



## **DIFFERENCE IN IDENTITY, EAST AND WEST**

THE SECOND ANNUAL BSU COLLOQUIUM  
FOR GLOBAL PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> April, 2016, Bath Spa University, Bath, UK.

### *Confirmed Plenary Speakers:*

- Dr. Geir Sigurðsson (Associate Professor of Chinese Studies and Director of The Northern Lights Confucius Institute, The University of Iceland)
- Dr. Victoria Harrison (Reader in Philosophy, Glasgow University)

We invite abstract submissions for papers that will examine the extent to which identity (broadly construed) is conditioned by difference or by differentiation. If all identity is at the same time relational, the question arises as to whether difference ought to be conceived as extrinsic or intrinsic to identity itself. Would a conception of 'difference in identity' simply be a contradiction in terms? Or, is some form of difference a presupposition for identity, when properly construed?

Dissimilar conceptions of identity (both of persons and of things) have tended to form a primary theoretical tool for distinguishing the foundational approaches between the Eastern and Western philosophical traditions. Typically, prior to Kant, the Euro-American view of self-sameness was associated with the positing of discrete and self-sufficient entities, existing in and of themselves. In contrast, Asian philosophies have often sought to explain identity in relational/relative (and non-essentialist) terms (e.g. in the Confucian, Daoist & Buddhist traditions). But to what extent is this characterization of the differences between such traditions a reductive or obstructive one? If it is a meaningful characterization, how might this framework for differentiation aid us in engaging with philosophically "foreign" ideas?

In addition, we welcome papers that deal with the ethical, political and cultural ramifications of the conference theme, with an emphasis on its relevance for cross-cultural dialogue in the modern world. We particularly encourage submissions from those scholars and researchers whose primary interests are in Western/European thinking, but who are open to engagement with and responses from "non-Western" approaches, as well as welcoming papers that may contravene typical disciplinary boundaries.

The conference, taking place at Bath Spa University Newton Park Campus, will provide an open-minded environment to celebrate increasing support for and recognition of the study of global and comparative philosophical traditions in the European academic context. Researchers at any level of their careers and in any discipline should feel confident to apply.

Example topics may include:

- The critical comparison of monist and non-dualist positions across philosophical contexts.
- Reflection on the meanings of “difference” and of “identity” in one or more philosophical/religious context(s).
- Constructivist, Realist and Anti-Essentialist conceptions of self-same existence.
- Cultural identity, cultural difference and global ethics.
- Comparative philosophies of difference and identity (political, metaphysical, psychological, environmental etc.)
- The identity of philosophy and difference: differing conceptions of the meaning of philosophy and its task.
- Gender difference and identity.
- The role of difference in conceiving divine/trans-human identity.
- Personal identity and difference/change in time.

The deadline for submissions is February 20<sup>th</sup>, however, early submissions will be viewed favorably and abstracts will be reviewed on a rolling basis. For any questions please contact the conference organizers: Dr. Sarah Flavel [s.flavel@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:s.flavel@bathspa.ac.uk) or Dr. Russell Re Manning [r.remanning@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:r.remanning@bathspa.ac.uk)  
*Please submit your abstract (500 words max) as an email attachment to either of the above addresses.*