

Paper Titles and Abstracts

MONDAY 29 JUNE

First Session: *Theoretical and Methodological Issues*

Monika

Kirloskar-Steinbach *'Comparative Philosophy as a Philosophy of Practice'*

Abstract:

The framework of my paper will be set by understanding comparative philosophy as a philosophy of practice. Accordingly, I will reflect on the practice of doing comparative philosophy by engaging with two closely related methodologies of comparison. Both approaches call on comparativists to pay greater attention to the practices on the ground; yet they differ in their ramifications. Using the notion of political freedom in the South Asian context as a lens, I will argue that both these methodologies are warranted for, depending on the context of comparison.

Giovanni Leghissa *Global Philosophy as a New Foundation of the Encyclopaedia*

Abstract:

In order to avoid using the expression 'intercultural philosophy' which arose in a context that was (and still is) strongly overdetermined by theological implications, I suggest that the use of the notion of 'global philosophy' can better help us identifying the discursive field within which it is possible to conceive of the unity of philosophy. The construction of this unity, which implies the neutralisation of the difference between Euroamerican and not Euroamerican philosophy, is made necessary not only by those reasons which the postcolonial critique made us acquainted with, but also by epistemological reasons that aim at reconstructing the encyclopaedic system of philosophy on a new basis.

Cosimo Zene *World Philosophies in Dialogue: A Shared Wisdom?* (pre-circulated published paper – see attachment)

Abstract:

Martin Heidegger's lecture in 1964 *'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking'* signalled a crisis and the acknowledgement of substantial changes within Western philosophy. Reflecting upon the concept of critical dialogue among World Philosophies (WP) can be seen as a corrective of this crisis and a novel advancement. I aim to substantiate this by referring to the work of three authors: i) Jean-Luc Marion's reflections on Heidegger will give us the chance to overcome a narrow understanding of 'philosophy' and the possibility of discovering "new horizons" for the discipline which are revealed as a "donation" towards "wisdom"; ii) Reyes Mate's considerations on *'Thinking in Spanish'* will offer, aided by Walter Benjamin, a concrete example for renegotiating the space and the place for those "excluded from thinking"; and iii) Paul Ricoeur's meditation *On Translation* puts forward the ethical element of "linguistic hospitality" and transformation of the self when encountering alterity. While it is impossible to do justice to these authors in a short article, I maintain that their work deserves close attention because it depicts the struggle within Western philosophy

on its way towards maturity: still entangled with so many challenges derived from its troubled history, this maturity appears only faintly, on the horizon, precisely, in the form of ‘traces’. On these grounds, I believe that Anglo-European philosophy can no longer postpone opening up to an indispensable dialogue with other systems of thought wherein the presence of WP and the renewed effort of many philosophers committed to this endeavour is recognised.

Second Session: Theoretical/Methodological Issues & Japanese Philosophy

Jonardon Ganeri *Cosmopolitan Philosophy in a Culturally Polycentric World*

Abstract:

The new philosophies of the 21st century will be cross-cultural philosophies. The self-critical meeting of cultures will be the driving force behind new forms of philosophical creativity, the newness of thought that arises out of the movement between different ways of attending to the world. New institutional infrastructures are needed, ones in which the distinctive sorts of philosophical innovation that a cross-cultural and cosmopolitan outlook enables are actively cultivated and enhanced.

[see full text:

https://www.academia.edu/8434737/Blueprint_An_Institute_for_Cosmopolitan_Philosophy_in_a_Culturally_Polycentric_World]

Marcello Ghilardi *Dialogue beyond Dialectics: Steps to an Ethics of Translation*

Abstract:

Starting from a re-consideration of the notions of “culture” and “identity”, we will try to point out the features of an intercultural dialogue, in order to foster some steps beyond an idea of dialectical process culminating in a final synthesis. To do so, it seems important to build up the awareness that in every comparison, confrontation, or authentic dialogue, we are involved in a transformative movement in which all the variables are interdependent – the speaker, the hearer, the meaning, and the language itself. For this reason, translation is not only a technical device: it must be considered as a form of ethics, an opportunity to bring out the symbolic dimension that occurs in every human exchange. Finally, as a particular example, we will deal with a Japanese word, *soku* 即, showing the peculiarity of its meaning as a logical operator that possibly leads to a different gaze and a different behaviour.

Takeshi Morisato *Metanoesis in Japanese Philosophy: A Way to the Open Community of World Philosophies*

Abstract:

The purpose of this presentation is two-fold: First, it gives an introduction to, and critical analysis of, “metanoesis” in reference to the history of Japanese thought; and second, it presents this notion as a way to approach the history of world philosophies as open communities of distinct philosophical traditions.

The notion and praxis of metanoesis has been available to Japanese people from antiquity but the rise of Kamakura Buddhism, especially in the works of Shiran 親鸞 (1173–1263), marks the first intellectual exposition of the metanoetics. In the first half of the 20th century, the Kyoto School thinkers emphasize the significance of this notion from various philosophical angles. Furthermore, in the second half of the 20th century, a famous Japanese thinker, Kimura Bin 木村敏 (1931–), re-emphasizes its philosophical importance in his monumental work *The Between* (*Aida* あいだ).

Through examining these historical appearances of metanoesis in the history of Japanese philosophy, I will show how the Japanese intellectual tradition, specifically in relation to the notion of metanoesis, can both show its openness to other intellectual traditions and possess its potential capacity to enhance dialogical interrelations among different intellectual traditions. If these points are successfully demonstrated, my presentation will exhibit the metanoetics in Japanese philosophy as a way toward the open community of world philosophies.

Third Session: Islamic and South Asian Philosophies

Roman Seidel *Towards an integrated “Intellectual History” and “Comparative Philosophy” approach to the Study of Contemporary Philosophy in the Modern Middle East*

Abstract:

The study of Philosophy in the Middle East appears to still suffer from a too-strong distinction between those who are engaged in intellectual history and those focusing on systematic accounts and the perspective of comparative philosophy. This paper argues that both sides would mutually benefit if they would consider the results of the other more systematically. The idea of bringing these approaches together in a sophisticated way is not an easy but, as I am convinced, a promising methodological manoeuvre. The challenge lies in the fact that – at least when comparative philosophy is understood as a systematic method, rather than a historical one – both approaches are often regarded as mutually exclusive. In my paper I will therefore first address some fundamental issues concerning the methodological divide between historical and systematic perspectives of enquiry. Moreover I shall discuss – drawing on particular examples from Kant-reception in Iran – some preliminary considerations of ways to integrate both perspectives. Finally I argue that a comparative philosopher has to consciously choose between different comparative designs in order to provide a sound argument.

Jan-Peter Hartung *Saving Religion? — The Uneasy Engagement of Contemporary Indo-Muslim Thinkers with Western Philosophical Alternatives*

Abstract:

In the late- and postcolonial period, philosophising Muslims in South Asia had to position themselves vis-à-vis rather successful philosophical frameworks that were not anymore in need of a justification of values by referring to transcendent entities. While religious elements were still easily detectable in Enlightenment philosophies of especially German provenance, especially the interventions of Analytical Philosophy has provided sustained arguments for the futility of metaphysical enquiry.

Initially, philosophical pursuit was little interactive, and Muslim philosophical discussion remained well within the Islamic scholastic tradition. This, however, did change at last with Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1937), who appears to be the dominant thinker to creatively engage with philosophical ideas outside the realm of strongly Avicennan Islamic philosophical thought, thus adhering to a universal notion of philosophy. On the other hand, he still aimed at justifying a religiously sustained approach, which led him to increasingly reject especially the normative foundations of Western philosophy as he saw it.

Revolving around Iqbāl as their centre of gravity, later Indo-Muslim thinkers still try to position themselves to alternative philosophical ideas. I will show on the example of select authors and their works how they attempted to overcome the dilemma of what was felt to be necessary religious foundation of all human pursuit, and the vindicability of non-theistic philosophical arguments from their Western counterparts. I will indicate various responses to that challenge, ranging from a greater or lesser embrace of Logical Positivism, to Life-Philosophy and Philosophical Phenomenology.

Carool Kersten *Weak Thought, Nihilism and Muslim Hermeneutics of Alterity*

Abstract:

The Iranian-born, but New York-based sociologist of knowledge and scholar of Islam Hamid Dabashi has constructed his increasingly prolific output of critical and engaged writings around the formulation of an Islamic liberation theology and hermeneutics of alterity, which he regards as counter narratives to the West vs Islam binary and useful alternative discourses in a world that is not only postcolonial, but also Post-Orientalist and post-Western. For this he draws on Gadamerian hermeneutics and the political thought of Hannah Arendt, postcolonial theory and poststructuralist philosophy – in particular the ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Gianni Vattimo. In this presentation, I will focus on Dabashi's inspiration drawn from the latter's notion of *pensiero debole* or 'weak thought'. Issues to be addressed include the attraction of 'weak thought' for Dabashi's intellectual project and how Vattimo's advocacy of nihilism and concentration on Christianity in the wider context of his growing preoccupation with religion can be accommodated in thinking about Islam and the Muslim world.

Brian Black: *Dialogue as a Philosophical Method of Inquiry in Indian Traditions*

Abstract:

In his book *The Argumentative Indian*, Amartya Sen has brought attention to India's long tradition of accommodating diversity through public discourse and debate. This toleration of diversity, according to Sen, has been 'explicitly defended by strong arguments in favor of the richness of variation, including fulsome praise of the need to interact with each other, in mutual respect, through dialogue' (2005: 17). In this paper I would like to explore Sen's claim by focusing on three dialogues from traditional sources: the Ajātaśatru-Gārgya dialogue in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, and the Janaka-Sulabhā dialogue in the *Mahābhārata*. First, I will bring attention to how each dialogue depicts an encounter between disputants who are defined by their differences, whether these differences are along the lines of caste, religious tradition, or gender. Then, I

will explore how each dialogue confronts the differences between the two characters and their viewpoints, concentrating on two strategies in particular. As I will suggest, each of the three dialogues both: 1) offers a perspective that transcends the differences between the characters; and 2) leaves the outcome of the debate to some extent open-ended, thereby accommodating both perspectives. As we consider each dialogue within its larger textual context, we will see that these encounters with difference are a crucial and recurring aspect of Indian religious and philosophical literature. With this in mind, these dialogues from traditional sources may have interesting implications regarding current attempts in India, by Amartya Sen and others, to recover an ancient tradition of argumentation and toleration.

TUESDAY 30 June

First Session: *African Philosophy*

Albert Kasanda: *African Intercultural Philosophy: Nature and Perspectives*

Abstract:

The debate on African intercultural philosophy implies three fundamental concerns. First, it raises the question of the existence of philosophies considered as others, that means philosophies whose genesis and development are independent from the Greek genius. Secondly, this debate implies the interrogation about the aptitude of world philosophies – particularly African philosophies- to communicate and interact between them. And, finally, this analysis stimulates questions related to issues such as purposes and methodological perspectives of this philosophical orientation. These are topics that this paper aims at exploring in the prospect to the dialogue between both African and World philosophies.

Alena Rettová *Being Human and Time: On the Situatedness of Philosophy*

Abstract:

Can philosophy be universal? Or is all philosophy an “ethnophilosophy” (Hountondji)? This paper questions the possibility and presumed characteristics of a universal philosophy and strives to highlight the situatedness of philosophy within historical, geographical, and cultural coordinates, employing the Gadamerian concept of hermeneutics and its reinterpretations by African philosophers. Against this theoretical consideration the paper presents a case study: the complex situatedness of philosophical thought whose medium is the Swahili language. Impacted as it has been by Islam, Swahili culture is at the same time firmly anchored in “indigenous” African traditions. From the interplay of these influences emerges a polyphonous Swahili philosophical discourse, whose currents at times flow together through channels of linguistic and cultural proximity and literary intertextuality and at times drift wide apart on account of the diversity and heterogeneity of the underlying philosophical inspirations. The paper will analyse the way this philosophy is situated in history, in a space created as a “significant geography” (Orsini), and in a cultural context which its means of expression. The most prominent of these is Swahili poetry, for it is through poetry that Swahili thinkers have over centuries constructed a sense of historicity, of both collective and individual identity, and of individuality and personhood. The arguments of the paper will therefore be supported by an analysis of how Swahili poetic genres are placed at the cross-section of cultures.

Benedetta Lanfranchi *Euphrase Kezilahabi's Idea of Time in African Philosophy and the Problem of Literary Interpretation in a Comparative Perspective*

Abstract:

This paper explores Euphrase Kezilahabi's idea of time in his PhD dissertation "African Philosophy and the Problem of Literary Interpretation" (1985) that engages both Kenyan philosopher John S. Mbiti's conception of "African time" as constituted by *sasa* (present), *zamani* (past) and virtually no future, and German philosopher Martin Heidegger's notion of *Vorgriff* as pre-oriented understanding operating as an anticipatory and foreshadowing scheme through which the future is met.

Kezilahabi's concept of the "eternal now" is analysed here as "the place of encounter" between these two apparently contradictory philosophies of time: Mbiti's "backwards flow of time" from *sasa* into *zamani*, and Heidegger's future-orientedness of the present.

Kezilahabi's notion of "eternal now" is then considered comparatively with South African philosopher Magobe Ramose's notion of truth as the "contemporaneous convergence of perception and action" (Ramose, 1999: 61) where the condition for truth is inherently related to its appearance as an instant of the present, as something that can only be asserted in the particularity and evanescence of each moment.

Second Session: Māori Philosophy

Georgina Stewart *Developing a Kaupapa Māori philosophy of education*

Abstract:

This paper considers the question of a philosophy of education with a Māori identity: the possibility and significance of such a concept, and challenges that stand in its way.

Māori are the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, which was colonized by Britain from about 1814 onwards, with schools playing an important role in the process from the start. The nation's founding document is universally recognised as the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840, through which Māori ceded 'kawanatanga' (a neologism created for the occasion by transliterating 'governorship') but never their mana (Hohepa, 1999; Walker, 1996).

In the 1980s a new form of Māori schools developed known as Kura Kaupapa Māori, complemented by Kōhanga Reo in the ECE (early childhood education) sector, and with Wānanga as Māori TEIs (tertiary education institutions) developing slightly later. Kaupapa Māori theory and research methodology emerged along with the schools (Smith, 2003; G. H. Smith, 2012; L. T. Smith, 2012). Described as "a Māori philosophy" for the schools from the start (Sharples, 1994, p. 16), Kaupapa Māori stakes a strong claim to be considered as a culturally-specific form of philosophy of education.

This paper discusses Kaupapa Māori as a philosophy of education and the implications of such a concept, both for Māori and for philosophy of education.

Carl Mika *The problem of the 'claim': Thing- and selfhood in Māori philosophy*

Abstract:

In Maori belief, an object – seen and unseen – 'claims' the self. A thing calls the self to its attention and the self may speculate on the thing's existence on that basis. This is one mode

of holistic engagement that is broadly discussed by such writers as Pere (1982) and Marsden (2003); it indicates that the self is more at the mercy of things in the world than various disciplines, such as education, law and health, acknowledge. In those disciplines, with which Maori engage frequently, the Maori individual is encouraged to muster assertions about things as if there is no such claim by them. In this paper I theorise on both the thing's directive to the self to pay attention, and the undermining of that most fundamental idea by certain colonising institutions. I shall pay particular notice to Maori terminology invoked in education; certain of the words used ask for a fuller interpretation than is evident in their current educational gloss.

Third Session: Latin-American Philosophy

Susana Neccetelli *Debate about the quality of Latin American philosophy* (pre-circulated paper – see attachment)

Abstract:

In the twentieth century, many Latin American philosophers held skeptical positions about the very existence and quality of their own field of inquiry. Recently, a new skepticism has appeared in connection with the attempt by some Mexican philosophers to raise two “invisibility problems” for Latin American philosophy. Old and new skeptics in both halves of the Americas have both wondered about the reasons for the absence of internationally recognized philosophers in Latin America -- of the caliber of, for example, Willard van Orman Quine in North America. In this paper, I acknowledge such absence but argue that this fact need not be taken to support that there is something wrong with Latin American philosophy. After pointing out some deficits in recent attempts to substantiate that skeptical conclusion, I provide an alternative account that avoids normative conclusions about Latin American philosophy's quality.

Renzo Llorente *Latin American Philosophy: Thinking in the Shadow of Domination*

Abstract:

One prominent theme in the work of twentieth-century Latin American philosophers was the nature of Latin American philosophy itself. For those philosophers who held that Latin American philosophy had, on the whole, proven rather disappointing, the need to grasp the impediments to the development of philosophy in Latin America became a major, and rather urgent, concern. One influential explanation for the apparent “underdevelopment” of Latin American philosophy, vigorously defended by Augusto Salazar Bondy (1926-1974), claimed that the source of the problem was to be found in the *culture of domination* that characterized Latin America countries and which, consequently, decisively shaped the philosophical activity of the thinkers working in those countries. While Salazar Bondy's writings offer the most perceptive and sophisticated discussion of foreign domination as an impediment to progress in philosophy, other Latin American philosophers have also explored the connections between national (or regional) liberation, moral regeneration and philosophical development, and these thinkers' works help to enhance our understanding of Salazar Bondy's claims. The “culture of domination” thesis remains a useful framework for interpreting certain aspects of Latin American philosophy, both past and present.