



International Philosophy Conference at GUST in Kuwait

“Unity” between East and West Organic Totality from Muhammad Abduh to Post- Structuralism

An organic concept of “unity” or “totality” has been expressed by philosophers at all times and in all geographical regions. In the *Timaeus* (*Timaeus* 29e) and concludes that the Cosmos “resembles most closely that Living Creature of which all other living creatures, severally and generically, are portions” (30c). The idea of an organic unity appears in Plotinus (divine simplicity) and in Spinoza. The Romantic quest for an immanent spirituality, which saw nature as the mirror of a human-centered cosmos evokes still another idea of unity. Philosophical descriptions of unity are also very much present in non-Western philosophies. The Arab notion of *tawhid* or the Oneness of God has been a main topic from Avicenna to Muhammad Abduh. In Japan, Nishida Kitaro’s *basho* (place) is an organic phenomenon holding together the manifold. Some of the most straightforward elaborations of this thought come from Russian philosophers living circa 1900 who established complex philosophies around the idea of “All-Unity” (*vsevedinstvo*) or also that of *sobornost* (spiritual community). Further, one can mention Bergson’s *durée pure*, the rhizome, hermeneutic ways of dealing with the individual and the general, or Derrida’s concept of play.

The conference is of strictly philosophical and not theological nature. Parallels between traditions and the relevance of older philosophies for the contemporary world should be emphasized. Every presentation should be understandable for philosophers from other fields because the purpose is to establish communications between different traditions.

The organizers will select the most relevant contributions and pursue a book publication.

The conference will be organized in coordination with the **Qur’an Translation Workshop**, which focuses on the notion of *tawhid*, and which will take place at the same time.

Possible Sections

Structures and rhizomes: unity and fragmentation in (post-)structuralism

Unity in ancient Greek philosophy

Plato an organicist?

Unity in the social sciences

Unity across philosophical cultures (comparative perspectives: East Asian, Arab, Russian...)

Organic alternatives in aesthetics

Unity versus totality. The danger of totalitarianism

The Philosophy of Whitehead

Gadamer and “organic hermeneutics”

Organicism and “deep ecology”

The idea of unity in bioethics and health science

Organic theories of state

Time: February 7-9, 2019

Venue: Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), Kuwait

Keynote speakers: Elisabeth Kassab (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies)
Jean-Claude Gens (University of Bourgogne, France)
Arianne Conty (American University of Sharjah)
More keynote speakers might be invited depending on funding.

Conference fee: 25 KD (80US\$)

Scientific committee: Thorsten Botz-Bornstein (GUST), Kenneth Pak (GUST), Jean-Etienne Joullié (GUST), Marco Zuccato (GUST), M.A.R. Habib (Rutgers/GUST), Andrei Zavalyi (American University of Kuwait).

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Abstracts (300 words) due on Oct. 15, 2018

Notification of acceptance: Dec. 1, 2018