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Abstracts

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Revisiting the Intercultural Dialogue in the Light of a Culture of Peace

Bensalem Himmich

This paper, originally an address presented before the Executive Council of UNESCO in 2010, presents the author's views on the possible modalities of an intercultural dialogue, and links them to the somewhat controversial notion of a "culture of peace".

The Philosophy of History

Irfan Habib

Written in memory of the Indian historian Papiya Ghosh, this article tries to establish a dialogue between two different fields, Philosophy and History, and to see how the History of the past can be reassessed in the light of the modern developments of philosophy. The author analyses the raison d'être of History, which is to Humanity what the personal memory is to the individual. Facts are selected and interpreted as they mirror the historian's biases and choices (that are never neutral), i.e. his/her personal philosophy, external pressures but also the evolution of the society. All meet a mainstream ideology that must be overcome or, at least, taken into account. Marxism and gender studies for instance re-examined whole parts of History and shed new light on wide aspects formerly neglected by scholars. Inversely certain trends of Indian historiography such as subaltern studies provide a distorted vision of colonial society and tend to promote cultural nationalism while putting aside universal values that bring human beings together. The historical narrative changes and must change, however, not only according to newly discovered facts but also according to the evolution of ideas and human values.

Logic and the Self: After Certain Crises in Western Thought

Bas C Van Fraassen

Delivered on the occasion of the 2009 "Giulio Preti Prize", this lecture examines and questions the contrast between the sense of intellectual crisis in the scientific world of the first decades of the 20th century and the absence of any such sense of crisis in current philosophy. Starting in the 19the century, we were confronted with changes in perspective that affected our relation to the universe we live in as well as to our own language and logic. Not only how we see ourselves but the tools by means of which we think about ourselves came into question. How would it be possible to rationally assess conceptual change that affects the very form of reasoning by which we assess

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such changes? Such are the paradoxes to which philosophers and scientists, in the throes of crisis in the first half of the 20th century, tried to respond. Philosophers today may seemingly have overcome those aporias that vexed their recent predecessors, in denial of the existence of a crisis that should actually be a fecund source for reflection.

Traces of Objectivity: Causality and Probabilities in Quantum Physics

Michel Bitbol

Unlike a widespread opinion, the constitution of objectivity (in Kant's sense) does not require a strict, determinist, application of the category of causality to phenomena manifested in space-time. Some stochastic theories, using probabilities at their fundamental level, are just as able to constitute a domain of objects as determinist theories. In this paper, the conditions to be fulfilled for numbers to be considered as probabilities of intrinsic properties of an object of experience are displayed. These conditions, that synthesize George Boole's relations and John Bell's inequalities, are discussed in detail. Where they are not fulfilled, they make us suspect that it is impossible to achieve the detachment of an object from the instruments that give access to it.

Nietzsche's Zarathustra and Parodic Style: On Lucian's *Hyperanthropos* and Nietzsche's *Übermensch*

Babette Babich

It is well-known that as a term, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* derives from Lucian of Samosata's *hyperanthropos*. I argue that Zarathustra's teaching of the overman acquires new resonances by reflecting on the context of that origination from Lucian's *Kataplous* – literally, "sailing into port" – referring to the soul's journey (ferried by Charon, guided by Hermes) into the afterlife. The *Kataplous he tyrannos*, usually translated *Downward Journey or The Tyrant*, is a Menippean satire of the "overman" who is imagined to be superior to others of "lesser" station in this-worldly life and the same tyrant after his (comically unwilling) transport into the underworld. As a reflection on the life and the death of Zarathustra, this essay also explores the politics of kingship for Empedocles as reformer in terms of Hölderlin's Death of Empedocles and Nietzsche's unpublished drafts on the same topic. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche points to a perspective beyond the here and now, including the "values" of our all-too-worldly and all-too-human concerns, no matter whether in terms of perceived political/economic advantage, or indeed in the pursuit of more trivial satisfactions.

The "Misfits": Genesis of a Non-Darwinian Myth

Florent Kohler

This paper studies the concept of "hominisation" in terms of the dialectic between rupture and continuity. To this effect, it takes into account a number of scholarly approaches belonging to different disciplines (neurobiology, ethnology, linguistics). Through these discourse, the author shows how the concept of hominisation escapes the Darwinian narrative, and belongs rather to a mythological dimension. As such, it plays a role in the process of building a specifically human identity, as opposed to an animal one.

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Being Time: Zen, Modernity, the Contemporary

James Adam Redfield

This paper integrates concepts from philosophy and Zen Buddhism in order to define the implications of an American Zen Master's sermon about the 2009 financial crisis. It interprets three aspects of his sermon: his critique of modernity, his reflection on the experience of Zen meditation (shikantaza), and his version of Buddhist ontology (tathāgata-garbha). The paper shows that his sermon is an innovative problematization of what it is to be a modern subject or, still more generally, what it is to exist historically. Each of its three aspects indicates a different, perhaps even opposed, response to this problem. Yet they all suggest new configurations of temporality, historicity, and Being. The paper argues that it is precisely this mobile adjacency to the dominant modernist perspective which makes the Zen Master's sermon both ethically and intellectually effective. Recruiting him into a Nietzschean lineage, it concludes with a programmatic statement of how work in the human sciences could develop his insights.

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