

**THIRTIETH ANNUAL TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY
UNDERGRADUATE PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION CONFERENCE**
November 9, 2019 Baldwin Hall Little Theatre

SCHEDULE OF PRESENTATIONS

Morning Session

9:00 DR. DERECK DASCHKE, TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY ← WELCOME

9:10 Allie Medler, Truman State University
Locke and the Information Commons: Types of Resources

Can a Lockean theory of property be extended to intellectual property? Himma has answered 'no' on the grounds that information resources cannot be accessed from a commons, as material resources can, since the former, but not the latter, require "special skills or knowledge." In this paper, I argue that special skills/knowledge are not required to access either type of resource, yet special skills/knowledge are required to legitimately appropriate both types of resources. Thus, by showing that both types of resources are parallel in these respects, I hope to undercut Himma's argument against a Lockean theory of intellectual property.

9:40 Dakotah Kinsella, Augustana College
The Beauty Within the Individuality of the Self

Individuality (the self) encompasses a single point of view and is subjective. Each self has a specialized mental state which emerges out of conscious experience. While individuals could share experiences, no two selves could share all the same experiences nor could they ascribe the same representations to their experiences. Every self is authentic. Beauty is a representation each self can ascribe to things based on prior experiences. The body projects our appearance into the world, and the self emerges out of the body. The mystery of the self and the meanings one ascribes to their experiences is extraordinarily beautiful.

10:10 BREAK

10:20 Garrett Bradley, University of Nebraska at Kearney
Beyond Beyond Good & Evil

In his work *Beyond Good & Evil*, Nietzsche provides an argument that, in his true unfettered state, man is unconcerned with good or evil but rather only with enacting his own will. This desire to dominate the world around him and shape it to his will Nietzsche calls cruelty, and he identifies it as the driving force even in 'polite society. Two of his contemporary authors, Kafka and Camus, seem to disagree with this conclusion in their stories. In depicting cruel characters they showcase the narrow minded absurdity of these ideals, and in doing so reject Nietzsche's premise.

10:50 Renee Zwahl, Missouri Western State University
Compassion and Mercy: Building a Better Justice Using Buddhist Ideology

In search of creating a better justice system that can help build better peace, this research analyzes core pillars of Buddhist ideology; compassion, suffering and Karma, and applies them to the concept of restorative justice. Then, to see how Buddhists have had implemented justice systems in their society, I look at the case study of Tibetan justice system and pros and cons of that system. While this system of justice was not great for many people, the pillars of Buddhism can be beneficial when creating a better, more restorative justice system for the future.

11:20 Kayley Larson, Augustana College
The Empathy Illusion as a Means for Morality

Empathy is the imaginative process of being in another's shoes. It is unavoidably influenced by biases and other factors, resulting in incorrect interpretations of emotions, and does not apply to all moral cases. Therefore, empathy should not be the basis of morality. Morality has two parts: evaluation, which functions through mentalizing, and action, which functions through emotional motivation. Mentalizing is the omnipresent, rational process that guides individuals to correct decision-making for moral behaviors. Mentalizing does not involve the emotions that weaken empathy, sympathy, or emotional contagion. Consciousness-raising is the first step to implementing mentalizing into morality, instead of empathy.

11:50 LUNCH MISSOURI HALL CAFETERIA
Conference participants and their guests may enjoy a complementary lunch at the Missouri Hall Cafeteria, located across the Quad to the southeast.

HENRY SMITS LECTURE

1:00 DR. EVAN FALES, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
Might the Biblical Miracle Stories be True After All?

The two testaments of the Bible have been contested territory since well before the canon was established. In view of the enormous range of interpretations of this literature, it becomes important to ask: What ways of approaching these texts stand the best chance of guiding us to a correct understanding of the intent of the authors and the meaning of their messages? On this score I'll briefly defend a strong principle of charity, but one that leads to puzzles over the interpretation of passages that seem not only historically problematic but quite bizarre when tested in the court of common sense. Are we to say such things happened? Or that the authors did not mean to be taken seriously? Or that the authors and their audiences were deceivers and the easily deceived? None of these options seems very attractive at first blush. Is there a way to thread the needle?



Evan Fales first became interested in questions regarding the veracity of the Bible quite by accident some fifty years ago, and these questions have not let him be ever since. Though he began his teaching career at the University of Iowa some 45 years ago with a focus on philosophy of science and the nature of explanation, he soon wandered off into metaphysics and epistemology, a trajectory that led him into the sacred but turbulent groves of philosophy of religion, where the interest in Scripture developed alongside of the epistemological and metaphysical puzzles raised by theism. He has published on a wide range of issues in philosophy of religion, including, among others, the problem of evil, divine command morality, divine foreknowledge and free will, mystical experience as evidence, the metaphysics of divine action, Biblical morality, and the historicity of the Gospel Passion narratives. He is working on a book on Bible interpretation.

The Henry Smits Lecture and the Undergraduate Philosophy & Religion Conference is generously supported by Dr. Patricia Burton Honorary Endowment. The conference itself was brought into being by the dedicated efforts of the Department of Philosophy & Religion, its departmental secretary Sara Sweet, and the student volunteers on the selection committee. Thank you for making this showcase for young scholars once again – and to all of those who have organized, assisted, and presented under its auspices for the past three decades!

Afternoon Session

2:00 Christopher LeWarne, Creighton University
Panpsychism or Neutral Monism: Yet to Make up My Mind

Russellian Monism has received much attention recently in philosophy of mind due to its advantages in combating problems with reductive physicalism. Sam Coleman has argued that neutral monism—which posits that the intrinsic nature of matter is neither physical nor mental—is a better theory than panpsychism—the view that the intrinsic nature of matter is purely mental—due to the latter’s long-term confusion over subjectivity and the subject combination problem. I argue that neutral monism faces similar challenges as reductive physicalism, and we ought not leave panpsychism behind just yet if we want to remain under Russellian Monism.

2:30 MC Raterman, Creighton University
Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign: Astrology, Science and the Phenomenological Attitude

Though disregarded by most fields of knowledge, phenomenology can equip philosophy more broadly with the tools to understand astrology. Through its careful treatment of subject and object, phenomenology tells us more clearly what is and what isn’t scientific, and avoids the missteps that many non-scientists make as they study and talk about science. Additionally, phenomenology can clarify what the practice of astrology actually is. This work redefines astrology as a socially imaginative practice that can generate a particular kind of knowledge, regardless of its veracity. Phenomenology’s insightful approach towards imagination allows us to find meaning in astrology that might otherwise be obscured.

3:00 Marie Rioux, Benedictine College

Aristotle, Quantum Foundations, and Newton's Flaming Laser Sword

Can philosophical reasoning ever have something meaningful to say—whether for or against—theoretical physics? According to Aristotle, each 'science' is restricted to conclusions drawn from its principles, leaving the physicist and philosopher to their own respective areas.

The scope of this question is limited to a conflict between Aristotle's principled demonstration of continuous matter and some interpretations of quantum physics, taking the existence of this conflict as a premise.

It is concluded that not only *can* philosophical reasoning speak meaningfully with regard to theoretical physics, but within this conflict it is an essential foundation on which quantum physics rests.

3:30 BREAK

3:35 Braidon Brannon, Pittsburg State University

Why the Ethical Perspective of Care Should Guide United Nations Peacekeepers and Mediators in Dealing with Sexual Trauma Worldwide

One in three women experience physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. This highlights just how immense the problem of sexual violence and assault truly is. One such organization tasked with aiding victims and survivors of such crimes is the United Nations. Although there have been mishandling of cases in the past, the United Nations (UN) has been ahead of its time in its advocacy of women's rights. Still, the UN has much it can do to comprehensively support victims. One of these improvements would be through institutionally adopting the ethics of care. Through understanding how the ethics of care maximizes equality for victims, how the UN already embraces the perspective to some degree (making it easier to wholly adopt), and how to implement the ethics of care at the institutional level, one can easily see how this ethical framework emphasizes supporting victims in a manner that is better than the way things currently are.

4:05 Leo Grantham, Missouri Western State University

Befast: *Examining Strategic Nonviolence as a Form of Effective Pragmatic Nonviolence*

From Terence MacSwiney to Bobby Sands, hunger strikes have been used in Irish resistance throughout the 20th Century, but it dates much further back to the pre-British Brehon Laws in a practice called *troscad*. This paper examines the roles of hunger strikes in pragmatic non-violent action and how this form fits into other fasting forms of resistance. I will also argue that despite the conditions set forth for hunger strikes varying for other forms, it is still a legitimate form of non-violent action. Additionally, to be examined is the conditions required for an effective hunger strike.

4:35 Randhi Perera Truman State University

Does Buddhism Justify the Righteous War (Dharmayuddha)?

Buddhism is a philosophy which emphasizes the values such as non - violence, loving-kindness and tolerance. The very first of the five Buddhist moral precepts that all Buddhists should follow is to abstain from killing any living being. Even though, generally Buddhists being presented as pacifists, due to the emergence of nationalism, some of the Buddhist nations in Asia have begun to engage in war and conflict in the name of the faith. Sri Lanka, a leading Buddhist country, is a good example of this. When nationalism overrides pacifism, Buddhists even tend to justify the war in the name of Buddhism. Nothing in the Buddhist scripture, however, gives any support to engage in war and violence or to justify it.