

Evolution and Transcendence:

Philosophical, Scientific, and Religious Perspectives

Date: June 18-21, 2018

Location: Catholic Academy of Berlin (www.katholische-akademie-berlin.de), Germany

Local Host: Stephan Steiner (Steiner@katholische-akademie-berlin.de)

Program Committee: Christian Polke and Nathaniel Barrett

The theme of the 2018 IARPT conference is human transcendence considered in the light of biocultural evolution. Central to this theme are the questions of human uniqueness and the various interpretations of transcendence that can be given in light of this uniqueness, as well as questions about the kinds of social and cultural conditions that are necessary for the development and realization of various kinds of human transcendence. For example: How should we articulate the continuity/discontinuity of the human species in relation to our evolutionary past and the rest of nature, and how should this evolutionary standpoint inform our understanding of the human yearning and capacity for transcendence? Is human transcendence a species universal, or is it a cultural development like agriculture, written language, or mathematics? What kinds of human transcendence are conceivable within a naturalistic, evolutionary framework? How should the phenomenon of human transcendence inform our understanding of nature and evolution?

In keeping with the special interests of IARPT (www.iarpt.org), we welcome, as always, contributions from diverse perspectives of American religious and philosophical thought, including pragmatism, empiricism, process philosophy, religious naturalism, and liberal theology. In addition, we invite (but do not require) participants to engage with one or more of the following:

- 1) Relevant scientific perspectives on human uniqueness, especially the work of American comparative psychologist Michael Tomasello, Director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig – see, e.g., his most recent books, *A Natural History of Human Thinking* (2014) and *A Natural History of Human Morality* (2016).
- 2) The German tradition of philosophical anthropology as represented by figures such as Max Scheler (e.g. *Man's Place in Nature*, 1928), Helmuth Plessner (e.g. *Man and the Stages of the Organic*, 1928), Arnold Gehlen (e.g. *Man: His Nature and Place in the World*, 1940) and Ernst Cassirer (e.g. *An Essay on Man*, 1944).
- 3) The recent revival of scholarly interest in Karl Jaspers' concept of the "Axial Age," especially as represented in the works of Robert Bellah and Hans Joas (see, e.g., their edited volume, *The Axial Age and Its Consequences*, 2012).

As usual, we will also consider proposals for papers that do not address the themes of evolution and human transcendence but are directly related to traditions of thought embraced by IARPT

(empiricism, naturalism, pragmatism, process thought, liberal theology, etc. – again, see our website for more information). Proposals for panels are also encouraged.

Proposals should contain a descriptive title and informative but brief (**maximum 500 words**) description of the paper to be presented, with some indication of how the paper relates to themes of the conference and/or topics of special interest to IARPT. Proposals should also include a brief (150-word) **biographical sketch** of the authors. All proposals should be sent in Word format to **both program directors**: Christian Polke (christian.polke@theologie.uni-goettingen.de) and Nat Barrett (nbarrett@unav.es). Deadline for submissions is **January 15th 2018**.

Confirmed Plenary Speakers: Prof. Nancy Frankenberry (Dartmouth College), Prof. Dr. Hans Joas (HU Berlin), Prof. Dr. Volkhard Krech (Universität Bochum), Prof. Dr. Gesche Linde (Universität Rostock), Prof. Michael Raposa (Lehigh University), PD Dr. Georg Toepfer (ZfL Berlin), Prof. Dr. Saskia Wendel (Universität Köln), Prof. Wesley Wildman (Boston University).