

**Critical Research on Religion Conference**  
**Chinese University of Hong Kong**  
**June 7-10, 2024**

**Preliminary Program**

**Friday, June 7**

**G/F Esther Lee Building, Chung Chi College, CUHK  
(ELB LT2)**

*map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/oztBWJG5jMMt9qJg8>*

**5:00pm- Opening Remarks**

**5:30pm: Keynote Address: Roland Boer, Renmin University, China, “Religion in a Time of Qualitative Change”**

**6:30pm: Reception Tin Tin Bar (4/F Hyatt Regency Hotel)**

**Saturday, June 8**

**LT1A Henry Cheng International Conference Centre, 1/F Cheng Yu Tung Building, CUHK (right next to University Station Exit B and Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Sha Tin)**

*map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/CTZJ3gVikgpoDgbX6>*

**10:00am-12:00pm**

**I Messianism, Marxism, Utopianism (CYT LT1A – 1/F)**

(moderator: Roland Boer, Renmin University, China)

1. “Which Permanent Revolution? Barth and the Problem of Utopian Messianism in Römerbrief 1919”  
Daniel Sihombing, University of Divinity, Australia
2. “Religions as Comprehensive Utopian Systems”  
Tamara Prosic, Monash University, Australia
3. “The Discourse on Marxist Study of Religion in the PRC: An Outsider Perspective”  
Katja Wengenmayr, Independent Scholar, Germany
4. “Representing Auroville Utopian Experiment, Neocolonial Exploitation, or Bureaucratic Project?”  
Peter Heehs, Independent Scholar

## **II Psychoanalytic Approaches to Biblical Interpretation (CYT 209A – 2/F)**

(moderator: Bruce Worthington, Chinese University of Hong Kong)

1. “Idealizing Need for Self-Satisfaction: Conceptualizing Meditation Based on Heinz Kohut's Idealizing Transference”  
Zhou Ziqin, Fudan University, China
2. “Entering the Mass Killing Fantasy in Esther: Constructing a Wish-Fulfilling Narrative for Cathartic Release”  
Tang Ho Sum, Chinese University of Hong Kong
3. “Egress from the Genealogy of Image”  
Shun tai Cheung, Alliance Bible Seminary, Hong Kong
4. “The Apparition of  $\eta\psi\alpha$  in Hosea's Life”  
Andy Cheung, Chinese University of Hong Kong

**12:00pm- 1:30pm Lunch**

**1:30pm-3:30pm**

## **III Hope, Theodicy, Reconciliation, and Resurrection (CYT LT1A – 1/F)**

(moderator: Tamara Prosic, Monash University, Australia)

1. “Critical Reflections on Translation: Hope as Word and Concept in Christianity and Buddhism”  
Paul Hedges, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
2. “Crying for Reconciliation: A comparative study of the Biblical Joseph and Mengzi's Shun on the function of tears in processes of familial reconciliation”  
Moritz Kuhlmann, Renmin University, China and Ludwig Maximilians Universität, Germany
3. “Escapist Religiosity or Rebellion of Solidarity? Confronting Calamities and Revisiting the Problem of Evil and Suffering in Camus' *La Peste*”  
Francis Xavier R. Salcedo, De La Salle University, Philippines
4. “Resurrecting the Dead: Premodern Chinese Approaches in Recipes and Rituals”  
H. S. ("Shum") Sum Cheuk Shing, University of Chicago, USA

## **IV Critical Religion Panel (CYT 209A – 2/F)**

This panel will lay out both the legacy and the more current strategies that mark Critical Religion at the University of Stirling. It will do so by presenting two sides to its profile: one that emphasizes the theoretical, and one that emphasizes the pedagogical. In the first, each participating member will offer an account of how Critical Religion theoretically frames their research agenda(s). In the second, each will describe ways in which Critical Religion has been employed within their teaching. In combining these two sides, the collective approach will point to ways Critical Religion, even as a mode, also impacts upon, or *ought to* impact upon, pressing cultural issues of our day such as gender politics, geopolitical conflict, economics, aesthetic values, etc.

**Panelists:**

Andrew Hass, University of Stirling, UK  
Fiona Darroch, University of Stirling, UK  
Zhe Gao, University of Stirling, UK  
Emma McCabe, University of Stirling, UK

**3:30-4:00 Coffee****4:00-5:30pm****V Religion and Reaction (CYT LT1A – 1/F)**

(moderator: Katja Wengenmayr, Independent Scholar, Germany)

1. “Post-Structuralist Interpretations of Scripture Embedded in Texts Produced by Islamist Extremists”  
Shamsun Nahar, University College London, UK
2. “Living and Dying in a Theological Utopia: Exploring Youth, Religion, and Violence in the West Bank”  
Yael Shenker, Sapir Academic College, Israel
3. “Religion, Authoritarianism, and the Social Psychology of Anti-Atheism”  
Petra Klug, University of Bremen, Germany

**VI Critical Religion and Civil Religion (CYT 209A – 2/F)**

(moderator Andrew Hass, University of Stirling)

1. “Religion: A Genealogical Inquiry”  
Minoo Moallem, University of California, Berkeley, USA
2. “Constructing Religious Identities in South Asia: Colonialism, Hinduism, and the Boros of Northeast India”  
Roshni Brahma, Indian Institute of Technology, India
3. “Civil Religion in the U.S., Japan, and China – Exploring the Limits and Potentials of a Global Concept”  
Yijiang Zhong, Komatsu University, Ishikawa, Japan

**6:00pm-7:00pm Keynote, Vincent Goossaert, “Living in the Society of the Gods. A Critical Comparative Approach to Gods as seen from the Chinese Case.”****7:00pm Reception****Sunday, June 9, 2024****10:00am-12:00pm****VII Liberation Theology, Critical Pedagogy, and Biblical Criticism (CYT LT1A – 1/F)**

(moderator: Fiona Darroch, University of Stirling, UK)

1. “Jesus as Teacher: His use of parable as a method of critical pedagogy to teach the marginalized and oppressed”  
Terrelle Sales, Pepperdine University, USA
2. “Reconstruction and Reinterpretation of the Virgin Mary in Brazilian Liberation Theology in the 1970s and 1980s: A Case Study of Leonardo Boff’s Works”  
Gao Ran, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China
3. “Lamu Ga Theology: A Kachin Indigenous Christian Perspective in Socio-Political Context of Myanmar”  
Adam Kabamu, Ah Dam, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
4. “The Authorship of the Bible between Jewish Medieval Exegetes and Christian Modern Scholarship”  
Eran Viezel, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

### **VIII Religion and the Environment (Lecture Theatre 5 – 3/F.)**

(moderator: Shamsun Nahar, University College London, UK)

1. “The Role of Catholic Life Formation in Fostering Sustainable Environmental Attitudes among Selected Filipino SHS Students”  
Dwight Ypanto, Milver Legitimas, Peb Villacrusis, Jake Barcenas, Josefina Ranara, The University of San Jose -Recoletos, Cebu and Rito Baring, De La Salle University, Philippines
2. “Examining the Anthropocentric Approach of the Abrahamic Religion of Christianity to the Human-Earth Relationship”  
Egodi Uchendu, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria
3. “Religion and the Environment: A Critical Appraisal of the Islamic Provisions on Environmental Conservation Degradation and Muslims’ Responses to them”  
Yahya Oyewole Imam, University of Ilorin, Nigeria
4. “Transformative Woman Movement of Gerakan Seribu Rupiah: From Religious Spirit To Become Social and Environmental Activities”  
Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth and Sholihan, State Islamic University Walisongo, Indonesia

**12:00pm- 1:30pm: Lunch**

**1:30pm-3:30pm**

### **IX Sexuality, Sexual Orientation, and Marriage (CYT LT1A – 1/F)**

(Moderator: Emma McCabe, University of Stirling, UK)

1. “Religious Celibacy and Sexual Repression: Exploring the Repercussions of Forced Asexual Behavior in Catholic Nuns”  
TS Krishnaja, National Institute of Technology Andhra Pradesh, India
2. “The Logic of Solidarity of Pope Francis towards Catholic Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgenders (LGBT)”  
Argel Oclarit, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde & Philippine State College of Aeronautics, Philippines

3. “Attitudes of Present Generation Towards Marriage with a Socio-cultural and Religion Focus in Iran”  
Kameel Ahmady, Independent Scholar, UK
4. “On Pornography and Artificial Intelligence: Some Theological Reflections”  
Teguh Wijaya Mulya, University of Surabaya, Indonesia

### **X Religious Divisions and Religious Pluralism (Lecture Theatre 5 – 3/F.)**

(moderator: Alex Asakitikpi, The Independent Institute of Education, South Africa)

1. “Comparing the language characteristics of Christian religious groups to characterize the nature of Christianity”  
Raymund T. Palayon, King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology, Thailand
2. “Multifaceted approach of corpus analysis for characterizing Christian religious groups”  
Raymund T. Palayon, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Thailand  
Richard Watson Todd, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand  
Sompatu Vungthong, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand
3. “Nomadology and the Lotus Sūtra: A Critical Post-Structuralist Approach to the De- and Reterritorialization of Buddhahood”  
Brianna K. Morseth, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
4. “Islam and Religious Pluralism in Nigeria: A Critical Exploration of Coexistence, Identity, and Power Dynamics”  
AbdulGafar Olawale Fahm, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

**3:30pm-4:00pm Coffee**

**4:00pm-5:30pm**

### **XI Thematic Session: Spotlight on Hong Kong (CYT LT1A – 1/F)**

#### **Navigating the Sacred: Critical Spatial Approaches to the Study of Religion**

*This session delves into the intricate intersections of politics, poetics, and lived experiences within the realm of sacred spaces. The panel will unravel the multifaceted dimensions of religious landscapes, exploring both the politics and poetics of sacred space, as well as the intricate dynamics of lived space and the intriguing concept of heterotopia. Drawing from various critical spatial theories, authors in this session critically examine the spatial constructions that shape and are shaped by religious thoughts, practices, and experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between spatiality, spirituality, and power dynamics.*

1. “Reconceptualizing Sacred Spaces: A Critical Poetics of Space Approach to Pentecostal Spatial Production in Hong Kong”  
Daniel C. Chow, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
2. Exploring Spiritual Lived Space: A Critical Spatial Approach to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in Hong Kong”  
Christian N. Ng, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

3. “Resisting Ecclesial Spatial Hegemony: A Critical Analysis of Hypersonic Festival as Heterotopia in Pandemic Hong Kong”  
Issac T. Sit, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

## **XII Capitalism, Charity, and Migration CYT (Lecture Theatre 5 – 3/F)**

(moderator: Daniel Sihombing, University of Divinity, Australia)

1. “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: Revisiting Max Weber in the Context of the Role of Religion in Sub-Saharan Africa”  
Alex Asakitikpi, The Independent Institute of Education, South Africa
2. “Trust and the Ancestors: Perpetual Trusts and the *Muktad* Ceremonies”  
Leilah Vevaina, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
3. A new path to a better life: The Hijra. Motivations and conditions of French Muslims to migrate towards Muslim countries”  
Amélie Puzenat, UCO – Angers (Université catholique de l’Ouest) and UA (Université d’Angers), France

5:30pm shuttle bus at the Lobby of Hyatt Hotel

**6:00pm Dinner – Black Window** (map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/GzaQ4uLHdB73Ktvb8> )

8:00pm Shuttle bus back to Hyatt Hotel

## **Monday, June 10**

**2024 Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival** (map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/xG8fVqHTfpJXm1rA9> )

10:00am Shuttle bus at the Lobby of Hyatt Hotel to Sai Kung

6:00pm back to the Lobby of Hyatt Hotel

### **Abstracts**

**(in alphabetical order by last name):**

#### **Kameel Ahmady, “Attitudes of Present Generation Towards Marriage with a Socio-cultural and Religion Focus in Iran”**

[kameel.ahmady@gmail.com](mailto:kameel.ahmady@gmail.com) & [ka@kameelahmady.com](mailto:ka@kameelahmady.com)

In recent years, the younger generation of the Iranian population has experienced rapid social and cultural changes. One pattern formed because of changing the culture and attitude of the younger generation is white marriage (co habitation), which is about to become one of the new challenges of Iranian society. The aim of this article is to investigate the socio-cultural and religious factors affecting the change in youth attitudes towards marriage in three cosmopolitan cities of Tehran, Mashhad, and Isfahan. The theoretical framework of this research was interpretative and qualitative methodological framework, along with grounded theory that was used to determine the effective socio-

cultural and lack of interest on religion factors on changing young people's attitude towards marriage. Lack of acceptance from society and family, lack of support and having a secret relationship are some of the limitations of this way of life. The results of the present study, considering the theoretical and experimental background, showed that social changes, transitional culture, declining in religious interest among youth, defective modernity and socio-cultural factors are involved in determining the phenomenon of cohabitation.

**Alex Asakitikpi, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: Revisiting Max Weber in the Context of the Role of Religion in Sub-Saharan Africa"**

[aasakitikpi@varsitycollege.co.za](mailto:aasakitikpi@varsitycollege.co.za)

This study revisits Max Weber's seminal work on the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism within the unique socio-religious landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa. Weber's thesis, originally applied to Western societies, posits a connection between Protestantism's ascetic ethos and the development of capitalism, which foregrounded the economic development of western Europe. In the Sub-Saharan African context, marked by diverse indigenous religions and the spread of Christianity, this research examines the applicability and adaptability of Weber's idea within the context of prevailing corruption, poverty, and underdevelopment. It explores how religious beliefs, and institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa intersect with the ethos of capitalism and politics, considering both historical trajectories and contemporary manifestations. The study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the relationship between religion and economic systems in non-Western contexts, offering insights into the complexities of the role of religion in the social and economic development of the sub region.

**Roshni Brahma, "Constructing Religious Identities in South Asia: Colonialism, Hinduism, and the Boros of Northeast India"**

[b.roshni@iitg.ac.in](mailto:b.roshni@iitg.ac.in)

Colonial anthropological knowledge production since the late 19th century led to the production of contesting religious identities in South Asia. The colonial project of categorizing particular groups into definite religious entities set out to determine the characteristics of Hinduism and of various tribal groups in colonial India. The period simultaneously saw the consolidation of Hinduism which attempted to incorporate tribal groups within Hinduism and the active participation of the tribes wherein they rejected to be counted as Hindus. These debates have continued amidst the rise of Hindu nationalism in India, resulting in contesting claims of identities. The paper explores how these debates have shaped contemporary claims of Hindu nationalism and the Boros, a major tribal community of Northeast India. It critically looks into the construction of religious identities and the role of colonialism in attempting to categorize religious groups and thereby, seeks to understand contemporary claims of Hindu nationalism and of the Boros.

**H. S. ("Shum") Sum Cheuk, "Resurrecting the Dead: Premodern Chinese Approaches in Recipes and Rituals"**

[shum@uchicago.edu](mailto:shum@uchicago.edu)

While the notion of resurrection dominates doctrinal and eschatological discussions of various religious traditions, less common are analyses of the practical and material conditions for undertaking such a practice. In short, how might a religious practitioner attempt to perform an act seemingly beyond the capabilities of a regular human being? What form of material and ritual apparatuses, if any, do they employ? Centering both excavated and transmitted sources from premodern Chinese religious and medical traditions, particularly the recipe texts from the Tang-Song period, this paper interrogates the place of material substances such as rhizomes, roots, and animal parts in the practice of “raising the dead” (qisi 起死). Simultaneously inspecting related ritual literature, I trace how such material substances work with one another and in cooperation with other assembling dimensions of praxis—sometimes producing alchemical elixirs—to solve concerns of healing and protection related to the issue of corporeal death.

### **Andy Cheung, The Apparition of אשׁ in Hosea’s Life**

[andy@avoda.hk](mailto:andy@avoda.hk)

The narrational (auto-)biography of Hosea’s marriage is notoriously enigmatic. Literariness, clarity, purpose, and connotation of the passage are generally subject to contested and contentious debates. The highly inconsistent and incongruent descriptions the text reveals, to one extreme, as suggested by some scholars, the protagonist as a schizophrenic prophet. Such a view presupposes the validity of biographical information in the book and thus traditional reading entails a reconstruction of Hosea’s marriage. This paper focuses on, instead of the composition, the psychoanalytic reading of the passage. Such reading is operated through a composite filter, namely Parrhasius’s curtain, constructed by employing conceptions and theories from Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Slavoj Žižek that the text leaves a trace of the desire of the subject, Hosea in this case, who pursues the objet petit a through the compulsion-to-repeat act dictated by the big Other, the LORD. It witnesses a testimony of a trauma as symptomatic textuality, which is claimed only après-coup, and through the process of “working-through” to adapt, assimilate, and cope with traumatic memories into a dual ideology of postcolonial society, namely the ideal of reunion with the LORD and within the split nation.

### **CHEUNG Shun tai, “Egress from the Genealogy of Image”**

[stc2018mcs@gmail.com](mailto:stc2018mcs@gmail.com)

Our world in post-modernity and the church in it are under the sway of religious discourses other than of monotheism. Lacanian Psychoanalysis on Genesis 3 discourse further informs the rich traditions on the genealogy of image and subject. In secularity, it is through Science, Technology and Ethics, insofar as it is structured by the symbolic, that the real is actualized. We are living in a society of spectacle increasingly obsessed with image, as suggested by Debord. Contemporary practices in church increasingly are image-based and entertainment oriented. Transhumanism aims to surpass the limitations of the human body. The Lacanian death drive entails the death of God and the teleology of men.

### **Daniel C. Chow, “Reconceptualizing Sacred Spaces: A Critical Poetics of Space Approach to Pentecostal Spatial Production in Hong Kong”**



[dancchow@link.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:dancchow@link.cuhk.edu.hk)

This paper calls for geographers of religion to delve into theology, emphasizing the importance of understanding the theological underpinnings that shape the spatial practices of Pentecostal communities in Hong Kong. The research explores how the spatial practices of Pentecostals are influenced by their distinctive theological worldview. Two central questions guide the investigation: How do Pentecostals conceptualize spatial construction within their theological framework? What is the dialectical relationship between their spatial praxis and theology? Employing ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, content analysis, and archival research, preliminary findings underscore the significance of a spiritual worldview in comprehending the spatial dynamics of the Pentecostals. The contested interplay between the divine and evil in spiritual battles shapes Pentecostal spatial practices, with spiritual territoriality serving as a crucial element in ongoing spatial production. This underscores the imperative for a critical poetics of space approach in discussions within the field of geographies of religion.

**Fiona Darroch, Critical Religion Panel**

[fiona.darroch@stir.ac.uk](mailto:fiona.darroch@stir.ac.uk)

In this panel, she will focus on the distinct relationship between postcolonial theory, feminism and Critical Religion. In particular, she will demonstrate why Critical Religion is the ideal methodological framework from which to delve more deeply into questions to do with colonial, race and gender inequalities; 'religion' as a category must not be separated from its colonial, patriarchal and Christian history but neither must contexts impacted by colonialism and patriarchy be separated out from 'religion'. She will then demonstrate how this interdisciplinary approach is transferred into the classroom through the teaching of modules such as 'Religion and Gender' and 'Christianity and the Body'.

**Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth, "Transformative Woman Movement of Gerakan Seribu Rupiah: From Religious Spirit to Become Social and Environmental Activities"**

[zulfa\\_elizabeth@walisongo.ac.id](mailto:zulfa_elizabeth@walisongo.ac.id)

Woman movements generally have social problems as basis. What was observed in a Gerakan Seribu Rupiah ( One-Thousand Rupiahs Movement) in Semarang Indonesia is interesting because this movement is motivated by the religious-values. This religious motivation does not only have religious impact, but also social and environmental impact. Applying qualitative research methods and field studies, this study will reveal: the religious texts held by women movement; the reasons these religious texts used by women to encourage their movement; the social and environmental impacts of the women's movement. The findings show that the basis of the movement is religious-values that stated of caring others as obligation; they take that values because they are very relevant to the society condition today; the activities carried out include providing student-scholarships, daily-need assistance, soft-loans as well as environmental movements. From the activities that emerged, it can be concluded that religious values can encourage transformative movements.

## **AbdulGafar Olawale Fahm, “Islam and Religious Pluralism in Nigeria: A Critical Exploration of Coexistence, Identity, and Power Dynamics”**

[fahm.ao@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:fahm.ao@unilorin.edu.ng)

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive examination of the intricate interplay between Islam and religious pluralism in Nigeria, focusing on coexistence, identity, and power dynamics. Nigeria, with its diverse religious landscape, presents a unique socio-religious milieu where Islam plays a significant role. This work seeks to unravel the dynamics that shape relationships between Islam and other religious communities, exploring the mechanisms of coexistence and the negotiation of identities within the context of religious diversity. In addition, the research will probe into the power dynamics inherent in these interactions, considering the influence of religious institutions, political structures, and societal norms. Through a critical analysis of historical, social, and political factors, this study aims to contribute valuable insights into the complexities of religious pluralism in Nigeria, fostering a nuanced understanding that can inform policies promoting peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.

## **Zhe Gao, Critical Religion Panel**

[gran32@163.com](mailto:gran32@163.com)

In this panel he will look at so-called ‘Sino-Christian theology’, an intellectual movement that emerged in the Chinese-speaking world, particularly Mainland China, around the late 1980s. He will examine its distinct methodological features, especially its employment of the language of Humanities (other than theology) and its advocating for ‘inter-religious dialogue’, neither of which can be fully grasped without considering the postcolonial contextuality of the movement, of which the tacit acceptance and uncritical use of ‘religion’ as a modern category in its binary distinction with the ‘secular’ constitute an integral part. By adopting the theoretical framework proposed by Critical Religion theorists such as Timothy Fitzgerald and Russell T. McCutcheon, he will seek to provide critical reflections on the strategic merits, theoretical and practical difficulties, and implicit ideological agenda of Sino-Christian theology. He will then explicate how this critical approach to the movement transfers into the classroom, in such courses as “Religion and Politics in China: From Premodern to Contemporary Times”, “Religion, Capitalism and Consumerism”, and “Critical Introduction to Christianity”, illustrating both the problematic role ‘religion’ has played as a power category in the modern world, as well as the historical dynamics among traditions and practices, whether deemed ‘religious’ or not.

## **Andrew Hass, Critical Religion Panel**

[andrew.hass@stir.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.hass@stir.ac.uk)

In this panel he will engage this modality by exploring how ‘religion’ and ‘theology’ must no longer be seen as separate from one another, but rather as collaborators, even co-conspirators, in understanding how we move forward from what many call a postsecular condition. He will use his latest research on music – the ‘music of theology’ – as but one example of such collaboration that collapses in on itself, making the boundary between religion and theology indistinguishable. Finally, he will show how this modality works itself

out in the classroom by way of interdisciplinary course structure and content, with a particular emphasis on hermeneutics as a common thread.

**Peter Heehs, “Representing Auroville Utopian Experiment, Neocolonial Exploitation, or Bureaucratic Project?”**

[exnihilo09@gmail.com](mailto:exnihilo09@gmail.com)

Auroville, a spiritual community in India, was inaugurated in 1968 and still exists. Over the 60 years since its conception it has been the subject of a mass of promotional literature, hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles, several non-fiction books and novels, dozens of academic papers, and a few academic monographs. The authors of these works approach Auroville as advocates or critics, outside observers or inside participants, imaginative dilettantes or careful scholars, representing it in ways that reflect their interests and points of view. In this paper I examine some recent publications about the community, pointing out the helpful and misleading features of the authors’ approaches. I give special attention to a work that asserts rather than argues that Auroville is a neocolonial project based on racist assumptions. I support my readings with long-term outsider experience and knowledge and interviews with participants.

**Yahya Oyewole Imam, “Religion and the Environment: A Critical Appraisal of the Islamic Provisions on Environmental Conservation Degradation and Muslims’ Responses to them”**

[imam.yo@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:imam.yo@unilorin.edu.ng)

Discussions on the environment occupies a primary of place among Muslims because of the numerous provisions contained in the Qur’an and Hadith (the first primary sources of Islamic Law). Such provisions focus on conservation and degradation of the environment. While conservation through is enjoined, degradation activities like are frowned at. This paper through extensive literature search aims at critically highlighting Islamic provisions on environmental conservation and degradation. Muslims responses to the provisions in human history will be evaluated with a view to suggesting them as solutions to numerous environmental challenges the Contemporary World is facing.

**Adam Kabamu, “Lamu Ga Theology: A Kachin Indigenous Christian Perspective in Socio-Political Context of Myanmar”**

[ewaasalum@gmail.com](mailto:ewaasalum@gmail.com)

The dominant Christian traditions, doctrines, and practices how they have influenced the attitude of humans and contributed to exploitation the creation and human’s socio-political settings. In this paper, four views on creation: mechanical view and secularization of creation, divine hierarchical structure of creation, anthropocentric view of creation, and dualistic view of creation will be looked critically. Then, the paper will argue *Lamu Ga* theology from a within a doctrine of creation offer a perspective in which human freedom and contingent the creation might be related to result peace, justice and freedom and mutuality among the people and the land in socio-political context of Myanmar.

**Petra Klug, “Religion, Authoritarianism, and the Social Psychology of Anti-Atheism”**

[petra.klug@uni-bremen.de](mailto:petra.klug@uni-bremen.de)

This paper explores how the relationship between religion and authoritarianism impacts anti-atheism by exacerbating the denial, discrimination, and exclusion of atheists. The idea of an almighty Father-God provides believers with a feeling of greatness and protection. However, at the same time, it is also an authoritarian concept that does not allow for doubt or dissent. Therefore, to preserve their unquestioned faith, some believers deny that atheists even exist. Moreover, others blame atheists for everything bad happening in the world and entertain sadistic phantasies about hell and damnation. Some even imagine a secular conspiracy, thereby deepening the political polarization of society. Following Feuerbach, Marx, Freud, and the Frankfurt School, this paper utilizes interview material from my dissertation titled “Anti-Atheist Nation: Religion and Secularism in the United States” to analyze anti-atheism as a basic component of religion.

### **TS Krishnaja, “Religious Celibacy and Sexual Repression: Exploring the Repercussions of Forced Asexual Behavior in Catholic Nuns”**

[krishnajats.sclr@gmail.com](mailto:krishnajats.sclr@gmail.com)

This paper examines catholic nunhood as an involuntary choice, considering external influences like familial pressure, limited alternatives, and lack of exposure that may impact individuals' decision to become nuns. The central objective of this research is to discern whether the imposition of religious celibacy coerces asexual behavior among catholic nuns. Many catholic nuns suppress their natural sexual and romantic inclinations to assume an asexual orientation, and often find their innate sexuality confined within the religious habits. This study examines the consequences of suppressing the natural sexual urges, in the context of nunhood. Several potential repercussions are explored in-depth, encompassing issues such as sexual vulnerability, psychosexual abnormalities, and potential pathways to personal emancipation. This research aims to understand the complex relationship between personal autonomy and religious vocation, particularly examining the psychological impact of being coerced into celibacy.

### **Moritz Kuhlmann, “Crying for Reconciliation: A comparative study of the Biblical Joseph and Mengzi’s Shun on the function of tears in processes of familial reconciliation”**

[moritz.k.j.kuhlmann@gmail.com](mailto:moritz.k.j.kuhlmann@gmail.com)

There is a need for reconciliation between China and the West with historical origins and effects in the present. In this article I am exploring common concepts of reconciliation in authoritative traditional texts from Western and Chinese culture. On the Western side, Biblical tradition proves to be the richest resource for a notion of reconciliation based in interpersonal and inter-population relations. Since the Biblical etymological field (כפר/καταλλάσσω is too explicitly religious sacrificial christological as to allow for direct terminological comparison I focus on comparing narrative treatments of reconciliation, more precisely the narration of Jakob Joseph (Gen 25 50)50). Close exegetical reading reveals that the key moment of reconciliation (esp Gen 42 46) is structured by the recurring textual pattern of crying. Joseph’s tears provide a rhythmic marker of progression marking the procedural and structural elements of reconciliatory processes. On that basis, a

Western notion of reconciliation is exemplified. Crying as feature of reconciliatory processes then serves as comparative bridge: On the side of Chinese classics, Mengzi's 孟子 narrations about Shun 舜 mainly Chapters IV, V and VII entail the recurring motif of tears, as well as more features which connect the Shun story with that of Joseph. Based on Mengzi's chapters on Shun, I discuss a notion of reconciliation rooted in Chinese tradition. In a last section, I systematically compare both accounts of interpersonal and communal reconciliation and discuss possible consequences for Chinese theology, political philosophy, and intercultural understanding. The manifold commonalities between both concepts provide communicative, ritual, and procedural norms for reconciliatory processes and thereby offer concrete stimuli for an intercivilizational reconciliation between China and the West today.

### **Emma McCabe, Critical Religion Panel**

[emma.mccabe@stir.ac.uk](mailto:emma.mccabe@stir.ac.uk)

In this panel, Emma will argue for a more material approach to apophatic knowledge, which has traditionally been concerned with the inexpressibility of God. Central to her argument is an understanding of how skin enables tangential contact between bodies and things, emphasizing skin as a site of metamorphosis, infinite entanglement, and queer relationality. Emma will then reflect on how her approach to research plays out in a classroom setting given her capacity as a graduate teaching assistant.

### **Minoo Moallem, "Religion: A Genealogical Inquiry"**

[mmoallem@berkeley.edu](mailto:mmoallem@berkeley.edu)

Since colonial modernity, the concept of religion has referred to a totalizing discourse separated from culture and politics. Through a genealogical inquiry, I investigate how the idea of religion has come to exist and what it represents since colonial modernity. I argue that the concept of religion should be read in the context of race and gender relations within the context of colonial and Eurocentric modernity. Indeed, religion has been crucial in constructing primitive or uncivilized people who must assimilate into the world of Christian secularism. The racialization and gendering of religion through colonial anthropology and the discourse of missionaries traveling in the colonized world would be the center of this inquiry.

### **Brianna K. Morseth, "Nomadology and the Lotus Sūtra: A Critical Post-Structuralist Approach to the De- and Reterritorialization of Buddhahood"**

[brianna.morseth@gmail.com](mailto:brianna.morseth@gmail.com)

A popular Mahāyāna Buddhist scripture purporting to open buddhahood to all, the Lotus Sūtra nonetheless demonizes anyone who dares to critique it and has been wielded dogmatically by Buddhist sects throughout history. Rather than excuse its exclusionary passages and practices, this paper takes a critical approach to its threats of retribution toward doubters by integrating theories of territorialization from French post-structuralist philosophers Deleuze and Guattari's *Nomadology: The War Machine*. While historically, many religious movements deterritorialize previous systems, like the nomad or war machine challenging the status quo maintained by the State, they also reterritorialize via

identity politics, excluding perceived threats to their power. This paper critically discusses the dissonance between upholding the inclusivity of buddhahood versus defensive counter-measures to backlash referenced throughout the text in the form of attack by sticks, swords, and slander, pushing Lotus Sūtra proponents to reterritorialize against opponents upon the very ground they intended to deterritorialize.

### **Teguh Wijaya Mulya, “On Pornography and Artificial Intelligence: Some Theological Reflections”**

[teguh@staff.ubaya.ac.id](mailto:teguh@staff.ubaya.ac.id)

Moving beyond feminist theological critiques of pornography, in this presentation I explore how pornography in the context of recent technological revolution of artificial intelligence (AI) might ignite new sexual theological imaginaries. AI technology has enabled new forms of engagement with sexually explicit online contents in ways that are more interactive, immersive, imaginative, participatory, and co-constructed, such as creative (co-)writing of erotic contents, erotic conversation, and sexual roleplaying with innumerable AI-created characters. Reflecting on these new forms of pornography engagement, I offer three speculative theological reflections, namely, pornography and AI as (1) human participation in creation, (2) sexual-spiritual empowerment, and (3) possible moments of transfiguration. These reflections are discussed in relation to the eschatological vision of a new world characterised by radical inclusiveness, emancipated identities, nomadic sensibilities, and cosmic empathy.

### **Shamsun Nahar, “Post-Structuralist Interpretations of Scripture Embedded in Texts Produced by Islamist Extremists”**

[accounts@culturebakery.co.uk](mailto:accounts@culturebakery.co.uk)

Literature produced by proscribed Islamist groups such as Islamic State (IS) and, their offshoot and affiliate, Islamic State in Khurasan Province (ISKP) contain Qur’anic verses and religious teachings which are employed to support and justify the political and military aims of the groups. In their politicisation of Islam, scripture is often presented in a highly de-contextualised and manipulated way. Taking a more-or-less post-structuralist position towards the interpretation of texts, I do not argue that one interpretation of scripture is correct and another incorrect; however, I present a case for the legitimacy of practicing one’s judgmental rationality in the reading of scripture utilised by extremists. By subscribing to John O’Regan’s treatment of the Text as a Critical Object (TACO), emphasis is placed on the description, interpretation, and social analysis of texts to offer a case for preferred readings which are consistent with the Qur’an as a whole.

### **Christian N. Ng, “Exploring Spiritual Lived Space: A Critical Spatial Approach to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in Hong Kong”**

Pentecostal Studies has been a global multidisciplinary research field that has envisaged exploring Pentecostal-Charismatic churches worldwide. Little attention has been paid to the spatial perspective in this emerging scholarship, however. The research question of this study is: How do the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches transform into lived spaces in the Chinese context of Hong Kong? Based on Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, this study

explores the trialectics of spatiality of the local Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. It attempts a critical spatial approach to analyze the churches in three dimensions: Conceived space, perceived space, and lived space. Based on multiple case studies, participant observation, interviews, and documentary collection and analysis, preliminary findings show that Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Hong Kong envisage transforming into contested, self-empowered lived spaces—spiritual homes—that confront the local theological discursive hegemony.

**Argel Oclarit, “The Logic of Solidarity of Pope Francis towards Catholic Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgenders (LGBT)”**

[argel.tuason@gmail.com](mailto:argel.tuason@gmail.com)

This study examines the type of pastoral care suggested and promoted by Pope Francis for Catholic LGBT individuals. The researcher hopes that clergy, local church leaders, or any church pastor, whether lay or ordained, can glean lessons from the Pope on how to better treat and provide pastoral care to LGBT individuals, who are also both Catholic and part of the church. To understand this, the researcher analyzed the Pope's statements regarding homosexuality or being LGBT and the reported interactions he had with some Catholic LGBT individuals. Before delving into his statements and interactions, the researcher first examined church documents on sexuality and homosexuality. Subsequently, the study focused on the "logic of integration" referred to by the Pope in *Amoris Laetitia* as the "key to their pastoral care." The researcher explained the meaning the Pope attributed to this logic and how church pastors can employ it in providing care for those considered to be in "irregular situations." This logic of integration was also discussed as a "logic of solidarity" through the lenses of sociology and the psychology and theology of empathy, embodied by Jesus in the past towards those suffering and marginalized in society. In the final part of this study, the researcher traced whether the Pope indeed "embodied" in his statements and interactions with Catholic LGBT individuals what he calls "the logic of integration/solidarity." Through the mentioned methods and gathered information, it was affirmed that Pope Francis follows a different logic than his predecessors when it comes to providing pastoral care for Catholic LGBT individuals – a logic of compromise or the path of *via media* or middle way.

**Raymund T. Palayon, Richard Watson Todd, and Sompatu Vungthong, “Comparing the language characteristics of Christian religious groups to characterize the nature of Christianity”**

[ajarn.ark18@gmail.com](mailto:ajarn.ark18@gmail.com)

The growing number of Christian religious groups is a continual trend, contributing to divisions within Christianity. This event undermines the strength of Christian faith. Previous studies on Christian religious groups have focused on characterizing the nature of each group from a social-psychological perspective. To improve this dimension, different Christian religious groups were characterized by analyzing the sermons of the leaders from a linguistic perspective. Four datasets were analyzed using keyness analyses to identify the linguistic indicators for illustrating the nature of Christianity. The linguistic features reveal the unique characteristics of each religious group, characterizing their differences.

However, based on the linguistic functions, each group's belief system associates with religious, life development, and well-being concepts with engaging communication style as their common characteristics, illustrating the whole concept of Christianity. This study sheds light on the social views towards this religion and provides insights for characterizing other religions from a language perspective.

**Raymund T. Palayon, Richard Watson Todd, and Sompatu Vungthong, "Multifaceted approach of corpus analysis for characterizing Christian religious groups"**

[ajarn.ark18@gmail.com](mailto:ajarn.ark18@gmail.com)

The use of a range of corpus-based methods to systematically examine religious groups from a language perspective remains relatively unexplored. This paper highlights the procedures and contributions of five corpus-based methods (namely, keyword analysis, key semantic tag analysis, key part-of-speech analysis, multidimensional analysis, and biblical citation analysis) used to examine various Christian religious groups. The target groups were categorized into mainstream religion, sect, cult, and destructive cult based on their social characteristics and the linguistic features in the sermons of the leaders were analyzed. The language reveals the similarities and differences of mainstream religious groups from sects and differentiates the characteristics of these groups from cults and destructive cults. All groups are persuasive and elaborative in discourse; however, cults and destructive cults are more persuasive and elaborative than mainstream religious groups and sects. This paper allows us to see the significance of language and various methods for viewing religious development.

**Tamara Prosic, "Religions as Comprehensive Utopian Systems"**

[aramttamara@gmail.com](mailto:aramttamara@gmail.com)

Discussions about religious utopianism most often happen from a perspective which conceptually equates utopia with descriptions and ideas about imagined good societies. Accordingly, analyses tend to focus mostly on religious elements presumably reflective of the desire for an ideal society, such as golden age and apocalyptic and millenarian stories, official/doctrinal theologies, "heretical" theologoumena, and monastic and non-monastic religious communities. This paper, however, discusses religions as comprehensive utopian systems similar to F. Jameson's closed utopian program (2005). It argues that within this programmatic system there are two utopian modes, one ontological, the other social and that the ontological utopia undermines the capacity of left religious radicalism to be a transformative force, while it encourages pernicious social Othering in religious fundamentalism.

**Amélie Puzenat, "A new path to a better life: The Hijra. Motivations and conditions of French Muslims to migrate towards Muslim countries"**

[Amelie.puzenat@uco.fr](mailto:Amelie.puzenat@uco.fr)

This proposal aims to talk about Muslims migrants' children who decide to realize the Hijra. Facing racism and islamophobia in the working space and the society, especially for women wearing the hijab, they leave France to establish themselves or their family in a Muslim State. Based on analysis of discussions in virtual spaces and on five in-depth



interviews, I will also show the ethical and moral motivations of this recent migration. I will look at the favorite countries selected, the necessary skills to succeed in this new type of migration and I will describe familial, educational and gendered models they are looking for.

**Gao Ran, “Reconstruction and Reinterpretation of the Virgin Mary in Brazilian Liberation Theology in the 1970s and 1980s: A Case Study of Leonardo Boff’s Works”**  
[gran32@163.com](mailto:gran32@163.com)

The Mariology of Leonardo Boff breaks through the dualistic framework of “progressive” (minimalism) and “conservative” (maximalism). By reinterpreting the text of the Annunciation in the Gospel of Luke, he tries to argue that Mary becomes the permanent residence of the Holy Spirit without any intermediary, so that the divinity of God and the humanity of Mary are hypostatically united, in a manner similar to the Christology of the Antioch school. Boff’s Pneumatologically Mariological Model has three characteristics: humanism, functionalism and universalism. The image of Mary in Boff’s works has two dimensions: one is an independent, self-improving, and courageous poor woman and “Mother of Liberation” with political consciousness; the other is a traditional mother image full of sympathy and tenderness. The two do not conflict in Boff’s mind, for Mary’s care for her family is not confined to the private sphere but extends directly to all those in need in society. Boff’s Mariology originates from his reflection on the Liberation Theology. He hoped that women’s political participation would infuse women’s experiences and qualities centered on caring into public life and change the dangerous tendency of the male-dominated social movements that put too much emphasis on grand projects rather than people. The conciliationism in this theory cannot satisfy all feminists, but it deeply reflects the dialectical relationship between liberation politics and everyday life.

**Francis Xavier R. Salcedo, “Escapist Religiosity or Rebellion of Solidarity? Confronting Calamities and Revisiting the Problem of Evil and Suffering in Camus’ *La Peste*”**  
[francis.salcedo@dlsu.edu.ph](mailto:francis.salcedo@dlsu.edu.ph)

Even before Camus wrote *La Peste*, countless writers have already addressed the mystery of suffering and evil. Still, Camus’s novel is particularly significant in that the questions that it raises represent the perennial questions of believers and non-believers during times of calamities. In revisiting the problem of evil and suffering, this paper attempts to analyze Camus’ novel *La Peste* particularly the two sermons of Paneloux to the people of Oran who were being ravaged by a plague. In doing so, I propose to explore Paneloux’s arguments by tracing the movements of his ideas from his first sermon to his second one. The whole analysis will revolve around Camus’ position that while life is absurd, we can still rebel against life’s sufferings and pains and prevent these from leading us to despair or escapist religiosity by being in solidarity with others and doing everything in our power to contain it.

**Terrelle Sales, “Jesus as Teacher: His use of parable as a method of critical pedagogy to teach the marginalized and oppressed”**  
[Terrelle.Sales@pepperdine.edu](mailto:Terrelle.Sales@pepperdine.edu)

The pedagogy of Jesus demands a formal discussion and inquiry into determining *why* He taught the way He taught (Sales, 2021). With parables comprising one-third of Jesus' teachings throughout the Synoptic (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) Gospels, this paper seeks to answer *why* Jesus chose to use parable as His foremost method of teaching. Moreover, this paper will also critically examine Jesus' role as *teacher* and how He masterfully employed the art and science of critical pedagogy to reach His audience. Research on the parables of Jesus tend to focus on various approaches to interpretation: historical, literary, reader-oriented, and theological (Clements, 1975; Hedrick, 1994, 2004; Jeremias, 1963; Jülicher, 1903; Perrin, 1972; Scott, 1989; Zimmerman, 2015). Rarely has research ventured into looking at *why* Jesus intentionally used parable as a pedagogical choice in structuring His lessons and sermons. This paper chooses to distinguish itself by engaging with Jesus as Teacher, seeking to focus on His adept use of parables from a critical pedagogical approach.

**Yael Shenker, “Living and Dying in a Theological Utopia: Exploring Youth, Religion, and Violence in the West Bank”**

[shenkery@gmail.com](mailto:shenkery@gmail.com)

In recent years, scholars have increasingly examined the Zionist movement through the lens of political theology. This paper offers a distinct perspective by delving into the ideology and practices of the 'religious Zionist' movement in Israel, interpreting them as indicative of a 'post-nationality' mindset aspiring to establish a Theological Utopia. The focus is on novels and documentaries crafted by authors connected to religious communities in Israel, offering a vivid portrayal of 'Hill youth'—young Jewish individuals in small West Bank settlements engaging in violent actions to assert control over Palestinian lands and villages. Through a critical reading of these texts, the paper aims to illuminate the nuanced interplay between religious utopia and the state. By examining the dynamic exchanges and tensions that arise, we can gain deeper insights into the complex relationship between the religious ideals of this movement and the broader Israeli political context.

**Daniel Sihombing, “Which Permanent Revolution? Barth and the Problem of Utopian Messianism in *Römerbrief* 1919”**

[daniel.sihombing@gml.com](mailto:daniel.sihombing@gml.com)

This article discusses Barth's remark on Holy Spirit and permanent revolution in his comment on Romans 8:35-37 in *Römerbrief* 1919, as a case of theological engagement with Marxism. The reference to Marx and Trotsky in a footnote of that passage provides an entry point to the discussion. While studies have highlighted Barth's socialist commitment and his critical engagement with Marx and Lenin in comment on Romans 13, his assertion of the idea of permanent revolution in Romans 8 has been overlooked. Through a close comparison with those two figures, this study highlights a possible alliance between theology and Marxism that simultaneously retains serious points of contention. While Barth holds that the fellowship of the Spirit invigorates zeal and radical commitment to revolutionize the whole capitalist society and fight for international socialism, his

theological standpoint led him to be prone to the problem of utopian messianism that has characterized Western Marxism.

### **Issac T. Sit, “Resisting Ecclesial Spatial Hegemony: A Critical Analysis of Hypersonic Festival as Heterotopia in Pandemic Hong Kong”**

This study adopts Michel Foucault's concept of Heterotopia, emphasizing the latest linking of festivals that cause spatial and temporal interruptions. Amidst COVID-19, the Hypersonic Festival (HF) in Hong Kong utilized an industrial setting in Kwun Tong and crowdfunding to challenge governmental and ecclesial controls over space and ideology. It deepens the discourse on Festival Heterotopias, particularly emphasizing the interaction during the pandemic. Also, it shows the complex dynamics between HF, government policies, and church authority. The research illustrates HF's venue, mission, and music genre as acts of resistance against the church's traditional social order. Employing thick description, detailed interviews, and archival analysis, the study provides multifaceted insight into Festival Heterotopias during the pandemic, aiming to showcase how these festivals can influence power structures and how disruptions in space and time can challenge and transform the Hong Kong church's musical and spatial hegemony, fostering innovation and action

### **Tang Ho Sum, “Entering the Mass Killing Fantasy in Esther: Constructing a Wish-Fulfilling Narrative for Cathartic Release”**

[hosum1134@gmail.com](mailto:hosum1134@gmail.com)

This article examines the perspective of the implied reader, the Jewish diaspora during the Hellenistic period, on the narrative of revengeful mass killing in Esther (9:1-17) through the interpretive lens of psychological *Phantasy* (fantasy) and psychoanalytic theories, such as *Cathexis*, to explore the potential psychological impact on the implied readers. After presenting the narrative's fantasy nature as serving a wish-fulfilment function, the article provides a psychoanalytic interpretation of the implied reader who longs for revenge against their enemies. It contends that: (1) The depiction of mass killing represents a wish-fulfilment narrative that satisfies the desire to eliminate other political powers, and (2) This fantasized violence offers a collective cathartic release for its implied readers which facilitates a coping mechanism for social-political frustration, while simultaneously carrying potential risks for enduring ideological repercussions.

### **Egodi Uchendu and Udo Okugbe, “Examining the Anthropocentric Approach of the Abrahamic Religion of Christianity to the Human-Earth Relationship”**

[egodi.uchendu@unn.edu.ng](mailto:egodi.uchendu@unn.edu.ng)

[u.okugbe@gmail.com](mailto:u.okugbe@gmail.com)

Religious worldviews shape traditional attitudes to nature and environment. The devastating effects changes in the environment have caused human beings have become a global concern. The Christian religion takes an anthropocentric position in the human-earth relationship; and this determines the role it plays in the changing human environment. This paper examines the anthropocentric approach of the Christian religion in the human-earth relationship using the comparative analysis method to determine

either how it has helped in sustaining the environment or contributed to the deteriorating state of the environment. The authors conclude that the anthropocentric approach actually emphasizes a stewardship role for man to the environment with a charge to tend it for sustainability. The authors recommend Robin Attfield's ethical considerations on the environmental role of religion as it will help shape a constructive form of responsible stewardship.

**Leilah Vevaina, "Trust and the Ancestors: Perpetual Trusts and the *Muktad* Ceremonies"**

[leilah.vevaina@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:leilah.vevaina@cuhk.edu.hk)

Charitable giving is one of the pillars of Zoroastrianism, where the acquisition of wealth is righteous if earned honestly and shared liberally. Conducting charity is practiced at all class levels of the Parsi (Indian Zoroastrian) community in Mumbai and is incorporated into several ritual practices such as annual muktad remembrances for the dead. It is at these rituals wherein the souls of deceased kin (*fravašis*) are called down by name for feasting and convening with their living families on earth, that future charitable intentions are often announced. While the muktad rituals reconvene the living and the dead annually, the charitable trust is the formal legal mechanism, which mirrors this cosmological cycle of giving in the realm of the worldly, perpetually. Not simply analysing the trust as an economic legal mechanism, this paper will investigate the trust as part of ritual practice.

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**Eran Viezel, "The Authorship of the Bible between Jewish Medieval Exegetes and Christian Modern Scholarship"**

[eviezel@bgu.ac.il](mailto:eviezel@bgu.ac.il)

Many scholars take a great interest in the views of medieval commentators regarding the authorship of the biblical books, including the way in which they were compiled and the writers' identities. While they frequently stress the affinities medieval commentators exhibit with their modern critical counterparts, they also tend to overemphasize the innovative exegesis of the former, thus misrepresenting their opinions. This misconstrual appears to derive primarily from the attempt of Jewish scholars to base Christian critical biblical scholarship on Jewish sources.

**Katja Wengenmayr, "The Discourse on Marxist Study of Religion in the PRC: An Outsider Perspective"**

[Wengenmayr\\_katja@126.com](mailto:Wengenmayr_katja@126.com)

In 2021, Xi Jinping underscored the importance of religious studies, emphasizing its alignment with Marxist principles. This triggered a renewed debate on the orientation and positioning of religious studies. Some scholars had previously advocated for a more explicit integration of religious studies with Marxism and atheism. This paper analyzes the structure of the academic discourse on religious studies in the PRC, with a specific focus on two debates concerning atheism and Marxist religious studies (2011/2013 and 2021). Applying De Certeau's theory of strategies and tactics, the paper scrutinizes the responses

of religious studies scholars to state directives. It illustrates how the reframing of the discipline and reinterpretations of the Marxist view on religion serve as adaptive tactics employed by scholars to answer “the call” of the official discourse. The study also highlights an internal power struggle within religious studies, involving both atheist and religious studies scholars. The significant representation of atheists in the political sphere further aligns religious studies with the official discourse, resulting in a narrowing discursive space for other theoretical approaches toward religion.

**Dwight Ypanto, Milver Legitimas, Peb Villacrusis, Jake Barcenas, Josefina Ranara, and Rito Baring, “The Role of Catholic Life Formation in Fostering Sustainable Environmental Attitudes among Selected Filipino SHS Students”**

[rito.baring@dlsu.edu.ph](mailto:rito.baring@dlsu.edu.ph)

A relevant Religious Education needs to confront life threatening global issues humanity face today. The present study investigates how Catholic Life Formation (CLF) through religious instruction may predict environmental attitudes among students in Cebu City, Philippines. This study analyzes how the following variables may influence Christian environmentalism: students' reception of CLF inputs, Catholic Social Teachings (CST) perceptions, Students' beliefs, and environmental responses (STB) from a sample of 491 Grade 12 SH students in a private university in Cebu, Philippines. This descriptive quantitative survey used ordinal logistic regression to test our model. We adopted a 2-step procedure to gather data: first an open-ended interview to tease the themes and viewpoints of students. Second, incorporating the qualitative output from the interviews, a survey is conducted using a researcher-made self-report paired with the Christian Environmentalism Scale (CES) to describe student attitudes towards the environment. The findings are discussed with respect to Religious Education and CLF environmental advocacy.

**Yijiang Zhong, “Civil Religion in the U.S., Japan, and China – Exploring the Limits and Potentials of a Global Concept “**

[kyoto8138@gmail.com](mailto:kyoto8138@gmail.com)

The concept “civil religion” was developed by the American sociologist Robert Bellah in the 1960s amidst domestic anti-war social unrest and high Cold War hostilities. Building on the political philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau and Emile Durkheim, Bellah tried to recover from American historical experience what he argued as a public religious dimension that had lent legitimacy to the republic and helped consolidate social solidarity. The concept, while being contested and criticized, had since gained popularity in and outside the U.S. including in Japan and China where scholars have been arguing to transform Shinto and Confucianism respectively into a civil religion for achieving national unity. The expansion of civil religion into a trans-Pacific discourse for engaging problems in countries that have radically different culture, history, and political system from the U.S. foregrounds the analytical and historical tensions, embodied by the concept “civil religion,” between inclusion and solidarity, the public and the private, transcendence and this-worldliness, individual and community, the “civil” and “religion.” This presentation critically examines these tensions to explore the limits and potentials of the concept “civil religion.”

**Zhou Ziqin, “Idealizing Need for Self Satisfaction : Conceptualizing Meditation Based on Heinz Kohut's Idealizing Transference”**

[zqzhou22@m.fudan.edu.cn](mailto:zqzhou22@m.fudan.edu.cn)

There are at least three traditions in the psychoanalytic approach to the study of meditation and mystical experience. Classical psychoanalysis understand meditation as the restoration of primary narcissism in adulthood. Epstein (1986) discusses meditation from the perspective of Charles Hanly's view of narcissism. First, I show how the classical psychoanalytic understanding of meditation and mystical experience is incompatible with mystics and scholars. I then suggest that Kohut's idealizing transference can be applied to the conceptualisation of meditation. Finally, I point out that this can bring some theoretical benefits, especially a better understanding of the popularity of compassion meditation in recent years.