

2018 New England & Canadian Maritimes Regional Meeting of the
American Academy of Religion (AAR)
Saturday April 7, 2018
At *Wentworth Institute of Technology*
550 Huntington Ave
Boston, MA 02115

Last Update: April 6, 2018



Full Conference Program Is Now Available
(See below link to Conference Site Rooms & Facilities Photos)

URL to this Conference Program: <https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/NEMAARConferenceProgram2018.pdf>

Conference Regular Registration of \$40.00 is handled via Eventbrite at
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-nemaar-annual-conference-regular-registration-tickets-44506087907> (ALL Conference presenters, participants, and attendees, including vendors and visitors, must be registered. Registration includes a Box Lunch and beverages and snacks). After March 23, 2018 the Conference Registration will increase to \$40.00 [*Conference Early Bird Registration of \$30.00 closed on March 23rd*])

NEMAAR Student Director & Vice-President Candidate Statements and CVs (election held during the luncheon Business Meeting):
<https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/2018NEMAARCandidateStatementsAndCVs.pdf>

Venue: 4th Floor of Beatty Hall of the Wentworth Institute of Technology, 106 Ward St. Boston, MA 02115, <https://wit.edu/>

Public Transportation: MBTA **Green Line "E"** (Heath Street) car to the Museum of Fine Arts stop. Wentworth is across the street: OR **Orange Line** to Ruggles Stop. Wentworth is about a three-block walk up Ruggles Street to the corner of Ruggles and Parker Street. A Wentworth Campus Map is available at <https://wit.edu/about-wentworth/life-boston/campus-map>

Conference Onsite Registration

Will be held in **Room 402 (Center for Academic Excellence) of Beatty Hall (106 Ward Street)** of the Wentworth Institute of Technology. Walk-in, “day of” registrations will be accepted, though if at all possible, please register before-hand online, as this will help us in more precise planning with the food service.

Conference Book Display will be in Room 405

Both Campus Parking and Wifi access will be available

Plenary Speaker: Dr. Calvin Mercer, Professor of Religious Studies at East Carolina University (for more see: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/religionprogram/mercer/>)



Dr. Mercer has been addressing the opportunities, dangers, and religious implications of human enhancement technology for over a decade and is among a growing number of scholars addressing the broader social, political, and economic implications. Much of his work is summarized in this podcast interview: <http://brickcaster.com/christiantranshumanist/29>. Dr. Mercer wants to promote, among academics and faith communities, substantive reflection on these questions, which he considers some of the most urgent public debates that need to occur in the world. Also trained in clinical psychology, Dr. Mercer practiced professionally part-time for over a decade and uses this discipline in his published work on religion, as exemplified in his 2009 book by Praeger, *Slaves to Faith: A Therapist Looks Inside the Fundamentalist Mind*.

Conference Rooms (for pictures see either the PDF or Power Point links below):

<https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/2018NEMAARConferenceSiteAtWentworth.pdf> (PDF)

<https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/2018NEMAARConferenceSiteAtWentworth.ppsx> (Power Point)

Room 1: 426

Room 2: 418 (needs laptop cables)

Room 3: 419

Room 4: 420

Room 5: 401

Room 6; **NOW Changed to: Beatty 421** (was originally M204 [Seminar])

426 (Use for Plenary & Business Luncheon Meeting)

Conference Schedule

8:15—8:55 AM Registration & Packet pick-up for those pre-registered available in Center for Academic Excellence, Room 402

9:00—10:15 AM First Concurrent Session of Papers

Room 1 426 PANEL: “DIALOGUES ON SCIENCE, ETHICS AND RELIGION – SPANNING BOUNDARIES TO SOLVE PROBLEMS.”

Convenor: John Duff (University of Massachusetts—Boston, john.duff@umb.edu)

Presentation #1: “From Cholera to Climate: What can the London Epidemic of 1854 teach us about confronting climate change in the 21st century?” Greg Davies, University of Massachusetts—Boston, (gregory.davies001@umb.edu) and J. Duff, University of Massachusetts—Boston (john.duff@umb.edu)

Abstract: Until the 19th century, prevailing medical opinion held that miasma, or impure air, caused cholera. Today, we know that cholera spreads through contaminated water, a discovery that began with a collaboration between a medical scientist and a priest during London’s 1854 cholera epidemic. As a partnership between members of scientific and faith communities led to a major breakthrough in public health in 1854, this paper argues that a similar faith-science partnership is well-suited to address current ecological crises.

Presentation #2: “Science - An Alternative for Religion?” Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland (KUL)

Abstract: Once in a while there appears a thesis that science can – and should – replace religion. For many this idea appears to be attractive and sometimes is seen as a civilizational mission of science. I will not discuss why science should or should not

replace religion but I focus on the structural elements of religion and its scientific counterparts, as well as on presuppositions of that project and on the understanding of human being which may support it.

Presentation #3: John Duff, (University of Massachusetts—Boston, john.duff@umb.edu), “Taking a page from Ian Barbour’s observations on relations between science and religion”

In physicist and divine thinker Ian Barbour’s 1990 collection of lectures entitled Religion in an Age of Science, he includes a chapter entitled Ways of Relating Science and Religion that acknowledges an oft-fraught relationship with an eye toward reducing conflict and accommodating differences. His observations and suggestions have been echoed since he offered them and prompted a collaborative effort between UMass Boston and the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland and that effort in turn serves as the impetus for this workshop. We do not aspire to some grand synthesis between science and religion. Our modest objective is to serve as a venue for dialogue between students, faculty and others interested in seeing whether and how minds might be opened and mindsets broadened by reflecting upon the work of those whose ideas and work employ a variety of ways of looking at the universe in which we live and the great contemplation - why?

Room 2: 418 Morality and the Facts of the World

Convenor: Timo Helenius

Roger R. Adams, “Science or Religions, Who Owns Morality?” Independent Scholar (roger_adams@comcast.net)

Abstract This paper argues that science cannot take us from “is” to “ought,” because principles derived from humans’ innate moral structures are not necessarily right. The deep grammar of human morality described by scientists is inborn and universal, yet the evolutionary origins of moral grammar mean that principles drawn from it remain contingent, not absolutely obligatory. The limitations of moral grammar as an ultimate basis for morality are inherent in the process of evolution itself, namely relative reproductive success in the face of adaptive pressures.

Nicholas Aaron Friesner, “The perfectionist transcendence of Henry Bugbee.” Brown University (nicholas_friesner@brown.edu)

Abstract: Turning to the little-known American philosopher, Henry Bugbee, this paper details a form of transcendence that preserves moral responsibility but relinquishes bounded individualism, asking what a religious practice of environmental perfectionism looks like Bugbee-style. This is a perfectionism that cultivates the intensely personal and searching character of American philosophy—where the lines between philosophical

argument, religious practice, and personal accounting become blurred—without allowing the human creature to completely dissolve into its ecological relations.

Room 3 419 Christian and Islamic Philosophical Theology

Convenor: Nicholas Hayes (Boston College, hayesnd@bc.edu)

Scott Rice, “The Spirit and Time in Robert Jenson's Trinitarian Theology.” Harvard University, (spr756@mail.harvard.edu)

Abstract: This paper examines the trinitarian theology of the Lutheran and ecumenical theologian, Robert Jenson. Jenson's theology is often faced with charges of either conceptual incoherence or a notion of eternal timelessness. This paper addresses these claims and offers an alternative rendering of Jenson on the God-world relation that proceeds from his doctrine of the Spirit. The paper concludes with a reflection on divine transcendence based on a trinitarian concept of divine unity.

Syed A.H. Zaidi, “Ibn Sīnā’s Philosophical Mysticism.” Emory University, (syedzaidi.nyc@gmail.com)

Abstract: The study of Ibn Sīnā’s (lat. Avicenna) (d. 428/1037) philosophy in the West has been dominated by two camps: those who claim he was a strict rationalist and those who claim he was a philosopher with inclinations to Islamic mysticism (ar. Şūfism). This paper proposes, by examining three texts, that Ibn Sīnā’s thought was both rigorously analytical and still influenced by Şūfism.

Room 4 420 Roman Catholic Responses to Oppression

Convenor: Sarah Bernard-Hoverstad (Boston College, sara.bernard-hoverstad@bc.edu)

Eileen Groth Lyon, “Spiritual Resistance to the Nazis and the Living Rosaries of KZ-Gusen.” State University of New York at Fredonia, (Eileen.Lyon@fredonia.edu)

Abstract: The inextricable ties between Polish national identity and the Catholic Church meant that practice of the Catholic faith became an important aspect of mutual support, resistance, and retention of individual and national identity in the Nazi concentration camps. Despite the prohibitions against religious practice, many prisoners surreptitiously produced devotional objects. Particular focus in this paper will be given to rosary beads produced at KZ-Gusen to illustrate the varied and overlapping purposes these artifacts served.

Peter Fay, “American Catholic Social Reform and the Victimization of Americans with Mental Illness: Lessons from Matilda Coskery and the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg, Maryland.” Boston College, (Faypg@bc.edu)

Abstract: Although people in the United States who suffer from mental illness encounter much victimization today, neither the American Catholic church nor the wider U.S. society has adequately cared for this vulnerable population. This essay explores the laudable, pioneering work of Matilda Coskery and the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg, Maryland to care for people with mental illness from the 1830s through the Civil War and proposes ways in which the American Catholic church can critically retrieve Coskery's model to better care for this vulnerable population today.

Room 5 401 Space and Empire

Convenor: Nazeer Bacchus (Yale University)

Laura Worden, "The Creation of Rituals and (In)Security at the TSA Checkpoint." Yale University, (laura.worden@yale.edu)

Abstract: Many of the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) screening procedures are countermeasures to highly publicized acts/attempts of destruction. This project examines the spaces and performances of the TSA, namely the relationship to power and (in)security through rituals. The creation of disaster rituals leads to a sense of security for certain populations yet great insecurity for many minoritized populations. Thus, these minoritized groups have created supplementary rituals to cultivate their own security in this space.

Hyunwoo Koo, "'The Little Girl' in Manhattan: How This Statue Honoring Comfort Women Cries with Postcolonial Koreans in America." Boston University (hyunwoo@bu.edu)

Abstract: The paper identifies the theological implications of the statue commemorating "comfort women" (Asian females forced into sexual slavery by Imperial Japan) installed in New York City. It frames the sculpture as an artistic mediator connecting the colonial stories to the people sharing their history today in a new land today.

Room 6 NOW Changed to: Beatty 421 (was originally M204 [Seminar])

21st Century Ways of Being Religious

Convenor: Paul Firenze (NEMAAR President and Professor at Wentworth, firenzep@wit.edu)

Ronald Brown, "The technology Empowered Cleric and the end of traditional religions." Touro College and the Unification Theological Seminary, NYC (Ronaldb712@aol.com)

Abstract: Those modern clerics who have mastered modern communications technology are leading to the decline of traditional world religions and the rise of new ways of doing religion and the formation of new religions. Much like Luther's exploitation of the printing press, mass air travel, the Internet, DVDs, Google, and global finance are fueling a new religious renaissance. Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/RonaldJosephBrown/> for full information and updates.

AJ van Tine, “Comparative Theology from a Unitarian Universalist Perspective.” Harvard, (Vantine.aj@gmail.com)

Abstract: Comparative Theology involves the metaphor of departure and return from the home tradition to the “other” theological world. This metaphor may not make sense for Unitarian Universalism, a tradition with fewer theological requirements and boundaries than most. To help answer the question of what kind of Comparative Theology is possible for Unitarian Universalists, this paper compares the tradition-based sources which frame comparative theology in Catholicism with those of Unitarian Universalism.

10:30—11:45 AM PLENARY In Beatty 426

11:45 AM—1:00 PM Lunch, NEMAAR Business Meeting, Elections for New Student Director and Vice-President, and Grad Paper Awards In Room 1, Beatty 426

Professor Paul Firenze, NEMAAR President and Professor James Bretzke, NEMAAR Regional Coordinator, presiding,

N.B. A lunch is provided for those who have pre-registered and paid for the NEMAAR Conference. Off campus fast food facilities are located nearby outside.

1:00—1:15 PM Break

1:15-2:30 PM Second Concurrent Session of Papers

Room 1 426 PANEL: “READING HEGEL CHRISTIANLY.” With **Justin Coyle** (justin.coyle@bc.edu), **Thomas Tatterfield** (thomasdtatterfield@gmail.com), & **Jordan Wood** (woodgh@bc.edu) (all Boston College)

Convenor: Nicholas Andersen (Brown University, nicholas_andersen@brown.edu)

Panel abstract: This panel revisits G.W.F. Hegel’s peculiar nuptials with Christian theology. Was Hegel, as he insisted, a goodly Lutheran—or else, as others have crowed, a heterodox gnostic, pantheist, or atheist? And how should Christian theology receive his thought? *Justin Shaun Coyle’s paper* remembers a forgotten 20th century critique of Hegel by the Orthodox sophiologist and suspected idealist Sergius Bulgakov. *Thomas Tatterfield’s paper* argues that Hegel displays how Christology might be resourced when theologically discussing religious experience in a secular age. *Jordan Daniel Wood’s paper* wonders whether Hegel’s philosophical program might not be better read as a species of Alexandrian Christianity, that is, within the speculative horizon of Clement and Origen. Together, the panel unties but a few knots in the tangled relation between Christian orthodoxy and Hegel’s speculative donation.

Coyle Abstract: My paper considers the theological reception of Hegel in Henri de Lubac and Sergius Bulgakov. Each assays Hegel by employing metalepsis, in this case accusing him of indulging heterodoxies. Both de Lubac and Bulgakov agree that Hegel plays modernity's archvillain, but they do not agree over which heterodoxy he commits. I study and compare these critiques to show how metaleptic anxieties often disclose more about de Lubac and Bulgakov than they do about Hegel.

Tatterfield Abstract:

Wood Abstract: My essay attempts to view Hegel in the broad tradition of Alexandrian Christianity. Hegel himself seems to intimate this in several ways, but I isolate only two themes: [1] that faith must flower in absolute knowing (subjective to objective movement); [2] that Christ disclosed the way the absolute comes into history (objective to subjective movement). When questioning Hegel's relation to Christian orthodoxy, then, these two themes cannot simply be dismissed as somehow foreign to Christianity itself.

Room 2 418 Nietzsche: Self-Valuation and the New Breed

Convenor: Nicholas Friesner (Brown, nicholas_friesner@brown.edu)

Casey Stanley, "Methods of Responsibility through Non-Violent Subjectivities." Yale University, (casey.stanley@yale.edu)

Abstract: This paper will first relate Nietzsche's philosophical method hermeneutically, and seek to disclose the movement of his interpretive truth under the guiding principle of Subjectivity. What I wish to demonstrate in Nietzsche's method is the essential instability of subjectivity, and the necessary movement toward new self identities through the subject's un-violated process of self-valuation. In contrast to this first thesis I will propose an alternative method of valuation which assumes responsibility for the other as the necessary identification of the subject. I will use the concept of substitution in Levinas and the theme of fraternity in Dostoevsky as an alternative to Nietzsche's *Dionysian Worldview* as a method of subjectivity displacement that is essentially responsible for others.

Timo Helenius, "The Purge: Nietzsche, Sin, and the New Breed of Humanity." University of New Brunswick, St. John, (helenius@unb.ca)

Abstract: This paper explores Merold Westphal's surprising and oxymoronic depiction of Nietzsche as "a great secular theologian of original sin." Even though I will contest Westphal's stance, I will also show how he could have arrived at such conclusion. Nietzsche's critical effort is directed at the human desire to identify oneself with fabrications that are understood to be the truth under the rubric of controlled order; this resentful and nihilistic human sickness deserves to be purged away.

Room 3 419 Islam

Convenor: Eva M. Pascal, (Saint Michael's College VT, evapasc@gmail.com)

Sana Patel, “Divine Celebrities? Examining the Online Fandom of Muslim Religious Leaders: The Case of Tariq Ramadan.” University of Ottawa, (spatel61@uottawa.ca)

Abstract: This paper examines online fandom of Muslim religious leaders that portray them as celebrity-like figures. Using the theory of implicit religion, the paper seeks to answer how these online fandoms are created in regards to its relation with religious authority and what role social media plays in this.

Rasheed Rabbi, “Honing Muslim Identity in Cyber Territory: Evaluating the 4P Formula for Mosque Survival Life Cycle in America.” The Hartford Seminary, (rasheed_rabbi@hotmail.com)

Abstract: This paper proposes a new approach called the 4P-MSLC (Four Phase Mosque Survival Life Cycle) to portray a comprehensive picture of mosque community online. The 4P-MSLC is an iterative process and each iteration contains four distinct phases to demonstrate mosque’s progress more meaningfully on the web. It was applied on twenty sample mosques to assess its universality. Further mapping different types of mosque audiences with each of the four phases ensures the efficiency of 4P-MSLC.

Room 4 420 Speaking Gender: Asceticism and the Self

Convenor: Kelsi Morrison-Atkins (Harvard)

Jordan Conley, “Wild but Not Free: Female Recluses and the Marking of Gender in Discourses of Asceticism.” Boston University, (jmconley@bu.edu)

Abstract: This paper considers both the representation of gender and gendered modes of representation in historical and contemporary approaches to female recluses. By locating specific stories (such as, for example, that of the eccentric mother-daughter pair, both named Edie Beale, whose descent into squalor is depicted in the popular 1975 documentary Grey Gardens) within a broader tradition of female asceticism, the paper highlights the ways in which that tradition has been strongly informed by gendered dichotomies.

Caleb Murray, “Ethics, Gender, Desire: Theorizing the Ecstatic Subject with Sarah Coakley and Judith Butler.” Brown University, (caleb_murray@brown.edu)

Abstract: Kenosis has long troubled feminist theologians. In this paper, I take up Sarah Coakley’s contribution to debates surrounding gender, submission, and self-giving and argue that while some recent critiques of Coakley might appear to invalidate her feminist

commitments (Tonstad, Mercedes), such criticisms call for a reevaluation of Coakley's position. Feminist accounts of self-giving certainly attend to vulnerability, but I argue that Coakley offers a robust account of the very (vulnerable) formation of the self itself.

Room 5 401 Religion and Politics

Convenor: James Dooley (Boston University, jmdooley@bu.edu)

Lauren Kerby, "Taking History Seriously: Toward a New Definition of White American "Evangelicalism." Boston University, (lkerby@bu.edu)

Abstract: In light of recent consternation over white American evangelicals' political activity, this paper proposes that we need a new definition of white evangelicalism that goes beyond traditional religious identity markers such as theology or morality. Drawing on intellectual history and ethnographic research, it argues that what unifies white American evangelicals today is their relationship to the nation, which is mediated by their creative and strategic use of American history.

James T. Bretzke, S.J. "Strategic Alliance or Faustian Compact? Reconsidering Religious Support One Year Out for President Trump and the GOP." Boston College School of Theology & Ministry, bretzke@bc.edu

Abstract: After one year of the GOP control of all branches of the government, in addition to numerous supporters and die-hard resisters, there is a considerable middle ground among both Catholic and Protestant leaders who exhibit some significant qualifications and reservations about this support. I will look at these middle of the road supporters, lifting up key differences in the reasoning put forward by the religious leaders, and reflecting on their ethical import for the future.

Room 6 NOW Changed to: Beatty 421 (was originally M204 [Seminar])

Kenneth Holder, "A Sacred and Pure Location: An examination of Paul's rhetorical strategy in 1st Thessalonians." Brite Divinity, (musical123@earthlink.net)

Abstract: Sexual morality underwent a massive transformation in the late Roman Empire. I argue that 1st Thessalonians constitutes Paul's first volley in this culture war. He engaged in a discourse of sacred geography to provide Christ-believers in Thessaloniki with an understanding of a new sacred space within a context they would recognize. Cognitive geography was the constructive tool for imagining this space in the absence of actual shrines for the nascent church in Thessaloniki.

2:30—2:45 PM Break

2:45—4:00 PM Third Concurrent Session of Papers

Room 1 426 PANEL: “CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCIENCE TO SPIRITUALITY.” **Jonathon Eder**, (ederj@mbelibrary.org) **Michael Hamilton** (hamiltonm@csp.com), and **Judy Huenneke**, (huennekej@mbelibrary.org) (all from the Mary Baker Eddy Library)

Convenor: Elaine Lechtreck, (Independent Scholar)

Abstract: Jonathon Eder: Mary Baker Eddy’s contributions to the discussion of the relationship of religion and science fall within a broader cultural and historical landscape. In profiling video clips from Mary Baker Eddy Library panel discussions that explored the intersection of science and spirituality, this paper examines how Eddy’s ideas both resonate and are in tension with other approaches in the sciences that advance non-material, metaphysical perspectives.

Michael Hamilton: Mary Baker Eddy understood herself both as a scientific discoverer and a purveyor of religious truth. Her earliest work characterized her discovery in phenomenological terms, as a “moral science” that would improve health. What prompted her shift toward explicitly religious definitions of her work as “Christian Science”? Was it sheer opportunism as Mark Twain later claimed? This paper examines Eddy’s own quest for health and its convergence with her broader quest to relieve suffering.

Judy Huenneke: Mary Baker Eddy and her followers were deeply interested in the advances in the sciences that took place in the late 19th century. This paper explores their interest and how it was expressed in statements about Christian Science theology made by Eddy and by early Christian Scientists, some of whom had backgrounds in the sciences.

Room 2 418 Philosophy: Goodness, Selfhood, and Transcendence

Convenor: Brian Robinette (Boston College, robinette@bc.edu)

Nicholas Hayes, “Behind the Background: The Ontological Architecture of Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*.” Boston College, (hayesnd@bc.edu)

Abstract: In this paper, I contend that interpreters have consistently misunderstood Charles Taylor’s two concepts of “transcendence” and “the immanent frame,” both central to *A Secular Age*. I argue that both concepts, which Taylor understands as “background structures of experience,” have three aspects which must be disentangled: 1) their historically and culturally constructed aspect; 2) their universal, anthropological aspect; and 3) their “reality-disclosing,” or ontological, aspect. Rightly grasping how the three relate has significant implications for understanding *A Secular Age*, and for assessing its abiding constructive value.

Matthew C. Kruger, “Words without knowledge: Wittgenstein, Nishitani, and Job on scientific knowledge in ethics and theodicy.” Boston College (krugerma@bc.edu)

Abstract: Through an exploration of the limits of language and conception of good and evil in the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Nishitani Keiji, and the book of Job, this paper offers a Christian attempt to articulate a narrow use for scientific knowledge in our attempt to develop and express a vision of the good. This is accomplished through first acknowledging the fraught nature of our conception of good, as suggested by each thinker, followed by a return movement which produces an alternative construction.

Room 3 419 Religion and the Body

Convenor: Vika Gardner (Center for the Study of Science in Muslim Societies at Hampshire College, vrgcs@hampshire.edu)

Elyse Raby, “Between ‘self’ and ‘spare parts:’ A theology of the body for transplantation ethics.” Boston College, (elyse.raby@bc.edu) :

Abstract: Organ donation and transplantation discourse often presuppose models of the body as “machine” and as “self.” However, both models have harmful implications for the physical and psychological health of organ recipients. As an alternative, I offer a model of the body as “finite ground of personhood” using Karl Rahner’s theology of death and of the body as symbol. This model can explain and potentially relieve the identity disruption and emotional distress experienced by transplant recipients.

Kate Craig “Revelatory Bodies: An Interdisciplinary Study of Religion, Embodiment, and Religious Violence.” Boston University, kcraig@bu.edu

Abstract: This paper will perform an interdisciplinary analysis of the evolution of religion and embodied cognition to discuss the interplay of particularity and generality in theological ritualization of the mundane, cognitive error, moral reasoning, and resulting interreligious violence. A working solution highlights contemplative practice to address in-group bias. This analysis brings together insights from cognitive science and critical theory, working with embodied cognition and phenomenology, to address one of the most pressing social ills of our time.

Room 4 420 Engaging the Limits of Bodies

Sue Fisher Wentworth “Staying Close to the Truth of Bodies.” Independent Scholar (clarewentworth@gmail.com)

Abstract: What does it mean to live humanly and humanely in a technological age? Bacon’s “new organon” has borne the strange fruit of insight into the natural world and estrangement from and destruction of that same world. This paper explores the practice of

“staying close to the truth of bodies” as potentially offering a wiser way: recovering the distinction between nature and artifice, attending to the vital exchanges which constitute “being alive,” and re-engaging with mortality.

WITHDREW March 25, 2018 Douglas Green, “Religious Fear, Ethics and Human Enhancement.” Independent scholar, (greendouglasp@hotmail.co.uk)

Abstract: A current debate within society involves the ethics of human enhancement & transhumanism which contends that future humans will be radically different and better due to biotechnological and technological advancements. However, there are some individuals and organizations who will argue against this vision of grandeur out of fear, stubbornness, misunderstandings and misconceptions. My purpose is to discuss Judaism’s, Christianity’s and Islam’s ethical frameworks and responses to biotechnology, human enhancement and transhumanism.

Room 5 401 Religion and the Arts

Convenor: Barbara A Beall (Clark University)

Erin Fulton, “The Religious and Regional Significance of Eighteenth-Century Church Music in 1840s Maine.” University of Kentucky, erinfulton@uky.edu

Abstract: Two collections of sacred music compiled in 1840s Maine deployed eighteenth-century church music to address contested religious and regional identities. Analysis of their musical and paratextual content of these books, contemporaneous advertisements, and critical reactions demonstrates that the compilers represented “ancient music” in relation to the anxieties of nineteenth-century worshipers. These collections are a little-studied example of how, during a time of social and demographic change, antebellum New Englanders represented their fragile religious, regional, and artistic heritage.

Tracy Rubin, “Deities, Shamans, and Satyrs: The Diverse Ontological Foundations of Composite Figure Imagery.” Museum of Fine Arts, (tgr090@mail.harvard.edu)

Abstract: Composite figures, which combine bodily attributes of humans and animals, are present in religious traditions from around the world and throughout history. This singular term fails to acknowledge the ontological differences that exist. Deities such as the Hindu god Ganesh and beings such as satyrs belong in separate categories, as do shamans who entwine with spirits. This paper presents a new perspective that allows scholars to more precisely understand, interpret, and discuss the significance and meaning of these figures.

Room 6: NOW Changed to: Beatty 421 (was originally M204 [Seminar])

Catholic Education & Solidarity with the Poor

Convenor: Patty Jones

William Horan, “Catholic Education in Solidarity with the Poor.” Independent Scholar,
(w.horan@myfairpoint.net)

Abstract: A “preferential option for the poor” should be maintained in our Catholic Schools. We cannot allow our Church to become a church primarily for the middle-class and rich. Practically speaking, the Catholic Schools must close in those countries where the state provides for general education and the resources used for “Confraternity of Christian Doctrine” and other programs which can be kept open to the poor. The essential factor is to cultivate enough Faith to act in the Gospel Tradition, namely, THE POOR GET PRIORITY. The rich and middle-class are welcome too. But the poor come first.

4:00—4:15 PM Break

4:15—5:30 PM Fourth & Final Concurrent Session of Papers

Room 1 426 PANEL: “THE GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL CRISIS AND A PROPOSAL FOR A HIGHER EDUCATION RESPONSE.” With **Anthony Harrison**, Boston University, (acharr@bu.edu), **Aimee Allison Hein**, Boston College, (heinai@bc.edu), **Thomas Hermans-Webster**, Boston University, (webstert@bu.edu), **Lise Miltner**, Brown University, (lise_miltner@brown.edu)

Convenor: Ronald Brown (Touro College and the Unification Theological Seminary, NYC
Ronaldb712@aol.com)

Abstract: As the global ecological crisis continues to worsen, how can colleges and universities respond? This panel believes that higher education has a role to play in fighting climate change, in countering the “ethos of extraction” embodied by much of American climate skepticism, and in shaping students who love and respect Creation as responsible members thereof. Along with structural and financial changes, this panel will address curricular changes rooted in a holistic, naturalist ethic.

Room 2 418 Science and Religion

Convenor: Elyse Raby (Boston College, raby@bc.edu)

James Dooley, “The Drawing of the Light: The Last Question, Revelation, and Artificial Intelligence.” Boston University, (jmdooley@bu.edu)

Abstract: Isaac Asimov enthralled generations of readers with his science fiction, as well as his interests in other genres and categories. Asimov’s short story The Last Question is no different. Bringing together speculative fiction and theological expressions in one

story, Asimov raises some intriguing and important ways that our modern artificial intelligence could possibly come together with a human desire to interact with the divine.

Seth Villegas, “The Morality of Autonomous Vehicles in the Context of Algorithmic Uncertainty.” Boston University, (sethvill@bu.edu)

Abstract: Algorithmic uncertainty represents a technical criterion which may be useful in making feasible recommendations to how autonomous vehicles may function within a larger moral framework with humans. If algorithmic uncertainty is made more transparent, the limits of the sensor technology that autonomous vehicles depend on will be more visible as well, allowing potential cognitive errors (here defined as sin) to be corrected and forgiven.

Room 3 419 Sexuality, Gender & Scripture

Convenor: Laura Worden (Yale University)

Nazeer Nathaniel Bacchus, “Postcolonial-Queer Theory at Biblical Frontiers: Multiaxial Engagement with the Hebrew Scriptures.” Yale Divinity School, nazeer.bacchus@yale.edu

Abstract: This paper seeks to explore the intersectional nexus of postcolonial and queer theoretical discourses and the hermeneutic applications of these connections in the Hebrew Bible. This study aims to offer some key considerations that critically examine the interrelation of power and identity and the implications of hegemonic systems on space, place, and bodies within the Bible. Special attention will be paid to the Book of Lamentations to illustrate such dynamic interconnections.

Emma McDonald, “‘If I But Touch His Cloak’: An Ethical Examination of Reproductive Remedies in the 21st Century.” Yale University, (emma.mcdonald@yale.edu)

Abstract: This paper will argue that the story of the woman with the hemorrhage found in Mark 5:24-34 suggests that women’s experience plays a valuable role in ethical debates on the use of reproductive technologies in the 21st century. By considering the popularity of this story in sub-Saharan Africa, this paper will argue that the narrative can be useful for cross-cultural ethical conversations on reproductive technology.

Room 4: 420 Religious Movements and Intercultural Encounter in New England

Ann-Catherine Wilkening, “‘but a small piece fit for planting’: A Microhistory of the Pachgatgoch Community’s and Moravian Missionaries’ Land Petitioning Efforts in Mid-18th Century Connecticut.” Yale University, (ann-catherine.mcneill@yale.edu)

Abstract: In 1752, the Native Pachgatgoch community petitioned and negotiated their land holdings before the Assembly of Connecticut through affiliation with Moravian missionaries. The daily records in Moravian mission diaries shed light on the religious, social, and material circumstances, various actors' motivations, and power dynamics that, for a time, assisted Pachgatgoch survival in a rapidly changing environment. Yet, Moravian and Pachgatgoch engagement was ultimately entrenched with different goals and resulted in diverging paths which led the Pachgatgoch into a devastating future.

Cancelled due to a work conflict: **Kristin McLaren**, "Capital Area New Mainers: Inter-Religious Partnerships in Augusta, Maine." University of Maine at Augusta, (kristin.mclaren@maine.edu)

Abstract: Capital Area New Mainers Project is an interfaith organization that provides support to recent immigrants to Augusta, Maine, and which promotes inter-cultural relationships. This paper examines efforts in the Augusta area to build an integrated multicultural community, and the successes and challenges of cultivating authentic intercultural and interreligious partnerships.

Room 5 401 Religion and Social Ethics II

Convenor: **Alex Mayfield** (Boston University, mayfieaa@bu.edu)

Rebecca Copeland, "Force-Fed Sour Grapes: Climate Change and the Multi-Generational Effects of Sin." Boston University, (rlcopel@bu.edu)

Abstract: This paper puts climate science into conversation with biblical portrayals of sin to analyze the cumulative effects of multigenerational actions that have created our present climate crisis. In light of the failure of individualistic moral reasoning to motivate adequate responses to this systemic and multigenerational problem, I turn to scriptural understandings of communal, multigenerational, and unintentional sin in order to generate the kind of moral urgency needed to address this pressing problem.

Elaine Lehtreck, "A study of white ministers who risked their pulpits and lives to heal southern society." Independent scholar, (elscholar@yahoo.com)

Abstract: During the 1950s and 1960s, it was easier to be part of the status quo of segregation, but some southern white ministers chose paths that led to harassment, pain, and dismissal from pulpits. Deeply moved by the struggle of African Americans, these ministers looked for ways to reconcile desegregation with Christian principles and to help their black neighbors. While many understand the role political leaders played in ending segregation, courageous white southern ministers also made a contribution.

Room 6: NOW Changed to: Beatty 421 NEMAAR Executive Board Meeting