

Transcontinental Migrations

Self, Community, and Nature in World Philosophies

Friday, April 5th — Sunday, April 7th | 2019

Presented by the University of South Florida Philosophy Graduate Student Organization
With the Department of Philosophy | Additional funding provided by the American Philosophical Association

All sessions will be held in C. W. Young Hall (CWY 206) | lunch and refreshments will be provided

Friday, April 5

11:30am – 5:00pm

Breakfast & Coffee

11:30am – 12:00pm

Michael Cooper

“Shaping the Conventional Self”

12:00am – 12:45pm

Bryan Mitchell

“Critique of the Metaphysics of Presence in Nagarjuna”

12:50pm – 1:35pm

Chair – John Preston

Lunch 1:40 – 2:40pm

Zachary Purdue

"Alcoff, Ortega, Gadamer, and Merleau-Ponty on the Self:
Identity, History, Embodiment and the Production of Knowledge"

2:40pm – 3:25pm

Chair – Dr. Raman Sachdev

Plenary Lecture

3:35 – 4:35pm

Chair – Cameron Wright

Dr. Gil Ben-Herut

University of South Florida | Department of Religious Studies

Epic Churnings: Moral, Ethical, and Philosophical Dimensions of Classical Indian Myth

The myth about the churning of the ocean is observable throughout the South Asian sub-continent in myriad forms, recounted in numerous texts (from the classical Sanskrit canon to late medieval retellings in regional languages), presented in performance arts (from village festivals to blockbuster films), and portrayed in intricate temple sculptures. In this lecture, I will discuss a canonical version of this myth and consider some of its abstracted meanings and philosophical aspects, which I argue are key elements for understanding this myth's ubiquitousness in Indian culture and imaginaire. My analysis of the myth of the churning will focus on three elements: its prescriptions for social development, the relation between man and the environment, and a metaphysics that is dualistic and dialectical.

Saturday, April 6

10:30am – 5:30pm

Breakfast & Coffee

10:30 – 11:00am

James Taplin

"Farabi and Maimonides on the Role of the Imagination in Prophecy"

11:00 – 11:45am

Chair – Sam Badger

Plenary Lecture

11:55am – 12:55pm

Chair – Sam Badger

Dr. Mohammad Azadpur

San Francisco State University | Department of Philosophy

Avicenna On Moral Perception in Humans and Its Counterpart in Animals

In my earlier work, *Reason Unbound*, I drew on Pierre Hadot's pioneering account of ancient philosophy as primarily a way of life to argue that Islamic Peripatetics, Avicenna included, also adopt this approach to philosophy. Of course, philosophy as a way of life emphasizes the centrality of ethics in the philosophical enterprise. In this essay, I don't mean to recite the old arguments. Rather I want to emphasize the importance of moral perception in the ancient account of virtue and discuss Avicenna's contributions. In the process, we come to appreciate the status Avicenna assigns to the animal awareness of value-related features of the environment. In contrast to the trite assumption that it is only with modern philosophy's connection between sentience and morality that animals acquire a moral standing, Avicenna's philosophy already ascribes to animals complex morally salient abilities. Of course, he distinguishes the human ability to perceive value from that of animals; but that is not a case of all or nothing.

Lunch 1:00 - 2:00pm

Sarah Jacob

"Philosophizing with a Gong: Nietzsche and Indian Thought"

2:00pm – 2:45pm

Chair – June Alice M Brown

Panel Discussion

2:55pm – 4:55pm

Moderators – Sam Badger & Cameron Wright

Dr. Mohammad Azadpur | Dr. Martin Schönfeld | Dr. Wei Zhang

Transcultural Encounters

The goal of our panel will be to engage the methodological, epistemic, and cultural challenges relating to comparative philosophical discourse as will be addressed in this conference on World Philosophy. *What should the goal of comparative philosophy be, and what alternatives are there to comparative philosophy in engaging thinking from outside our own traditions? To what extent should we take different cultural approaches to philosophy as incommensurable? How do we avoid the pitfalls of exoticizing and othering traditions of thought outside our own?* Our panelists will bring together their expert knowledge on diverse philosophical perspectives to bear on these and related questions. Lastly, they will attempt to offer conference participants heuristics for future philosophical Transcontinental Migrations, showing its contemporary significance. This critical panel will thus integrate the findings of our conference speakers and provide an outlook for the future.

Sunday, April 7

10:30am – 4:00pm

Breakfast & Coffee

10:30am – 11:00am

Will Parkhurst

"Indigenous American Epistemologies: The Perpetuation of Pedagogical Oppression"

11:00am – 11:45am

Jason Keyser

"Xunzi and Machiavelli: Human Nature and Practical Philosophy"

11:50am – 12:50pm

Chair – Matt Eckel

Lunch 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Plenary Lecture

2:00pm – 3:00pm

Chair – Cameron Wright

Dr. Martin Schönfeld

University of South Florida | Department of Philosophy

World Philosophy as New Paradigm of Reason in the Anthropocene

The Given

In 2019, civilization finds itself at the fork in the road. We face a choice between staying on a trajectory to a hothouse state that would mean the end of life on Earth as we know it, and guiding climate to a stable state that would let us transition to sustainability and keep the biota and the biodiversity that remain. In 2018, the United Nations concluded that civilization has twelve years left to head for the hothouse-exit, otherwise climate will cross the tipping point.

The Argument

Clearly, the old ways of cognizing and valuing won't do anymore. The hothouse trajectory is the legacy of the canonical elders whose ideas constitute hegemonic Far Western culture: Plato, Augustine, Rene Descartes, John Locke, Adam Smith, David Hume, Max Weber, Ayn Rand, and others. Their ideas, gone viral as civilizational memes, had been victorious in the Holocene but they also ended the Holocene. They define the paradigm that has precipitated the current crisis.

The Question

What, then, will be the new paradigm of reason? Which ideas will allow for a paradigm of hope instead of angst; of progress instead of decline? A paradigm of universal facts, not relativistic narratives? A paradigm of reality instead of anti-realism? A paradigm of scientific dogma instead of skepticism? A paradigm of future-oriented critique instead of an embrace of the past? A paradigm that serves the world's children, the world's poor, the world's ethnic communities, the world's pagans, the world's gay, the world's women—and that does not serve the old rich white evangelical breeder males who have put civilization on a trajectory to hothouse-Earth?

The Abstract

In this talk, I will describe the given, present the argument, and raise the question. I will suggest that despite the near-infinite richness of world-philosophical perspectives, there is a coherent and holistic pattern of reason, the key of which is found as the antithesis to the old paradigm. A new paradigm of reason is emerging, which straddles the West and the East, and which bridges Global North and Global South. It is rationality in between. I will conclude by outlining the profile of this future-oriented pattern of reason, and how it elucidates world philosophy.