

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

WALLS: THINKING THROUGH INSULARITY

12TH EAST/WEST PHILOSOPHER'S CONFERENCE

MAY 22-29, 2020

The 12th East/West Philosopher's Conference will be dedicated to the topic of walls. While walls can be physical, they can also be psychological, social, political, economic, and ontological. Understood metaphorically, walls are any real or virtual barrier to the uninhibited flow of people, products, affects, and ideas.

In his poem, "Mending Walls," the American poet Robert Frost famously opined: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall, that wants it down." And yet it might be said that we are living at a time in which many people are coming to believe that "good fences make good neighbors." Ours is apparently an era in which differences of histories, cultures and identities are engaged as sources of insight, but also one of populist retrenchment—a period in which cultures, peoples, and nations have begun turning inward, shunning many of the promises that globalization made regarding the prospects of economic, political, and cultural exchange and interdependence. In recent years, we have witnessed the crumbling of international alliances, the emergence of trade wars, a reinvestment in notions of national sovereignty, an increasing number of disputes over borders, and many expressions of populist discontent regarding migration and changing demographics.

Wall building for the purposes of protection and identity reinforcement are not new. The Great Wall of China, Hadrian's Wall, and in modern times, the Berlin Wall, are all ideological-cultural artifacts intended to separate and consolidate. Yet, after decades of rhetoric about interdependence-generating globalization, what are the sources of current and often fervent desires to distinguish radically between what is "ours" and what is "theirs"? What are their root causes and their likely outcomes if put into action? Are there prospects for reversal and transformation? And most importantly, how should we understand, relate, and respond philosophically to this new "age of insularity?"

We invite participants to reflect upon the significance of constructing, deconstructing, scaling, circumventing, penetrating and "tagging" walls. What does it mean to put up and take down walls—whether within the context of interpersonal relationships, among groups within national borders, or among members of the international human community? Which walls are the most pressing sites of struggle? How do the world's various philosophical traditions dispose us to think about the notion of the wall? How should philosophy understand the processes, practices, and ideologies of insularity? And, what prospects do conversations among various world philosophies open for thinking through these walls?

Of special interest are panels and papers that explore the constructed nature of the "walls" between nations and cultures, but also between the private and public spheres, between ethics

and economics, between the human and the natural sciences, between disciplines, between classes, genders and generations, and between the academy and societies it serves.

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS

Jonardon Ganeri, New York University, Abu Dhabi

“Bridges and Doors: The Importance of the Interjacent Intellectual

Wendy Brown, University of California, Berkeley

“What Kinds of Boundaries Sustain Democracy and the Earth?

Thinking in the Inter-regnum Between the National and the Global”

PAPER AND PANEL SUBMISSIONS

We invite proposals for individual papers and panels. Please submit a 250-300 word abstract to the Conference organizers via: ewpc2020@hawaii.edu

Submission Timeline: November 1, 2019

Notifications of acceptance for abstracts and panel proposals received by the November 1 will be sent out by December 15, 2019. We have established an early submission timeline to facilitate faculty applying to their own institutions for travel funding.

Abstracts received after November 1, 2019 will be vetted as received, taking into consideration the late submission. The absolute deadline for abstract submissions is March 15, 2020. After this, we will not be able to accommodate additional proposals.

Final Papers Due: April 15, 2020

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

Hosted in keeping with the Hawaiian Islands’ spirit of aloha, there is no registration fee for the Conference. Breakfast and lunch will be provided for all registered presenters, as well as an opening reception and final dinner. The Conference does not provide lodging or travel support, but economical lodgings of various kinds are readily available in Honolulu.

ABOUT THE EAST-WEST PHILOSOPHER’S CONFERENCE:

For more than three-quarters of a century, the East-West Philosophers’ Conference series has hosted a dialogue among some of the world’s most prominent philosophers of their time. The dialogue began in 1939 when three University of Hawai‘i visionaries—Professors Charles A. Moore, Wing-tsit Chan, and Gregg Sinclair—initiated the first East-West Philosophers’ Conference in Honolulu. Its aim was to explore the significance of Eastern ways of thinking as a complement to Western thought, and to distill a possible synthesis of the ideas and ideals that are aspired to in these unique traditions. Comparative philosophy has evolved from this earliest idea to pursue a mutual respect and accommodation among the world’s cultures, with conferences

continuing to be held in 1949, 1959, 1964, 1969, 1989, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2011 and 2016. Each of these conferences focused on a theme chosen as a vital issue of its time.

This conference series has been successful in fostering dialogue among philosophical traditions, and was instrumental in the establishment of the East-West Center on the campus of the University of Hawai'i in 1960. *Philosophy East & West*, now one of the leading journals on comparative studies, was founded in 1951 as a forum that continues this same dialogue. Conference volumes from papers presented at these conferences have been published by the University of Hawai'i Press to share with and promote further discussion on its theme within the world academic community.

SPONSORING INSTITUTIONS

The **East-West Center** promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue. Established by the U.S. Congress in 1960, the Center serves as a resource for information and analysis on critical issues of common concern, bringing people together to exchange views, build expertise, and develop policy options.

The **University of Hawai'i** is a Research I institution, founded in 1907, that has identified Asia and the Pacific as one of its selected area of excellence, with many of the centers in its School of Pacific and Asian Studies ranked as National Resource Centers. The University of Hawai'i Press is one of the leading international publishers of scholarly monographs and journals on Asian cultures.

We anticipate that this forthcoming conference like the previous eleven will be an historical event. We look forward to welcoming you to the Islands.

Roger T. Ames, Peter D. Hershock and Tamara Albertini, Co-Directors