Dr Jill Schaeffer, Visiting Associate Professor of Ethics, New York Theological Seminary, US

The Drive from Without and from Within

"As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. 'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' 'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. 'No one is good – except God alone. You know the commandments: Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" Mark 10:17-22

This paper reflects upon "*nous"* in relation to the word "*good"* in the Markan passage and the author's Jewish theological cognate, *"the yetzer hatov,"* the *good* inclination. Both *nous* and *the yezter hatov* are dynamic forces generating events or effecting change with *nous* originating from outside and beyond creation, while the *yetzer hatov* emerges from within creation. I resonate with Stephen Menn's conclusion that "*nous,*" as Good-in-itself as God, depicts *that* final cause through which the universe bends towards generating good events. He also observes "nous" to be an *aporia.* I apply Catherine Keller's "driving force of God" to the problematic as itself leaving room for freedom, obviating a hard determinism. The way we can imagine or conceive of this "driving force," is if we ourselves are driven towards doing the good by participating in its work, a work the object of which is an "other". The author of the Markan passage may be fetching up reminders of *yetzer hatov* (the good inclination) and *yetzer hara* (the evil inclination) complicit in Jesus' rebuke to the rich man. Neither he nor Jesus can do otherwise than perform good deeds, commanded by some *being* or *power* outside themselves. The rich man knows the mitzvot, what is required, so what's his real question anyway? Jesus finds out when the man can't give up his "goods." *"Nous"* here may be related to the "yetzer hatov" in the sense of shaping an action through any inclination to achieve a good result and, as Rabbincal commentators suggest, can override the evil inclination. But, sadly for Jesus, the rich man cannot finally participate in his own well-being. The "good" inclination may, but not necessarily, override the "evil" inclination through training, education, and formation in Jewish practices of moral development, while *"nous"* as governing or reasoning (but not mind or logos) acts from without to shape the direction of inclinations, with Plato and certainly Aristotle proposing a process of development similar to rabbinical thought. While doxa regarding divinity appears in Greek and Jewish texts, the way to God lies through a developmental process, a way of insight and inference rather than deduction and mere assent. The drive in us towards effecting

the well-being of the "other" may serve as a clue to that God whose horizon lies at the edges of our thought and capacity to do a "good" deed we can never fully understand.

Mr Erez DeGolan, PhD Student, Columbia University, New York, US,

Joy in Rabbinic Judaism

My paper studies the early rabbinic movement (~2nd-3rd CE) as an "emotional community" (Rosenwein, 2006; 2016). I examine how the rabbis negotiated their conceptions of joy with respect to the norms of a competing emotional community, the Romans. As a case study, I explore key tannaitic texts on Sukkot, a festival which the Hebrew Bible associates explicitly with joy (e.g. Deut. 16:14). I argue that the joyous activities that these texts link with Sukkot echo Roman accounts of festive joy. The rabbis, then, imagined the epitome of Jewish rejoicing in terms which they marked, when discussing non-Jewish festivals, as idolatrous. By situating texts on Sukkot in the context of Roman festivals which were celebrated in 2nd-3rd centuries Palestine (Graff, 2015), I seek to show that the history of rabbinic joy provides new perspectives into the question of how Romanized the early rabbis were, which were not considered previously (e.g., Lapin, 2012; Rosen-Zvi, 2017). I contend, therefore, that applying the methodologies of the so-called "History of Emotion" approach (e.g., Eustace et al., 2012) to the study of rabbinic Judaism can advance our understanding of the intellectual and social history of the rabbis.

Mr Douglas Furth, 2018 Graduate, Yale Divinity School, US

Anti-Semitism–The Unintended Consequence of the Development of Augustine's Thinking About Human Free Will

This paper is being prepared as the foundation of a chapter for a book which will discuss the enculturation of anti-Semitism in Late Antiquity. I propose to examine the relationship between Augustine's conclusion that human beings lack free will and what Paula Fredriksen has referred to as Augustine's "doctrine of Jewish Witness." Part I of the paper will trace the arc of Augustine's thinking on free will, focusing on the major change in his thinking which took place between 394 when he wrote Propositions From the Epistle to the Romans and 396 when he wrote Miscellany of Questions in Response to Simplician. The former contains a place for human free will, while the latter leaves all to God.

Part II will discuss the doctrine of Jewish Witness. Augustine argued that the Jews are supposed to continue liturgical observance in the Diaspora. He asserted that Jewish praxis is a good in and of itself because it provides testimony to the truth of orthodox Catholic Christianity. This concept can be found primarily in four places in the Augustinian corpus—Against Faustus, City of God, several of Augustine's letters, and at least two sermons that we possess. The paper will show that there is a direct relationship between Augustine's thinking about human free will and his thinking about the status of Jews. It will disagree with the conclusion of Paula Fredriksen's book Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism which asserts that Augustine helped Jews by defending their right to observe Jewish law. This paper will argue that Augustine contributed to the enculturation of anti-Judaism, which for early Christians was a largely theological concept, as a more ethnically based anti-Semitism by eloquently synthesizing a theology which permitted Christians to see the fate of Jews as having been foreordained by God.

Dr Gouri Sankar Bandyopadhyay, Principal & Professor of History, Syamsundar College (The University of Burdwan), India

Tantricism and the Cult of Fertility in Bengal's Religious Culture—A Historical Survey

A predominant feature of the folk religious culture of Bengal is the presence of mystic Tantricism which is primarily based on the concept of fertility and reproduction. In this study we are going to inquire how far Tantricism and Tantric rites and practices, mainly related to the worship of mother goddess, are identical with the age-old fertility rites and rituals, and how it played a significant role in the materialistic folk religion of Bengal. There is a long tradition of Tantric cult in its different forms in Eastern India. It may be argued that Tantricism with its supreme emphasis on 'prakriti' or the female principle is much older than the Tantric texts themselves and that, in spite of the existence of metaphysical speculations in the tantras, originally Tantricism was only concerned with ritualism for procuring fertility and reproduction. Tantric beliefs and practices are profoundly associated with womanhood. In this context, we can mention the significance of 'kumari puja' or virgin worship, still prevalent widely in the religious tradition of Bengal to which the tantras attach special importance. Agriculture was the

invention of women, and consequently the agricultural magic had its origin in the province of women worldwide. This is a vital clue to Tantricism as the tantric rites are known as 'vamacara' (feminine rites and practices). Tantrcism explains that these vamacaras or secret tantric religious-sexual rites have following purposes: procreation, fertilization, pleasure and liberation. The present paper humbly attempts to make an empirical study how Tantricism had its sources and expansion in the agricultural fertility beliefs and rituals of Bengali folklore through the ages.

Dr Provakar Palaka, Assistant Professor University of Delhi, India

Hinduism And Social Justice
.
Hinduism and caste system are two sides of the same coin. Caste system is the foundation of Hinduism. The divine theory of creation according to Hindu scriptures proclaims that human beings are created unequally. They are created from different parts of God's body. The Brahmans were created from the mouth of God; the Kshatriyas were created from God's chest; the Vaishyas were created from his thighs and the Shudras were created from God's feet. Hinduism believes and promulgates a closed and compartmentalised structure of society in which a person is born and lives and dies in the same profession. The faith in 'Karma' again gives rise to a world view which only perpetuates graded inequality in a caste-ridden society. This world view has guided India for more than five thousand years. This belief is deeply ingrained in the Indian minds.

However, with the arrival of modernism and education, scholars from the

bottom of the society began to critique. According to Ambedkar caste system has created a graded inequality. He further says that caste system is about the division of labourers rather than the division of labour. Going by the same logic modern scholars like Kacha Ilaiah calls Hinduism as a 'fascist religion' in which there is no possibility of upward mobility because the members of this religion do not have any freedom.

My paper is a humble attempt to delve upon some of the obvious questions arising out of the statements made above: is social justice enshrined in the preambles of the constitution possible in Hindu society? Is Hinduism responsible for all the incidents of caste violence and caste discriminations in India? Is Hinduism responsible for illiteracy and poverty in India?

Dr Margo Kitts, Professor, Religious Studies and East-West Classical Studies, Hawai'i Pacific University, US

Ritual and Violence

The ritualized dimensions to religious violence are undertheorized, but profusely evident in literature and practice. The circumcising, circumambulating, and shouting which lead to the fall of Jericho in Joshua, and the bodily purifying, swearing oaths, and impressing words of the Qur'an into the clothing and passports of the 911 bombers (in the Last Instructions), are some sensational examples, which I have treated elsewhere (see below). Further, ritualized menace and warfare are emerging interests in subSaharan studies (e.g. Ferme, Richards, Geschiere), while ritualized corpse degradation has occupied excellent Near Eastern and biblical scholars (e.g. Collon, Reade, Olyan). Some of the questions are basic: How do rituals enhance, color, or grant meaning to, if they do, acts of destruction? Others are more contentious: How are we to understand the nature of ritual and of violence, disputed terms both? And what kind of evidence might open a window to the perceptual effects, not only for victims, but for targeted spectators? I have scratched the surface of these topics, but would like to explore them further for your body.

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Dr Marcus Martins, Associate Dean, Brigham Young University-Hawaii, US,

"Social Climate Change": Religion and the Rising Tide of Extremism in Society

The waves of solidarity after each terrorist attack in major urban areas around the world reveal one of the finest attributes in humanity. However, a permanent solution necessarily requires the recognition of the historical forces that have shaped (some might say "warped") the world we live in. Beneath all the social and technological progress, we still find the fossilized remains of decades- and centuries-old feuds and hatreds oftentimes violently suppressed.

Now we face the predicament of a world full of descendants of those exploited peoples—many of them angry young people who, falling prey to the violent rhetoric of many preachers of hate,

discard the colonially-imposed restraint of their elders and use widely available weaponry to express their hatred, terrorizing innocent populations unaware or indifferent to their cause. Perhaps a far more immediate threat to the planet is "social climate change," or drastic changes in the fabric of society that can bring about violence as a way of life.

The traditional response to extremism has involved more violence. Unfortunately, such response generally begets further violent attacks, because the murderers' friends and associates will be tempted to avenge their deaths, fueling a vicious cycle of violence. That leads to the frightful realization that complete annihilation of extremism may come perilously close to genocide, which our humanity considers morally offensive.

Although expressing solidarity is laudable, to seek an end to the escalation of violence one must become educated on its underlying causes--its "historical burden": colonialism, slavery, and other subtle forms of oppression categorized by Pierre Bourdieu as "symbolic power," elements Zygmunt Bauman also described in his discussions on "liquid life".

This paper will address some of these issues and offer insights into one of the potential role organized religions could one day have in counteracting extremists' recruitment efforts.

Dr Daryl Pullman, Professor of Bioethics, Memorial University, Canada

Medical Aid in Dying and Institutional Exemptions
.
In June 2016 Canada passed legislation to permit medical assistance in dying (MAiD) for eligible persons. Although the original legislation has reasonably restrictive eligibility criteria confining requests for MAiD to adults over age 18 who are experiencing unremitting suffering and for whom death is 'reasonably foreseeable', there are ongoing efforts to expand the eligibility criteria to include mature minors, those suffering from mental illness, and to allow requests for MAiD through advance directives.

One particularly controversial area with regard to the legislation concerns conscientious objection. While individual physicians and nurse practitioners are allowed to abstain from providing MAiD for reasons of conscience, it has been argued that institutions such as faith based health care facilities and nursing homes should not be able to claim exemption from providing the service at their facilities. Institutions, it is argued, cannot have a conscience, and

inasmuch as the vast majority of these institutions receive public funds, they should be required to provide the service to any patient or resident who requests it.

In this paper I defend the notion of institutional exemptions for faith based nursing homes. I argue that the notion of individual conscientious objection trades on a narrow notion of autonomous selves that is largely a legal fiction that fails to capture the reality of the complex historical and multiple relationships that form contemporary selves. When such broader notions of selves are taken into account the idea of an institutional exemption is defensible. Nevertheless, I argue that while faith based institutions have a moral right to claim such exemptions on grounds of conscience, they should be careful in exercising that right.

Dr Sam Baker, Professor, Christian Ministries / Chair, Christian Ministries Dept., Corban University, US

Practicing the Patience of God: A Response to Technologically-Induced Impatience by Way of Ancient Holy Habit

This research addresses three interrelated concerns: the pervasive nature of technologically-induced impatience, a Christian theological understanding of divine patience, and, finally, a suitable response to techno-impatience. It will be argued that an appropriate moral response to techno-impatience begins with the time-tested Christian spiritual disciplines, starting most obviously with the holy habit of practicing the patience of God.

Silicon Valley, social science experts, digital utopists, technology ethicists, educational specialists, and ecclesiastical leaders—to name a few stakeholders—suggest that society faces a technologically constructed state of anxiousness, resulting in a loss of patience in all sectors of individual and public engagement. They are right to believe so. As we have experienced faster flows of information, and as we have experienced larger amounts of information through which we must sort, we have become less patient people, and this loss of patience continues to produce a new kind of cultural disquiet on an impressive scale. In response, we are wise to rediscover, and reinvent, a richer understanding of patience as a spiritual virtue within a historical faith-based context.

Christian Scriptures affirm the supreme expression of patience as originating in the Triune Godhead, passed on by way of divine connection with human beings, and subsequently made

manifest in social and ethical dimensions of human interpersonal contexts. The movements of the supernatural, within the human soul and toward others, it will be argued, are best nurtured through time-tested spiritual disciplines. Accordingly, a corrective to the exacerbating effects of technology-induced impatience will be offered: namely, a practical engagement with the virtue of holy patience. Building upon the theological foundation of divine patience articulated in the middle section of this paper and borrowing from other classic forms of Christian spiritual discipline, this paper further recommends postures and expressions of patience, all of which demonstrate—by example—a more comprehensive response to the effects of technologically-induced impatience.

Dr Sean Foley, Associate Professor, Middle Tennessee State University, US

Islam and the Rise of Smoking in Saudi Arabia

Between 1975 and 1986, Saudi Arabia's cigarette market tripled in size, overcoming a government ban on cigarette advertising and the opposition of the country's religious leaders, who labeled smoking ḥarām, or forbidden, under Islamic law. The Kingdom, which Western tobacco companies had long dismissed as a conservative backwater, emerged as one of the most lucrative cigarette markets in the world. While rising incomes during the 1970s oil boom and many Saudis' association of smoking with modernity increased the number of smokers, the country's Hanbali-Wahhabi traditions—which its religious leaders vigorously upheld—also ironically helped to transform Saudi Arabia into a Kingdom of smokers.

To explain this dynamic, I draw on three sources that scholars have not used together to study Saudi smoking: in-country research; the many tobacco company documents housed at the University of California, San Francisco; and the rulings, or fatāwā from Saudi Arabia's top jurists. In dozens of fatāwā, there are questioners from smokers stating that (a) Islam permits smoking or (b) that smoking exists in a legal gray area because there is neither a record of the Prophet Muhammad banning smoking nor verses in the Quran/Hadith that address smoking. Remarkably, in response, jurists don't dispute the absence of smoking in the Quran/Hadith, instead focusing on judicial decisions and the consensus of the Muslim community to show that smoking is ḥarām.

In a society that valued the literal word of the Quran and the Hadith, this was a weak argument, especially when compared to the Saudi bans on alcohol and pork, both of which are prohibited in the Quran and by the Prophet himself. As a Western tobacco executive observed, although Imams branded smoking as ḥarām in their Friday sermons, the practice "is not as clearly 'Harem' [sic] as alcohol, pork, etc. and will not therefore be banned."

Dr Jonathan Watts, Humanities and Fine Arts Division Chair, Snead State Community College, US

The Ethical Dilemmas in Genesis: From Failure to Grace - Ancient Ethics in a Post-Modern World

The world is often perceived as one of no moral integrity. The work, The Ethical Dilemmas in Genesis: From Failure to Grace, addresses the core ethical issues which have been a part of the human condition since ancient times. The purpose of the work is to seek a connection with the foundational, etiological stories which formed the moral compass for the ancient culture in the Biblical text of Genesis and its relevance for the current generation.

The Post-Modern world appears to have replaced the term "ethics" with the concepts of legalism and law. These terms appear to have replaced what was once defined as a "moral compass." The fabric which bonded the ancient/pre-history societies together was not the legal codes but rather an understanding of moral and cultural ethics hammered out in the events of real life encounters.

The process for addressing the ethical issues in Genesis is not linear. Since the ethical issues identified are repetitive in nature the approach is topical with multiple stories moving toward the understanding of a single theme. Topics include the subjects of community, retributive justice, distributive justice, accountability, truth-telling, loyalty, confidentiality, and autonomy. Each is defined and examined in the context of the Genesis stories then recast to address the topic to a post-modern audience.

The result of the examination of these etiological stories is the Post-Modern society continues to struggle with the same issues as those of ancient cultures. By identifying those issues, the hope is to create an awareness that what we learn from the past can be used to reclaim the "moral compass" that points in the direction of rightness, fairness, and justice.

I would hope, as society reaches the pinnacle of an apparent legal void of ethics and unfairness, humanity will realize the need to move from a legal construct to ethical context.

Prof. Douglas R McGaughey, Emeritus Professor, Willamette University, US

Yes, God is Necessary to be Good!

This paper proposes that one best avoid invoking an anthropomorphic deity but that belief in God is, nonetheless, a necessary assumption for the exercising of humanity's moral capacity. Furthermore, the notion of the "good" will be parsed according to an amoral, a categorical, and a hypothetical good that grounds (or is necessary for) *autonomous freedom* intentionally to initiate sequences of events that, otherwise, nature on its own cannot accomplish, which makes moral effort possible. Denial of this set of themes and moral capacity is, of course, conceivable, but methodologically skepticism's Copernican Turn points out that such scoffing amounts to misanthropy.

The paper rejects moral "naturalism," which proposes that morality is the mere consequence of successfully negotiating a social world to accomplish one's ends, and it rejects Utilitarian "consequentialism," which involves violating of human dignity and the fostering ignorance to the benefit of a privileged elite. Rather than reduce morality to teleology, the paper will propose the crucial elements exposed by archaeology of humanity's autonomous capacity for understanding humanity's dependence upon God in order to be good – without succumbing to speculative, heteronomous theonomy.

Dr Colette Harris, Reader in gender and development, SOAS University of London, UK

Interrogating the Relationship Between Gender (Norms) and Religion, with an Emphasis on Protestant Forms of Christianity

My research objective was to study the relationship between religion and gender by interrogating the ways in which gender norms have been deployed by religious establishments, focusing mainly on twentieth and twenty-first century Protestant Christianity. Methodologically, I analyse texts from colonial-period and later missionaries to Africa along with my own fieldwork data on

the Acholi of northern Uganda and compare the ideals of gendered behaviour expressed in them with those of their traditional religion. I follow this by examining gender-related exhortations emanating from recently formed Pentecostal and other charismatic churches from Uganda as well as Nigeria, where I have also done research. Data from other settings and religions are additionally used to situate this in a broader context.

My findings have been that local African forms of religion lack the kind of gendered expectations of the world religions, while throughout this period the latter have imposed clear behavioural prescriptions on members of both sexes, albeit with differences among religions as well as among denominations/sects of the same religion. Although such prescriptions may be less rigid among some contemporary Anglican churches, especially in western settings, this is the case neither for African Anglicanism nor for most newer religious establishments, whether Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or Buddhist. I draw two main conclusions - first, that especially in Africa gender and religion are viewed symbiotically as crucial for sustaining social order in today's often chaotic circumstances, with significant emphasis on masculinity as well as femininity; secondly, that a major function of most recently formed religious establishments seems to be the legitimation of male superiority to guard against attempts towards greater egalitarianism for women and the non-heteronormative. Thus, while women may be offered more active roles than previously this is largely predicated on their accepting men's right to leadership in domestic and public life.

Dr Insook Lee, Professor, New York Theological Seminary, US

Self-Cultivation in Confucian Ethics and Its Contribution to Western Liberal Feminism

Confucianism has been regarded as anti-feminism in its approach to women's well-being. Its traditional patriarchal system is most blamed for its persistent and consistent exclusion of women in its ambitious project of actualizing a full humanity in developmental self-realization. This paper explores the Confucian concept of self-cultivation and its possible contribution to the feminist discourse in the 21st century.

Half a century after the seminal paper of Elizabeth Anscombe in 1958, there has been a revival of virtue ethics in the Western academy as an alternative to the preoccupation with specific

action-guiding standard for morally right behavior. As a consequence, there has been a renaissance of ancient Aristotelianism virtue ethics. Similar to Aristotelian virtue ethics, Confucian ethics of self-cultivation emphasizes human flourishing and overall well-being, and regards cultivating virtue as a means to achieve this ultimate goal. This paper examines the Confucian ethics of self-cultivation and its relationship to certain tenets of Aristotelian virtue ethics. Its focus will be on: 1) three different maturity levels of Confucian self, 2) the six stages of Confucian human development, and 3) the significance of self-cultivation as the ultimate goal in human flourishing.

The primary aim of this paper is to engage Western liberal feminism to claim that Confucianism has its own distinctive characteristic of feminism which focuses on the project of self-cultivation. Indeed, the process of Confucian self-cultivation could be one of the most effective strategies for addressing the problem of women's oppression in Confucianism. This strategy would contribute to liberal feminism which has a tendency to focus primarily on legal and political reform to achieve gender equality based on individual freedom and right. Confucian feminists and liberal feminists can complement each other in their common task of promoting women's flourishing.

Ami Chopine, Student, Utah Valley University, US

Achieved Under Divine Inspiration: Mormon Midwives and Authority, 1840-1900
.

Two days after arriving in the Salt Lake Valley, Patty Bartlett Sessions delivered the first baby boy born to Mormon pioneers there. A trained midwife in her late forties, she had been given priesthood authority to perform her duties by Joseph Smith. Sessions recorded the priesthood blessing, which indicated that her "hands should be the first to handle the firstborn son in the place of rest for the Saints, even in the city of God." This blessing, or "setting apart," as it was called, for medical practice was given in anticipation of administering care to the Latter-day Saints on their westward trek. Brigham Young, Smith's successor, and congregational leaders followed this pattern of setting apart midwives, but the experience and subsequent success of those appointed to be frontier medical practitioners varied greatly. Recognizing the difficulties, the central female leadership in Salt Lake sent women east to learn medicine, founded a hospital, started schools of obstetrics and nursing, and sent trained women to outlying areas to teach

midwives. This research explores the interplay of priesthood, spiritual, and professional authority and their effects on the autonomy and identity of early Mormon women in relation to medical practice. A review of diaries, letters, minutes, other historical texts, and previous work on this topic shows that this system provided these women with personal and professional autonomy uncharacteristic of the times within the context of a male-dominated priesthood hierarchy. Though developed within the confines of a gendered Victorian social construct, these women held positions of great social and religious power.

Prof. Tiziana Dearing, Professor for Macro Practice, Boston College School of Social Work, US

What Is Catholic Social Innovation?

In 2017, a team at Boston College School of Social Work's Center for Social Innovation conducted research for Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA) that sought to create a working definition of Catholic social innovation, catalogue it in action in response to the global refugee and migrant crisis, and complete write-ups on several dozen Catholic-led and Catholic sister-led Catholic social innovations. FADICA released a report on the research in early 2018. I plan to discuss that research, offer a working definition of Catholic social innovation, and argue that the definition has a heavy overlap with the general concept of social innovation because the concept of social innovation itself was influenced by the 20th century Catholic social justice ethic. The Catholic social innovation research examined socially innovative Catholic-led and secular programmatic responses to the refugee and migrant crisis in 35 countries with above average flows of migrants when Catholic-led innovations, and socially innovative Catholic sister-led responses globally. Using dual sampling, we identified nearly 180 nominations of programs that met ten social innovation criteria and ten Catholic criteria. Social innovation criteria included efficient, effective, new service/organization/product, new structure/paradigm, new approach to resource development, transforms the problem, sustainable and enhances social justice, foments social capital and repurposes existing resources. Catholic criteria included human dignity, common good, rights and responsibilities, a preferential option for the marginalized and vulnerable, the dignity of work, solidarity, subsidiarity, care of the earth, integral human development and new ways of welcoming the stranger. After codifying the

programs, we created a working definition of Catholic social innovation. Similarities between responses, combined with parallels between the Catholic and secular social innovation criteria suggested a conceptual overlap between social innovation and Catholic Social Teaching. Social justice animates social innovation, and Catholic Social Teaching helps animate social justice.

Dr Stephen Boyd, Easley Professor for the Study of Religions, Wake Forest University, US

The "Missionary Conquest" of the Americas and Contemporary Ethical Challenges Posed for Euro-Western Christians in the U.S.

George Tinker, a Native American of the Osage Nation and Lutheran theologian, observes, in his American Indian Liberation, "American Indian poverty is and has always been a necessary condition for American wealth and well-being." The historical effects of federal policy and judicial decisions substantiates Tinker's claim, posing a significant ethical challenge to U.S. Euro-Western Christians who claim moral and ethical loyalty to Jesus. Referring to the effects of poverty —food insecurity, citizen status, precarious health and incarceration—Jesus, says, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:36) The paper focuses on a current case study—the attempt by a multi-national mining company to mine copper ore in the Arizona desert that will destroy a sacred ceremonial and foodgathering site of the Apache peoples. Despite the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the 2007 UN Resolution on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Apaches and their allies could not stop a 2014 act of Congress that will put this federal land into private hands in order to proceed with the project. What can Euro-Western Christians do about this most recent human rights violation? The final section of the paper employs perspectives from several sources to address this question, including Tinker's suggestion that "enlightened white resistance" include "the creation of new social spaces with Indians that encourage indigenous peoples to maintain the integrity of their communities and cultural values" and Mary Fulkerson's, Places of Redemption, identifying practices that create cultural "spaces of appearing" for members of groups routinely invisible to culturally dominant groups.

Mrs Braulia Ribeiro, Student, Yale University, US

Metaethics and Amerindian Languages

Every language in the world manifests a particular way to conceptualize the world through its semantic and syntactic structures. Words "embody" concepts and organize them in distinct ways, creating meaning schemas, correspondences, and constraints that are translated to the life of the speakers in their daily quest to function socially. In Western languages, the notion of Good and Evil is presented through two opposing nouns. They are both abstract nouns which infer a binary system with opposing semantic fields. This lexical phenomenon reflects a particular mythological view, the Indo-European, of two gods of similar power, a Good and an Evil god. This paper will propose a discussion of ethics anchored in languages outside of the Proto-Indo-European spectrum. Could we see beyond the spiritual war between Good and Evil using the conceptual paradigm reflected in languages that don't share the same dualistic heritage? Could "non-philosophical" indigenous languages illuminate the discussion? Can indigenous languages and mythologies contribute to the philosophical discussion? I will explore Reale's discussion on the difference between mythology and philosophy and Radin's exposé of indigenous philosophy to make a case for the validity of philosophical investigation using indigenous languages, bringing into the discussion a few notions postulated by Amerindian Perspectivism. Then dialoguing with a few different moral perspectives, I will bring an analysis of two Brazilian languages, Kaingang, and Suruwahá and demonstrate how we can use a non-binary paradigm to dialogue about how Good and Evil expressed in these two languages. I will discuss the nuances of these two ethical systems using the lexical entries that are translated as "good" and other virtues, and some of their mythological perspectives.

Fr. Ionut Plescau, PhD Candidate, University of Bucharest, Romania

The Contribution of Byzantine Scholars to the Renaissance Process in Florence in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century
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This article shows that the byzantine culture had a big importance in the early Italian renaissance genesis in Florence. In the Medici`s quattrocento happened a big exile of the Constantinople`s intellectuals to Western Europe considering the bad circumstances in their country. In the XVth century, Manuel Chrysoloras popularized Greek in Florence and all over the Italy. The Ferrara - Florence Council (1438 -1439) was not just a religious reunion, but a cultural discovery between two civilizations: East and West. Humanists of the Tuscan capital welcomed the Greeks with

huge respect. But the guests came more and more between The Council of Florence and The Fall of Constantinople (1453). The Platonic Academy of Florence (led by Marsilio Ficino and sponsored by Cosmo de Medici) had thousands of manuscripts brought by the Greek scholars before. The representants of this Academy very often agreed, in one form or another, in their writings, the Byzantine culture`s contribution to the Renaissance. This neoplatonic thought determined a surprising scientific movement that will develop further in entire Europe. In conclusion, the Byzantines participated actively and decisively to the Italian Renaissance and their contribution is very significant for the history.