

The Third Biennial Telos in Europe Conference

Sacrifice: Biological and Theological Investigations for Economic and Military/Political Praxis

Humboldt University-Berlin
Theology Faculty
Burgstr. 26, Berlin
16-17 June, 2016

16 June, 2016

14:00: Meet in the lobby of Motel One opposite the Main Train Station/Hauptbahnhof. We will travel together to the Langemarck Halle Memorial.

15:00-16:30: Tour of the Langemarck Halle Memorial and opening remarks by Christoph Marksches (Ancient Christianity, Humboldt). We will travel together back to Humboldt University.

17:30-19:15: Panel 1, Burgstr. 26, room 330. Moderator: Marcia Pally

- **Peter Kappeler (Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology, Goettingen University)**
“Proactive Prosociality in Non-Human Primates as a Form of Sacrifice”

In some species of non-human primates, individuals spontaneously assist others, without direct gains for themselves and without being solicited, and variation in this behavioral tendency is best explained by variation in allomaternal care.

- **John Milbank (Religion, Politics and Ethics, Nottingham)**
“Gift or Sacrifice? History, Politics, and Religion”

Girard, Gauchet and Tarot reinscribe Hobbes by putting sacrifice and politics at the human origin, but it is more plausible to see sacrifice a mode of gift. If gift-exchange is seen as originally religious, then religion and reciprocal peace were more fundamental than violence, scapegoating, and politics.

- **Wolfgang Palaver (Catholic Social Thought, University of Innsbruck)**
“Politics of Sacrifice: On the Roots of European Culture and its Future Challenges”

The question of sacrifice raises one of the most difficult problems of every theory of religion because it can either turn into a regression to an archaic understanding of religion (Joseph de Maistre, Carl Schmitt) or it can help us to overcome the problem of human violence (Mahatma Gandhi, Simone Weil). With the help of Girard’s mimetic theory I will connect this question with an inquiry into the roots of law and look at connections between religion and politics.

19:30: Conference dinner for participating scholars at Malatesta restaurant, Charlottenstrasse 59;
+49 30 2094 5071.

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8:30-10:00: Panel 2, Burgstr. 26, room, 013. Moderator: David Pan

- **Tsvi Blanchard (Jewish law, Fordham Law School, Humboldt University)**

“The Immanent Beyond: Time, Place, and Intention in Jewish Sacrifice”

I intend to review the general structure of the sacrificial system as presented in classic and medieval Rabbinic literature examining the ways in which time, place and intention are related to a transcendent God. Using a relational approach, I will also seek analogies in contemporary family, social, national, and international contexts.

- **Hassan Rachik (Anthropology, University Hassan II of Casablanca)**

“Sacrifice, Islamic Reformism and Local Traditions”

Interpretation of the reformist arguments and attitudes towards local sacrifices that are qualified as *bid'a* (blameworthy innovation).

- **Francisco Canzani (Focolare, Rome)**

“From the Sacrifice of the Cross to the Transformation of Society “

Some reflections in the light of the teaching of the Catholic Church in Latin America.

- **Adrian Pabst (Politics, University of Kent)**

“Sacrifice: Anarchy, Artifice and the Alternative of Association”

Much of modern political thought views sacrifice as inevitable and necessary. Hobbes and Locke, for example, claim that humankind needs to surrender a measure of their liberty and equality if one is to escape the anarchic violence in the ‘state of nature’ and secure the artificial order of the ‘social contract’. The alternative which this presentation puts forward is the notion of association, which is a more relational idea that involves being wounded by the other but also rejoicing in the relationality of creative fulfilment in work and social life.

10:00-10:30: Coffee break

10:30-12:00: Panel 3, Burgstr. 26, room 013. Moderator: Marcia Pally

- **Rolf von Uslar (Colonel Dr RvU, Bundeswehr Command and Staff College, Head of Medical Service and Health Sciences)**

“The Ambiguity of Sacrifice in a Post Heroic Nation: A Military Perspective”

Although technical developments as robotics allow the reduction of casualties in military operations, the forces still depend on the willingness of soldiers to make sacrifices. In post-heroic nations like Germany, the willingness for sacrifice has been on a reverse trend. This has implications for the civil-military relations.

- **Ulrike Brunotte (Religion and Gender Studies, Maastricht University)**

“Victim and/as Hero: The Elevation of Masculinity between Sacrifice and Murder”

The resilience of Christian models of self-sacrifice and redemption in modern societies is especially apparent in war narratives and death cults during the long 19th century, as well as in the so-called “Langemarck-myth.” In my presentation I focus on three heroic *pathosformulas* (Warburg) that have become relevant as models of modern Western heroic masculinity in connection with violence, pain and its conquest; and in self-sacrifice and the cult of the dead.

- **Rolf Schieder (Practical Theology, Humboldt)**

“From Sacrifice to Victimhood: Have We Entered a Post-Heroic Age?”

The German term “Opfer” does not differentiate between “victim” and “sacrifice.” The “*Opfer, das man ist*” and the “*Opfer, das man bringt*” are semantically closely connected. How must the relation between “sacrifice” and “victimhood” be conceptualized in order to understand present-day discourses on “sacrifice” in a supposedly post-heroic age?

12:00-13:15: Buffet lunch at the Theologische Fakultät Room 330

13:15-14:45: Panel 4, Burgstr. 26, room 206. Moderator: David Pan

- **Katja Triplett (East Asian Studies, University of Goettingen)**

“The Motif of Human Sacrifice and Self-Sacrifice in Japanese Confucian-Buddhist Narratives”

The motif of human sacrifice and its function in well-known narratives is discussed with reference to the discourses on the historicity of a sacrificial cult in Japan.

- **Laurent Mignon (Professor of Turkish, Oxford University, Fellow of Saint Antony’s College)**

“Sacrifice, Religion and the Revolutionary Left in Turkey”

In this presentation I will discuss the use of religious language and imagery regarding sacrifice and martyrdom in the engaged poetry and music of far-left political organizations in Turkey.

- **Philip Roscoe (Business Management, St. Andrews)**

“Sacrifice and the Crypto-theologies of Management”

Popular management discourse, with its hagiographies of great leaders and tales of sacrifice and reward, frequently echoes the theological; as Weber pointed out, capitalism itself embodies a secularized narrative of sacrifice and salvation. This talk will explore the importance of sacrifice in management talk and management practice: who sacrifices, why, and how much?

14:45-15:00: Coffee break

15:00-17:00: Concluding panel, Burgstr. 26, room 206. Moderator: Rolf Schieder

- **Marcia Pally (Multilingual Multicultural Studies, New York University; guest professor, Theology, Humboldt University)**

“The Contingent Nature of Sacrifice: Relational Determinants in Biology, Physics, and Theology”

My remarks will focus on the meaning and valence of sacrifice as it changes in relationships of reciprocal regard, for which we are “wired” as a matter of physics and biology—sciences that are now catching up with theology.

- **David Pan (German Studies, UC Irvine, Telos)**

“Sacrifice and Sovereignty: Europe’s Long War”

The European focus, since the early modern period, on self-interest as the basis of sovereignty has ignored the fundamental sacrificial nature of both individual consciousness and collective identity. The key consequence of this deficit has been a crisis of political identity that has rendered Europe incapable of offering to its inhabitants and the wider world an alternative vision of sacrifice that could replace the dangerous fundamentalist notions of sacrifice currently driving political conflict.

Concluding discussion

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