of spirituality, and on answering existential questions. Maslow stresses that children and young people should not be given uncontrolled freedom. Some limits need to be set and children need to learn to withstand frustration, to try to strengthen their character, and to understand that sometimes reality contradicts our desires. It is clear, therefore, that overprotective treatment is likely to create children/young people with a lack of confidence in themselves and make them feel worthless (Maslow 1968, p. 165). Furthermore, over-gratification of needs found in the lower rungs of the 'Pyramid of Needs', a phenomenon common in today's affluent society, can lead the individual to boredom, selfishness, feelings of 'superiority', remaining at a lower level of maturity, and destruction of friendship. Besides, excessive indulgence and tolerance will not help, since the child needs stability, teaching respect..., discipline, boundaries (Maslow 1987, p. 71).

What is most important for teachers is their duty to promote self-actualization and provide the raw materials for meeting their basic needs.

The developing person will spontaneously absorb these 'raw materials' for their unique personal development. In this way, children and adolescents who are on their way to fulfilment and self-actualization' will contribute to a healthier society because these children 'have lived a life of love, have been loved and are loved. That is, they are now, people capable of loving and being loved' (Weinberg, 2011).

Xavier Pavie

Professor, ESSEC Business School, International College of Philosophy,
Université Paris Nanterre, France

Non-Standard Philosophy: A Necessity for a New Era of Innovation

The term “innovation” is said to have originated in the Middle Ages from the Latin composition of “in (inside)” and “novare (change)”, with its purpose at that time being able to aid survival. As a result of innovation, animal populations and species are disappearing. The massive development of technologies, products, consumer, and non-consumer goods has had and continues to have a direct consequence on the depletion of natural resources. It is undisputable that the atmosphere, soil, and oceans are deteriorating due to anthropogenic activity and our constant quest for economic growth. Increasing urbanisation is profoundly and lastingly changing the balance of the biosphere. These challenges are global: acid rain and radioactive pollution know no borders, and the “7th continent” made of plastic is adrift in the Pacific beyond national waters. These are the direct consequence of the unpredictability of the innovations introduced onto a market.

This observation does not apply only to the environmental impact of science: electronics have invaded our everyday lives with communicating objects; the “digitalisation of the world” is becoming a global challenge; nanotechnologies are ubiquitous in food, clothing, furniture, cars, etc. And this is certainly only the beginning, considering the advances still to come in the exploitation of the human body and its brain through artificial intelligence.

In the 16th century, French novelist François Rabelais said, “Knowledge without conscience is but the ruin of the soul”, proving himself to be particularly visionary. If we as humans believe in the need to preserve and develop humanity, then innovation needs to be rethought in great depth. In order for us to preserve our sense of humanness, we need to rethink innovation in great detail. To rethink innovation, we must reach beyond its usual boundaries.

There are several reasons to consider philosophy to be, the “right” approach to break the current vicious cycle of innovation and aid the innovators to revisit innovation more holistically. With philosophy, it is possible to think of innovation with a different perspective, outside of the usual categories of engineering and management.

We suggest to challenge the essence of innovation and even its very definition, with the use of non-standard philosophy.

Martin Peterson

Professor, Texas A&M University, USA

A Compromise between Utilitarianism and Duty Ethics?

This article explores the hypothesis that the best theory of normative ethics is a compromise between utilitarianism and deontology. Various proposals for how to spell out such a “dutilitarian” theory are considered and it is pointed out that a version of Arrow’s impossibility theorem is applicable: any attempt to aggregate utilitarianism and deontology into a dutilitarian theory will turn either the utilitarian or the deontological theory into a “dictator theory” that unilaterally determines the ranking of the dutilitarian theory, provided that a small number of seemingly plausible conditions are satisfied. However, this does not show that it is impossible to aggregate utilitarianism and deontology into a dutilitarian theory, the conclusion is rather that dutilitarians must reject one of Arrow’s conditions. I argue that the most plausible option is to reject the ordering condition (rather than the principle of irrelevant alternatives or its weaker cousin contraction consistency). If so, clashes between utilitarianism and deontology are best understood as cases in which moral rightness and wrongness come in degrees. The article ends by considering a generalization of Arrow’s impossibility result by Khmelnitskaya, which has recently been explored in a different context by Hedden and Nebel. It is noted that the gradualist approach to dutilitarianism avoids Khmelnitskaya’s impossibility result in a manner that differs from the solution proposed by Hedden and Nebel.

Sanaa Riaz

Associate Professor, Metropolitan State University of Denver, USA

Spirits and Social Agency

Spirits occupy a world that simultaneously dwells between the divine and the earthly binary, while speaking to all forces of nature, marginality and extremity in between. A discussion on spirits requires examining the rituals and mediational forces and their performance that allow participants to tackle adversity, voicelessness in the face of colonial oppression, and political, social and economic anxiety and uncertainty. The paper links the conceptualizations, interactions with and experience of spiritual beings in relation to the concept of Self and social agency, in turn defined as a continuum of cooperation leaving those involved with an enhanced or diminished perception of self-agency. It is important to include the pre-colonial repertoire and syncretic imaginations of the spirit, such as their conceptualization in unison with sorcery and spirit possession as central to voodoo practices, neither of which were promoted by the Abrahamic religions during Western colonization, particularly in Africa. Equally important is to subscribe to the power of ritual during rites of passage and examine the interplay between the spectators' and the performers' in today's virtual manifestations. A ritual not witnessed is a ritual not experienced. The streaming broadcasts of spirit possessions and performances in the social media global cosmos present human catharsis, embodied and transformed in and off-screen through ritual. The paper highlights how foundational elaborations on the nature of the spirit inform their transformative power in digital manifestations and possessions to negotiate agency in the digital era.

Cristina Rossitto

Professor, University of Padua, Italy

The “Appetite” (*Orexis*) in Animals and Man According to Aristotle’s *De Anima*

The Aristotelian notion of *orexis*, especially in its adjectival form (*orektikon*, i.e. “appetitive”), appears in the *De anima* with some frequency. These occurrences demonstrate its importance in the physical field, but also, and more particularly, in the psycho-physical field - given that its object is the soul -.

Aristotle establishes that the *orexis* can have three species, that is “desire, passion and wish” (*epithymia*, *thymos* and *boulesis*). For this reason it is a distinctive characteristic of animals, which possess sensation (*aisthesis*) and consequently also pleasure and pain: they are precisely what animals tend towards (*orexis*) - pleasure -, or from which they escape - pain - (Aristot. *De an.* II 3). Therefore, the *orexis* is a peculiar activity of the sensitive soul (*aisthetikon*), which is precisely the soul of animals (*zoa*) and a peculiar type of soul (among the three distinguished by Aristotle) characterized by the possession of the sensory power (*aisthetikon*) and the possession of local motion. Instead, the vegetative soul, which is specific to plants and inferior to the first, is characterized by the nutritive (*threptikon*) power and reproduction, while the soul of man is characterized by the capacity of thinking (*dianoetikon*) and is superior to the other two.

Since man is also an animal - “animal” in fact is the genus to which he belongs as “man” is one of his ultimate species -, it is clear that the psychic power of *orexis*, despite being a characteristic of animals (and indeed precisely for this reason), is also exercised by man. This does not mean that in the same entity, such as man, all three types of soul are co-present (given that he also feeds and reproduces). In fact, this would mean living three lives at the same time - given that in living beings the soul is their own life -. But it means that the soul of a superior type carries out, in the entity of which it belongs, in addition to its own main function, also the functions of the lower souls.

Therefore, it may be interesting to investigate if and to what extent the human possession of *logos* (that is: thought) makes the activity of the human *orexis* different from that of other animals, and, respectively, in other animals - which primarily possess the *orexis* as such - if the exercise of *orexis* is configured differently from that of man.

Moreover, it was Aristotle himself who studies the nature of the *orexis* in its various aspects, both in the second book of the *De anima* (II 3

ff.), in relation to the sensory soul, and in the third (III 7-10), in relation to the thinking soul, resorting to other notions, related to *orexis* but equally complex, such as those of local motion, imagination (*phantasia*) and practical thought (*nous praktikos*), which extends his doctrine from a perspective of physical or psycho-physical type, typical of the context of the *De anima*, to an ethical perspective, such as that which characterizes the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Samir Roy

Professor, National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training & Research
(NITTTR), Kolkata, India

The Missing Link between the Strong AI Thesis and Searle's Chinese Room Argument

Ever since Alan Turing proposed to consider the formidable question "Can machines think?" in his seminal paper "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" in 1950, the relation between "real" and "simulated" mental activities has been a topic of great debate. There are plenty of arguments and counter-arguments on the apparently contradictory views of the Strong AI thesis and Searle's Chinese Room argument. According to the Strong AI thesis, there is, in principle, no distinction between a thought process and the simulation of the thought process on a computing machine. Searle, however, demonstrated through his thought experiment that what Strong AI proposes do not conform to our intuitive notion of thinking and its imitation at a behavioral level. His argument is based on a thought experiment. In this experiment, the philosopher imagines himself to be confined inside a room. The room contains instructions written in English to answer in Chinese any question written in Chinese. There are openings in the room to receive written questions in Chinese language from outside world and also to provide answers in Chinese to the outside world. The instructions inside the room are exhaustive. Hence obviously anyone asking any question in Chinese is guaranteed to be answered in Chinese only, even though the man inside the room does not know anything about the Chinese language. Searle then asks, should we say that the person in the room knows Chinese just because he produces correct output corresponding to correct input? Apparently, Strong AI thesis is highly counter-intuitive and Searle's Chinese room argument has a natural appeal to human understanding. In this paper, in order to reveal the soundness of Strong-AI, a situation is imagined where both Albert Einstein, the 20th century icon of human intelligence, and Sophia, the famous humanoid, have been asked the same question regarding the equivalence of mass and energy. An analysis of the situation helps us to realize that the distinction between "real" and "simulation of the real" is really hard to establish. Then, in this paper, the author proceeds to consider a trivial real-life situation and analyses it to identify the missing link between contending points of views. The proposed real-life experiment and the subsequent analysis of its outcome reveals the inadequacy of causality in the physical world to

explain personal experience, even though causality physical world is the necessary conditions for personal experience. In this paper, the author argues that Strong AI thesis is valid so long as we are within the boundary of behavioral manifestation of the Chinese room, i.e., we consider the Chinese room as a black box. If, however, we take into account personal experience, and not just the observable (and measurable) behavior, then obviously Strong AI is not valid. So Searle's Chinese room neither validates, not invalidates the Strong AI thesis. Rather, it emphasizes the necessity of postulating a behind-the-scene entity which is responsible for the phenomenon of personal experience. This subjective reality provides the missing link between the opposing views and provide a platform for their reconciliation.

Tennyson Samraj
Professor, Burman University, Canada

Naming and Meaning Delineated in the Context of the Essence/Existence Distinction

A noun is a naming word that also evokes meaning. A noun connotes meaning and denotes a referent. The distinction made between naming and meaning with reference to a noun is necessary because nouns deal with both the referent and meaning. The essence/existence distinction defines why it is necessary to separate naming from meaning. What does a noun entail? It can ascribe the identity of a person, place or principle; it can affirm the existence of something--(material world), the subsistence of something (mathematical world) or the absistence of something (denotes being an object but not having a being—just as a thought in one's mind. **F.N. Findley**); and it can define the essence of something by defining it as an essential, accidental or an emergent property. The central thrust of my paper is to discuss why nouns can be understood as either defining the meaning and essence of something or defining the identity and existence of something. There are no nouns without reference or meaning. When we see something what conjures in our mind is either the existence of that thing or the essence of that thing. Naming puts emphasis on specificity and existence, while meaning puts emphasis on universality and essence. In this paper it is argued that it is necessary to distinguish between naming and meaning because (1) Nouns connote and denote something—namely, referent and meaning with one term. (2) Nouns can conjure either the existence of something or the essence of something. (3) Nouns are best understood when we differentiate naming and meaning based on the essence/existence distinction. **Quine's** indeterminacy of meaning and **Swinburne's** inexplicability of essence are discussed in the context of the three types of reality namely existence, subsistence and absistence. It is concluded that the necessary distinction between naming/meaning can be best understood in the context of the essence/existence distinction. For naming deals with the specificity and truth of existence; and meaning deals universality and the truth of essence.

Petros Satrazanis

PhD Candidate, University College Dublin, Ireland

Costas Axelos' Planetary Thought: Challenging Boundaries and Embracing Enigma

Costas Axelos, a philosopher whose thought transcends conventional categorizations, beckons us to explore the enigmatic nature of existence and thought itself. His intellectual legacy, deeply rooted in profound inquiries and scepticism regarding established philosophical boundaries, offers a refreshing perspective in today's world.

Axelos, rather than confining himself to formal philosophical disciplines, embarks on a journey to unravel the narrative of the world. His philosophy serves as a wake-up call, inviting us to contemplate "What is to come," which is the title of his last book.

In our presentation, we plan to showcase how Axelos, in contrast to being merely a philosopher of socio-political utopia or rebellion, delves into the eternal truth that underlies our ever-transforming reality. We will endeavour to show that he challenges the boundaries of metaphysics, dialectics, and ontology while revisiting fundamental concepts like the cosmos, world, man, nothingness, God, death, and thought. Axelos' revelation that admiration/ to admire (*θαυμάζειν*) is the key to the affirmation of existence gives birth to both joy (*χαρά*) and friendship (*φιλία*), ultimately birthing Philosophy itself.

We will introduce the concept of "Planetary Thought," an Axelos original concept as a perspective that recognizes the divine without invoking God. We will aim to illustrate that this thought casts light on the human condition, rejecting notions of humanity's inherent purpose or godhood. It navigates between peril and mystery, embracing ambiguity as a terrain for exploration.

Our study will delve into how Planetary Thought critiques traditional ontology. We will attempt to demonstrate that Axelos reinterprets ancient Greek discourse (*λόγος*) on being, drawing inspiration from Heraclitus. He explores dialectical reasoning and poeticism, and we will showcase these elements in his work. He questions whether being precedes self-consciousness, highlighting the questioning argument, if there is an essential schism between thought and existence.

Furthermore, we will demonstrate that Axelos' philosophy is characterized by wandering, resisting rigid causal frameworks and predefined conclusions. We seek to illustrate that it raises an enigmatic

question: Is thought possible without God? This question transcends mere mystery, inviting us to engage in the ongoing enigma rather than providing mere explanations. It challenges traditional analytical and systematic approaches, emphasizing unity "in relation" and participation in dynamic essence.

Throughout our presentation, we will emphasize how Axelos' philosophy is an invitation to embrace the profound and the uncertain, transcending established boundaries to explore the enigma that is existence. Axelos's thought beckons thinkers to engage in a continuous dialogue with the cosmos/world and thought, resisting the urge to assign definitive meaning and embracing the ever-elusive nature of reality.

Jevgenija Sivoronova
Researcher, Daugavpils University, Latvia

Academics' Meanings of Knowledge Sources

The authors' objective is to address the difficulty of investigating sources of knowledge using an interdisciplinary approach that merges both the philosophy and social sciences. The current study examines academics' epistemological attitudes towards different sources of knowledge, including scientific, science popular, and social media sources. The epistemological attitude is a theory of cognition that combines holistic constructivism, epistemology, system modelling, specific theories of personality, social and cognitive psychology, and sociology. The theory of epistemological attitude proposes that cognition is a process between an individual and the object of cognition, which takes place in three dimensions: subjective, contextual, and epistemological. This theory delivers the model which allows studying and reflecting on the sources of knowledge and their content through three dimensions operationalised in four domains. The epistemological approach and strategy both fall under the epistemological dimension, the cognition context under the contextual dimension, and the activity principle of personality in cognition under the subjective dimension. Sixty-six university academics participated in the study, including lecturers and researchers from various universities in Latvia. The study used the Epistemological Attitude Towards Sources of Knowledge Questionnaire to examine how academics cognise, approach, utilise, and value different sources of knowledge. The results were obtained by conducting confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses and statistical criteria. The initial findings support the three-dimensional epistemological attitude model, validating the theoretical framework. The second part of the results provides academics' epistemological and psychological meanings of seven sources, comprising scientific journal articles, scientific monographs and books, university lecturers' knowledge, textbooks and handbooks, popular science magazines and books, academic social networks, and social media. The results illustrate a profile of the importance of each source, analysing their differences and unique characteristics. The general findings reveal that academics evaluate the source of knowledge in different ways. The interpretation of these evaluations indicates that sources are both epistemologically and psychologically significant. However, it is essential to note that one meaning does not always imply the other.

Eventually, the authors illuminate the trends in cognition and knowledge evaluations.

Montserrat Sobral Dorado

PhD Candidate, National University of Distance Education (UNED),
Spain

An Approach to Eroticism through our Aesthetic Experience with the *Odyssey*

The significance of Eros is apparent due to its presence and importance in every culture and its artistic expressions. In Archaic Greece, he is portrayed by Hesiod as a primal force from the beginning of all things, later to become part of Aphrodite's courtship. In Classical times, Plato depicted him not as a god, but as a daimon who mediates between mortals and immortals. Thus, Eros has transformed over time, flowing and provoking new modes of relations.

Based on the main Greek sources and contemporary reviews, I propose that Eros has four essential forms: Antheros, Himeros, Hedylogos, and Pothos (Calame, 2002:35, 106; Kerényi, 1997:73, 75; Vernant, 2000:17-18). Each Erote represents a distinct aspect and effect of the relationship between the lover and the beloved. Antheros is mutual love, Himeros is sexual desire, Hedylogos is sweet talk, and Pothos is loving nostalgia. These patterns act as mediators in our erotic relations.

Additionally, these patterns manifest in the connections among characters in the *Odyssey*, especially evident in the dynamics between Odysseus and Penelope, Circe, Calypso, and Nausicaa. Consequently, this piece sheds light on comprehending the manner in which these four types of erotic relationships permeate a lifetime. It is also relevant to explore how this classic has influenced other writers, including Samuel Butler, Robert Graves, Madeline Miller or Margaret Atwood. Each author has transformed the *Odyssey* material, altering the impact of the erotism once again.

The selection of these four Erotes and their modes of action is based on ontological reasons (Hartmann, 1959: 211-212). Erotic agency is believed to manifest itself from the physical body to the social environment in which it exists. This is evident when comparing the characters in the classic story of the *Odyssey* to those in contemporary works, such as Miller or Atwood.

The aim of this work is twofold: firstly, to analyse erotic experiences and secondly, to explore the generativity of aesthetic experiences. The goal is to gain a better understanding of our self-organization as individuals and members of a cultural tradition.

Ori Soltes

Teaching Professor, Georgetown University, USA

Shaping God in Modernity: From Descartes to Spinoza

As much as both Descartes and Spinoza are credited with pushing medieval thought toward modernity, their respective foci on questions pertaining to God – informed, in part, by their respective experiences as a Catholic and a Jew – are significantly different.

The French Descartes (1596-1650) was more than a generation older than the Dutch Spinoza (1632-77), so that Spinoza was introduced, as a young thinker, to Descartes' already mature thought. Descartes' thought is itself shaped within and against a Jesuit context; Spinoza's thought is shaped within and against a rabbinic context. The thinking of each is honed by an important intellectual-spiritual tradition, but each pushes beyond the bounds of his tradition.

The biographical framework of Descartes includes the beginning of his education at a Jesuit institution barely two years after the Jesuits had been permitted to return to France; it includes the fact that he spent most of his mature adult life away from France – in the Netherlands. The biographical framework for Spinoza includes being part of a – specifically Sephardic Jewish – community the leadership of which attacked his thinking in part because of their experience and fear of the Dominican-articulated Catholic Inquisition as it had gone awry in the Spain and Portugal from which most of them had come within the previous generation or more. Both thinkers sought to remain committed to their respective traditions while pushing strenuously against key aspects of their fundamental norms.

Whereas Descartes' *Discourse on the Method* and *Meditations* famously introduce the issue of radical doubt, when he arrives at his proof of God's existence, his method follows a process shaped centuries earlier by St Anselm of Canterbury; whereas Spinoza introduces an entirely new vocabulary for God in his *Ethics* and his *Theologico-Political Treatise* – new enough so that his panhenotheistic perspective is confused by his contemporaries (and others) with both pantheism and atheism. While Descartes' *cogito* opens a door into modern *thought*, Spinoza's *natura* opens a door into modern *theology* and the question of God and the divine interface with humanity. The implications of this are both general and specifically present in the theodicy question posed expansively by Christian and Jewish theologians in particular since the time of the Holocaust.

Natasza Szutta

Associate Professor, University of Gdańsk, Poland

Is *Phronesis* an Expert Skill?

Practical wisdom (*phronesis*) is understood as the key virtue that integrates moral character. Its main task is to find out what one should do in given circumstances. The need for practical wisdom is acknowledged within virtue ethics and among the advocates of the ethics of principles (i.e., utilitarians and deontologists). It is so because, in many situations, a rigid following of moral principles may, in the end, have disastrous consequences (e.g., the Nazi at the door case).

The situationist critique, especially the empirical inadequacy objection, has prompted many advocates of virtue ethics to search for a proper response. The effect of this search was a concept of virtue as a skill. Although various critics denied the existence of virtues as acquired, constant dispositions to a morally good action, nobody questioned the existence of expert skills such as virtuoso skills of playing an instrument or outstanding skills in sports or medicine.

In my presentation, I want to focus on the challenges faced by the concept of *phronesis* as an expert skill.

Stephan Unger
Professor, Saint Anselm College, USA

The Ancient Roots of Classical Liberalism

This article explores the impact of Ancient Greek epistemology on the Austrian School of Economics. While our economic system is based on the concepts and principles, as founded by Menger, Schumpeter, Hayek et al., the Austrian School of thought hasn't been investigated according to its ancient philosophical roots. Since concepts such as virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and natural law find their roots in Greek philosophy, it is important to analyze these concepts according to their epistemological impact on Classical Liberalism. By investigating Ancient Greek philosophers' views on the process of knowledge accumulation, it is possible to identify the drivers, which shaped today's economic and societal perception of reality.

Interestingly, it can be found that some factors of Ancient Greek epistemology resemble in today's economic and societal values. This insight serves as an indication that Classical Liberalism was heavily influenced by Ancient Greek principles of moral and ethical values. However, the increased renunciation of these values nowadays imply a reshaping of epistemological foundations in society.

Peter Vranas

Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

Permission-Prohibition Configurations

The fundamental components of a code of conduct are commonly thought to be *permissions* (“Feel free to smoke”) and *commands* (“Stop”), but I argue that they are instead permissions and what I call *pure prohibitions* (“Don’t feel free to smoke”). In contrast to *ordinary prohibitions* (“Don’t smoke”), which are just commands and thus both forbid certain things and expressly allow other things (e.g., “Don’t smoke” forbids you to smoke and expressly allows you not to smoke), *pure prohibitions* forbid certain things but expressly allow nothing. They are thus “mirror images” of permissions, which expressly allow certain things but forbid nothing, so permissions and pure prohibitions can be considered *negations* of each other: “Feel free to smoke” is the negation of “Don’t feel free to smoke”, and vice versa. Commands are *conjunctions* of permissions with complementary pure prohibitions: “Stop” is the conjunction of “Feel free to stop” with “Don’t feel free not to stop”. There are also conjunctions of permissions with *non-complementary* pure prohibitions: “Feel free to whisper, but don’t feel free to yell” expressly allows you to whisper, forbids you to yell, and is neutral on your neither whispering nor yelling. Because permissions, pure prohibitions, and their conjunctions (including commands) correspond to different patterns of expressly allowing and forbidding, they are all what I call *permission-prohibition configurations* (PPCs). I develop a model of PPCs.

Andrew Ward

Honorary Life Fellow in Philosophy, University of York, UK

The Judgment of Taste: Hume versus Kant

Hume and Kant both hold that we determine the beauty of an object on the basis of a feeling of pleasure. Equally, both hold that judgments of beauty are not a matter of mere individual taste but can claim to hold for every human being. But whereas Hume holds that the standard of taste or beauty rests merely on an empirical (or *a posteriori*) foundation, Kant claims that it rests on an *a priori* one. As Hume sees it, the existence of a standard of taste depends on the contingent agreement of human beings regarding their sense of beauty; but, for Kant, its existence depends on their sense of beauty being necessarily shared. The upshot is that while Hume affirms that judgments of beauty can only carry what Kant calls *comparative* universality (a claim to hold for everyone as a matter of fact), Kant affirms that they carry *strict* universality (a claim to hold for everyone without possible exception). The paper examines the main grounds for this difference between their respective views and offers an assessment of them.

Johannes Wirtz

Teacher, Gymnasium (German High School), Erzbischöfliche
Ursulinenschule Hersel, Germany

Is Classical Music Superior to Pop Music? On the Structure of the Evaluation of Music

According to wide-spread opinion there are no differences in the quality of musical works. A judgement of taste like »Mendelssohn's *Piano Trio no.1* is superior to Taylor Swift's *Shake It Off* "is" merely "subjective" in the sense that there are no universally comprehensible criteria to justify said statement. On the other hand, both in academia and everyday life, we passionately discuss and debate the quality of pieces of music. Such a quarrel is without substance and consequence if there are indeed no objective, i.e., universally comprehensible, criteria to judge the quality of musical pieces.

The aim of this paper is to outline a theory of musical judgement of taste that captures the subjectivist and objectivist intuitions in an equal manner. Its four main points are:

(1) The proposition "Music piece m^1 is superior to music piece m^2 " is in need of interpretation. It is understood as: "Music piece m^1 with the properties p^{m1} is more adequate for the purpose z for person p with the properties p^p than music piece m^2 with the properties p^{m2} ."

(2) A piece of music is adequate for a purpose (e.g., dancing) because of its properties (e.g., tempo, instrumentation etc.). These properties can be described in a universally comprehensible manner. Consequently, this theory captures the objectivist intuition.

(3) Whether we like a piece of music or not is not a conscious decision based on a reflective process of reasoning. Rather, it simply happens to us. This "happening" is connected not only to the piece of music but also to the personality of the recipient.

(4) A central purpose of classical music is to mirror the personality of the recipient. Subsequently and for this theory's purpose, works of classical music are more adequate than works of pop music. The superiority of works of classical music can hence only be demonstrated by setting a specific purpose and under assumption of a specific personality. The theory presented thus captures the subjectivist intuition.

Jianjun Zhang

Professor, Philosophy Department & Director, Institute for Modern
Logic and Application, Nanjing University, China

The Pragmatic Nature of Generalized Logical Paradoxes and the RZH Criterion for Paradox Resolution

This paper is a study of the definition of '(generalized) logical paradox' and criterion for paradox resolution. By way of a historical investigation and a comparative analysis of the two issues, the author attempts to reveal the pragmatic nature of logical paradoxes and to show that a well-defined 'logical paradox' should be a pragmatic concept. The recognition of the pragmatic nature of 'logical paradox' actually turns back to its Greek roots - 'para' (beyond, against, contrary to) plus 'doxa' (belief, accepted opinion). The obvious conclusion is that based on the pragmatic concept, '(generalized) logical paradox' can cover not only the logicians' set theoretic paradoxes, semantic paradoxes and the recently heatedly discussed 'epistemic paradoxes' or 'doxic paradoxes', which are all defined by the author as 'logical paradoxes in a narrow sense', but also the 'philosophical paradoxes' of the specific community of philosophers and the 'scientific paradoxes' of the specific community of scientists. A systematic discussion on the criteria for paradox resolution is made, and a 'Russell-Zermelo-Haack Criterion', abbreviated as the RZH Criterion, is proposed. The fundamental importance of such work for the uniform, across-the-board approaches to the research on paradoxes and their resolutions is demonstrated. In this connection, the contributions and defects of Nicholas Rescher's *Paradoxes: Their Roots, Range, and Resolution* are discussed.

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