

A Conference put on by
**The Theory of Knowledge Society and
the JMU Combined-Integrated Doctoral Program**

TOWARD A BIG THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE:

A GLOBAL VISION OF KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

APRIL 12-13, 2018



Sponsored by
*The Center for Global Engagement, the Cohen Center, the College of
Health and Behavior Sciences, and the Department of Graduate
Psychology*

TOK Society Conference

Dear Conference Participants,

I am delighted to welcome you to this event, where we will be exploring global visions of knowledge and values for the 21st Century, with a special emphasis on the implications for the field of psychology.

The conference theme is positioned against the backdrop that human knowledge currently exists in a state of “fragmented pluralism,” such that there is a seemingly endless number of perspectives on knowledge and values with virtually no coherence or unity or shared language game to frame our general understanding. This fragmented state of knowledge is associated with an attitudinal shift that emerged in the academy during the latter half of 20th century regarding the nature of knowledge, and associated core values. That shift was that “big” theories of knowledge were no longer deemed useful, feasible, or valuable.

Although forced “top down” approaches to knowledge construction should always be resisted by free academic inquiry, it nevertheless must also be recognized that fragmented pluralism is deeply problematic in terms of its capacity to educate citizens and foster a coherent understanding of the world and humanity’s place in it. Consistent with this claim is the fact that many scholars have noted a crisis of meaning making in modern society, and a dramatic rise of anti-intellectual “know nothings” and “post-fact” attitudes, resulting in much cultural chaos and future uncertainty.

In a January 2018 article in the *Chronical of Higher Education* titled, “Higher Education Is Drowning in BS, and It’s Mortally Corrosive to Society,” Professor Christian Smith challenged the academy to reflect deeply on its role in the current cultural state of affairs. He expressed grave concerns over “the university’s loss of [its] capacity to grapple with life’s Big Questions, because of our crisis of faith in truth, reality, reason, evidence, argument, civility, and our common humanity.” He further lamented the fact that modern universities are “actually ‘fragmentversities’ claiming to be universities,” and that they suffer from “hyperspecialization and academic disciplines unable to talk with each other about obvious shared concerns.”

The problem regarding the increasing fragmentation of our knowledge has been recognized for more than half a century. In his book, *The Integration of Human Knowledge*, the philosopher Oliver Reiser presciently forecasted that the combination of empirical specialization in science and philosophical movements that strongly emphasized knowledge as a social construction without foundational truths would result in a deeply problematic breakdown in understanding. Over fifty years ago, he issued a passionate call for scholars to seek visions that could work to tie together the foundations of human knowledge into more coherent wholes.

TOK Society Conference

In 1958, Oliver Reiser wrote:

In this time of divisive tendencies within and between the nations, races, religions, sciences and humanities, synthesis must become the great magnet which orients us all. ...[Yet] scientists have not done what is possible toward integrating bodies of knowledge created by science into a unified interpretation of man [sic], his place in nature, and his potentialities for creating the good society. Instead, they are entombing us in dark and meaningless catacombs of learning.

The purpose of this conference is to bring individuals together who have adopted “meta” perspectives on theory, knowledge, and values, such that we might be able to piece together a greater synthesis, giving rise to a more coherent understanding of humanity and our place in nature. Given the remarkable challenges, opportunities, and the accelerating rate of technological changes that we are witnessing, it seems the time is ripe for an earnest dialogue regarding about how to wisely structure human knowledge systems.

This conference is organized by the Theory of Knowledge Society, and is also placed in the context of James Madison University’s Combined-Integrated Doctoral Training program in health service psychology. This is apropos for many reasons. First, as the esteemed psychologist and philosopher Gordon Allport noted many years ago, psychology, perhaps more than any other discipline, exists at the fault lines of human knowledge, having foundational connections to the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Yet, as Henriques (2008) has highlighted, the discipline of psychology has been enormously fragmented throughout its history, and has resisted a clear definition and coherent framing of its subject matter. Thus, to solve the problem of integrating knowledge, we must confront the problem of psychology’s fragmentation.

Since its emergence in the mid-1990s, the C-I Doctoral program has pioneered an integrative approach to psychological training, based on a scientific humanistic philosophy grounded in a coherent meta-theoretical view of the field. Thus, C-I faculty, alumni and students have, for decades, been engaged in a project very much aligned with the purpose of this conference, which is to cultivate a scientific and humanistic identity that informs how we might be able to flourish in the world.

The conference will revolve around the discussion of four major interrelated issues.

- The first issue pertains to the status of “big” theories of knowledge and includes the following: What are the major approaches to big theories of knowledge today? The Tree of Knowledge System (Henriques, 2011) offers one such model: what are its advantages and disadvantages and how does it relate to other big theories of knowledge? Is there any way to determine the criteria for the efficacy of big theories of knowledge or the superiority of one approach over others? What are the implications of theories of knowledge for education and curriculum development?

TOK Society Conference

- The second issue pertains to the question of values. How are values, globally and locally, used or not to guide higher education? What is the relationship between a big theory of knowledge and core human values? What are the values associated with advancing a big theory of knowledge, and what values or ethical perspectives should such a theory be informed by?
- The third issue pertains to social and temporal contextual issues regarding big theories of knowledge. Specifically, what have been the social, economic, religious, and historical forces that brought us to the current state of affairs? What are the current state of affairs regarding knowledge and values? And, what needs to be done to return universities to attend to the big picture questions?
- The fourth issue pertains to the identity of psychology and the training of health service psychologists. What is the future of health service psychology? What is the role of scientific research and theories relative to humanistic values and idiographic ways of being in the world? What relevance do big theories of knowledge have for the field of psychology in general and the relationship between science and practice in particular?

Thanks to everyone for all the contributions, reflections, and support. I look forward to embarking on this journey of discovery with you.

All the best,
Gregg Henriques, Program Chair



TOK Society Conference

TOK CONFERENCE PART I

Lecture Series Thursday, April 12

When: Gathering at 2:30: Conference goes 3:00 to 7:00 pm

Where: Madison Hall 4000/4010;

The Cohen Graduate Student Professional Development Center

3:00 - 3:20 PM CONFERENCE OPENING

Gregg Henriques, Conference Chair

Paper Session 1:

On Human Knowledge:

Biological, Psychological, Social, and Moral Considerations

3:20 - 3:50 PM Narrating Psychology from the Top Down

Dr. Steve Quackenbush

4:00 - 4:40 PM The Emerging Science of Virtue as an Exemplar of a Moral Science

Dr. Blaine Fowers

4:45 - 5:30 PM Homeostasis, Evolution and Mental Health

Dr. John Torday

5:35 - 6:15 PM Sociology's Contributions to a 'Big Theory Of Knowledge'

Dr. Joe Michalski

6:15 - 7:00 PM Group Discussion

7:30 Dinner

TOK Society Conference

TOK CONFERENCE PART II Lecture Series Friday, April 13

When: Gathering at 8:15; Conference goes from 8:30 to 12:30
Where: Highlands Room, Festival Center

- 8:15 – 8:30** **Gather at Highlands Room**
- 8:30 – 8:45** **GREETINGS;** *Gregg Henriques*
- 8:45 - 9:45** **Paper Session 2:**
Our Place in the Cosmic Evolutionary Scheme
- Dave Pruett* Ripples in the Cosmic Web
- Steve Keffer* Homo mutuum: The Biosocial Evolution of Relational
Autonomy
- 9:50 – 10:50** **Paper Session 3:**
On the Evolution of Emotions, Dreaming, and
Consciousness
- Nancy Link* The Evolution of Emotion and Consciousness
- Chance McDermott* Dreams: A unified approach
- 11:00 – 12:30** **Paper Session 4:**
A Vision for Values in the 21st Century
- Waldemar Schmidt* Whence & Whither Knowledge
- Frank Ambrosio* Cultural Genetics and the Mystery of Human Dignity
- Steve Quackenbush* Between Fact and Value: Sartre and the Problem of
Ultimate Justifications
- 12:45 – 2:00** **Lunch Break (Lunch in the Highlands Room)**

TOK Society Conference

TOK CONFERENCE PART III

Some Thoughts to Foster Discussion about Big Theories of Knowledge and Their Implications

2:00 to 2:20 Brief comments from CI faculty on the conference

Question 1: Small Group 2:25 – 3:00; Large Group 3:00 - 3:25

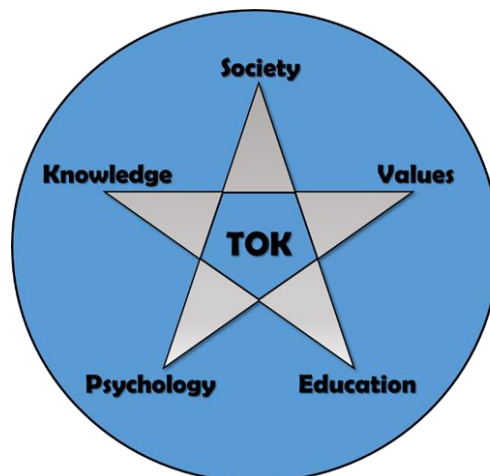
The relationship between Big TOKs and Education and Society

What are some implications of big TOKs for education and society? Many have argued that higher education systems are “fragmented.” Do you agree? What have been the cultural and historical forces that brought us to the current state of affairs regarding knowledge fragmentation and how is that impacting society? Should there be a push to return universities to attend to the big picture questions framed by big TOKs? Could there be a return to big TOKs and what would that look like?

Question 2: Small Group 3:35 – 4:10; Large Group 4:15 – 4:40

The relationship between Big TOKs and Psychology and Mental Health

What is the current state of mental health in modern society, and what might be some implications of a Big TOK for mental health? What is the relationship between the field of psychology and Big TOKs? How can we construct education in professional psychology in order to respond to the challenges we face at local, national, and global arenas and how might this question connect to big TOKs?



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Other Questions for Consideration

Knowledge Question:

What are the major approaches to big theories of knowledge today? The Tree of Knowledge System (Henriques, 2011) offers one such model: what are its advantages and disadvantages and how does it relate to other big theories of knowledge? Is there any way to determine the criteria for the efficacy of big theories of knowledge or the superiority of one approach over others? If viable, what are the steps necessary to move toward big theories of knowledge having more influence?

Values Question:

What is the relationship between a big theory of knowledge and core human values? What are the values associated with advancing a big theory of knowledge, and what values or ethical perspectives should such a theory be informed by? Are there absolute or universal values or are ethical values always relative?

Society Question:

What is the current state of society today, both within the United States and globally, in regards to its broad systems of knowledge and meaning? What have been the major intellectual trends and associated social, economic, religious, and historical forces that brought us to the current state of affairs? Do you see academic knowledge as fragmented and is this related to a rise in anti-intellectual forces? If so, do you believe that big theories of knowledge have implications for this?

Education Question:

Christian Smith argues that higher education systems are “fragmented.” Is this accurate? What are the implications of theories of knowledge for education and curriculum development? Is it feasible that an approach to education could be organized around a big theory of knowledge? Can (should) things need to be done to return universities to attend to the big picture questions? How are values, globally and locally, used (or not) to guide higher education?

Psychology question:

How can we construct education in professional psychology in order to respond to the challenges we face at local, national, and global arenas? What are the mental health challenges our society faces? Do we need big theories of knowledge to construct theory and practice of psychology? If yes, how can big theories of knowledge inform theory and practice of psychology?

TOK CONFERENCE PART IV

When: 5:30 to 8:30

Where: Ice House

A reception, with reflections

TOK Society Conference

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Thursday, April 12

Paper Session 1

Narrating Psychology from the Top Down

Dr. Steve Quackenbush

The 2018 Theory of Knowledge Society Conference is animated by a concern that the fragmented pluralism of contemporary knowledge leaves us ill-equipped to assume our responsibilities as citizens and to appreciate our common humanity. Significantly, this fragmentation is reflected in the very organization of introductory psychology textbooks. Students are exposed to a broad range of topics (sensation & perception, learning theory, cognitive psychology, personality, etc.) but are left to fend for themselves when it comes time to organize research findings and theoretical perspectives into a coherent worldview. In this presentation, the Tree of Knowledge framework will be considered as the ground of an alternative pedagogy that allows us to survey the field of psychology from the vantage point of the cultural-person-as-a-whole. We justifiably begin our survey with a focus on the person, complete with passions, dreams, worries, talents, and values. We are then free to examine various conditions of possibility for our lived experience, including the emergence of cultural justification systems, the dynamics of behavioral investments, and our evolutionary history.

The Emerging Science of Virtue as an Exemplar of a Moral Science

Dr. Blaine Fowers

This paper will introduce the concept of a transdisciplinary domain of research and applied work termed *moral science*. Moral science is analogous to cognitive science, inclusive of many disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, evolutionary science, education, anthropology, and sociology. Many scholars already investigate moral concerns, including the virtues, well-being, prosocial behavior, and public goods, but a full-fledged moral science has not yet emerged. A moral science perspective is non-reductive in suggesting that morality is a vital scientific problem and recognizing that the human sciences are inherently imbued with moral import and commitments. An example moral scientific endeavor will be outlined in the emerging science of virtue. This emerging science can be guided by a neo-Aristotelian model of virtue that is less abstract and more psychologically realistic than typical philosophical scholarship. A science of virtue is important because virtues enable individual, relational, and communal to function optimally. Virtues are implicit in many psychological topics and making virtue's presence explicit will enhance that research and clarify its inherent moral dimension. Some approaches to virtue research will be recommended, along with descriptions of extant research. This interdisciplinary theoretical endeavor is at the core of the knowledge and value theme of the conference.

TOK Society Conference

Paper Session 1

Homeostasis, Evolution and Mental Health

Dr. John Torday

Life is that which can mix oil and water - Robert Frost

Life began as the ambiguity of negative free energy (negentropy) within the cell vs the positive Free Energy in the surrounding environment (Schrodinger, What is Life?, 1944). Life has coped with that ambiguity using deception (self- and that of others) to transiently 'cheat' the Second Law of Thermodynamics, ultimately paying the price through mortality. In an attempt to rationalize our finite existence, we have misconceived Evolution by reasoning after the fact, from its ends instead of its means. However, by exploiting the cell-cell signaling mechanisms of embryologic development, merged with phylogeny, how Evolution functionally integrates Quantum Physics and Physiology as a continuum can finally be understood, referring all the way back to the Singularity/Big Bang of the Cosmos. As such, this perspective provides evidence-based insight to the First Principles of Physiology- negentropy, chemiosmosis and homeostasis- and the unity of the Cosmos. Thus, physiology can be conceived of as the embodiment of Consciousness as all of existence (I will explain). And since homeostatic balance determines Evolution, it is directly relevant to clinical psychology as mental homeostasis.

We are at a crossroads in human experience, and we can either think outside of the box or continue to suffer the consequences of our cognitive dissonance ("Higher Education is Drowning in B.S.", Christian Smith, 2018). I will explain the science behind the revelation of this systematic error in our understanding of Evolution, thinking that we are the center of the biosphere, and all of the attendant consequences that have led up to "The Big Theory of Knowledge" conference. Like the impact of a 'round' Earth perspective underlying The Enlightenment, we can recalibrate our way of thinking, realizing the fundamental error in our self-perception, our perception of other organisms, and our perception of the environment.

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Paper Session 1

Sociology's Contributions to a 'Big Theory Of Knowledge'

Dr. Joe Michalski

Henriques' Tree of Knowledge (ToK) offers an integrated framework for understanding emergent complexity in nature: Matter, Life, Mind, and Culture. The ToK offers a consilient approach that logically connects natural and social sciences, such that the disciplines associated with physical, biological, psychological, and sociocultural behaviors contribute in unique and yet complementary ways to explaining different levels and dimensions of complexity. The Periodic Table of Behavior offers a taxonomy of the fundamental forms of object-field relations, thereby allowing scientists and philosophers alike to map clearly both the levels and dimensions of behavioral complexity in the universe at large: the key to developing a genuinely Big Theory Of Knowledge (BTOK). Yet as one climbs the ToK, the models of behavioral change grow increasingly complex, diffuse, and contested. The least successful scientific discipline has been sociology, mainly due to a lack of theoretical coherence, a debilitating territoriality, and corresponding disputes about the proper analytic focus. The current presentation outlines briefly some of the key unresolved tensions before demonstrating that sociologists (and analysts from cognate disciplines) can contribute to fleshing out the ToK and the BTOK in at least five important ways: 1) studying primary socialization and the mechanisms through which human primates are transformed into human beings (i.e., "persons"), with a particular focus on interaction patterns and language acquisition; 2) collaborating with specialists in human psychology to identify the relevant dimensions of Behavioral Investment Theory (BIT), the Influence Matrix (IM), and justification systems that help shape individual behavior; 3) describing the social forces at play that create and sustain justification systems; 4) evaluating the impact of these forces in maintaining both individual or "personal" identities, as well as group or "tribal" affiliations; and 5) identifying the generative aspects of emergent and durable social structures that organize and sustain social life across diverse ecological contexts.

TOK Society Conference

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Friday, April 13

Paper Session 2

Ripples in the Cosmic Web

Dr. Dave Pruett

“We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story,” observed the late cultural historian Thomas Berry. “We are between stories.”

Perhaps the most fundamental rift in the fragmentation of knowledge is the one that pits science against spirituality, head knowledge against heart knowledge, reason against intuition. All manner of individual and societal ills can be traced to the “tragic choice between an antiscientific philosophy and an alienating science,” in the words of Nobel laureate Ilya Prigogine. In 1999, I piloted an honors seminar at JMU to explore the interface between science and spirituality. The premise of the course was to examine the universe from diametrically opposed perspectives—the perspective of modern science and the perspective of Native-American mythology—and then to look for points of nexus that could be incorporated into a more holistic “myth of meaning” than accessible to either perspective alone. This academic tangent turned out to be the most rewarding experience of my 30-year teaching career. But the real surprise was how deeply the course touched the lives of students, as indicated both by journal entries and course evaluations. Since 1999, the course has been taught six more times. It received a Templeton Foundation Science-Religion Course Award in 2001 and launched Reason and Wonder, which was published by Praeger in 2012. This talk will deal not so much with the course and book as wholes, but with a single point of nexus between mythological and scientific perspectives, one that illustrates the value of remaining faithful to the “tension of opposites” until synthesis is achieved.

Homo mutuum: The Biosocial Evolution of Relational Autonomy

Dr. Steve Keffer

The social structure of the hypothesized common ancestor of humans and our closest evolutionary relations, chimpanzees and bonobos, was almost certainly a dominance hierarchy. Humans, however, lived in radically egalitarian nomadic hunter gather bands for hundreds of thousands of years. Personal autonomy and community solidarity both were valued highly and behaviors that threatened autonomy and/or community, e.g., dominance and freeloading, were aggressively suppressed with escalating sanctions. Thus, hunter-gatherer bands were mutualistic, balancing and integrating self-concern and other-concern in a relational autonomy. Dominance hierarchy reappeared with the advent of agriculture, ca. 10,000 years ago, but the legacy of the long interregnum of egalitarian, mutualistic sociality lives on in our deeply felt need for both personal autonomy and ongoing, positive experiences in community. Indeed, the degradation of one of the other can result in ill health.

TOK Society Conference

Paper Session 3

The Evolution of Emotion and Consciousness

Dr. Nancy Link

My solution to the fragmentation problem facing psychology is to adopt a set of assumptions that are different from the ones that currently govern thinking within the discipline. The assumptions I adopt are: 1) The ability to learn evolved within lineages. 2) Emotion (affect) has a central role to play in the ability to learn. 3) Learning abilities evolved in accord with a terminal end addition pattern. Using these assumptions, I reanalyze existing data.

Six learning systems evolved on the lineage pathway leading to humans. Each learning system possesses two components: the learning itself, and what I call the behavioral organization system. The behavioral organization system provides animals with information about what to do with the information learned. As learning systems became more complex, the behavioral organization systems changed as well. The behavior of animals using the earliest evolved learning system was organized through reflexes. The behavior of animals using the intermediate learning systems was organized through affect. With increases in learning ability, language began to assume a role in the organization of behavior. By the evolution of the last learning system, language assumed exclusive responsibility for behavioral organization.

The inner experience of consciousness is generated out of the activity of these six learning systems. The last two learning systems are accessed through language and are more “conscious” than the earlier learning systems that are accessed through affect.

Dreams: A Unified Theory Approach

Dr. Chance McDermott

The Unified Theory (Henriques, 2011) is designed to transpose the language systems from different theoretical perspectives and map their overlapping and distinctive qualities onto human functioning, and is thus a model that should excel at organizing the fragmented and elusive psychological construct of dreaming. The UT allows us to understand that dreams can be understood as serving the function of processing emotional and relational themes to foster problem solving. It also informs us regarding the complicated role of self-consciousness, both in terms of how the rational, justifying portion of consciousness is normally shut off in dreams, and how it sometimes, in rare cases, comes on line in the form of “lucid” dreaming. After a brief review of the dream construct through the lens of the UT, an experiential activity designed to simulate lucid dreaming will be presented.

TOK Society Conference

Paper Session 4

Whence & Whither Knowledge

Dr. Waldemar A Schmidt

The Unified Theory provides an elegant and visionary perspective on “The Human Condition.” The Tree of Knowledge offers a paradigm within which the hermeneutic hominids may be apprehended. Knowledge is variously defined and used in diverse fashions. My interest is driven by a desire to understand more about the psychology of knowledge. Such comprehension entails acquiring answers to assorted questions about knowledge, such as: What is the relationship between data and knowledge? How is the embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended brain/mind involved? What parts of that brain/mind are engaged in the acquisition of knowledge? As well as, what role is played by consciousness in this process? Clearly, the procurement of knowledge is, by itself, unsatisfying – a surfeit of knowledge and paucity of wisdom characterize the 21st century. In praxis, knowledge and wisdom are linked concepts, the former an antecedent to the latter. Examples of the application of knowledge and wisdom are presented, and that to which wisdom is a precursor is proposed, as is its applicability to the next joint point on the Tree of Knowledge.

Cultural Genetics and the Mystery of Human Dignity

Dr. Frank Ambrosio

This paper invites consideration of three potential areas of development within the ToK/UTUA Framework: First, the development of a fully articulated Fifth Dimension of Behavior: the realm of Personal Identity, governed by the Principle of Responsibility which arises from the nodal point of Freedom, connecting the dimension of Culture with the dimension of Personal identity. Here it is argued that only a conception of Personal Identity which constitutes its own unique dimension of reality can support the claim of absolute, universal and inviolable dignity that characterizes all human beings, and which would extend to include all personal beings which humankind might encounter. Second, the articulation of a notion of Mystery as the necessary correlative of any unified theory of reality as a whole. Here it is argued that a conception of Mystery is both the original center and the vanishing point of every horizon of knowledge, understanding and practical wisdom that meaningfully pertains to Personal Dignity. Third, the introduction of the notion of Cultural Genetics as an extension of both analytic scientific knowledge and the wisdom traditions of practical reason and deliberative judgment that have developed until now as the conception of Values in the fourth and fifth dimensions of reality. Here it is argued that the current paralysis of human cultural imagination typified by the phenomenon of “culture wars” must be understood in epigenetic terms so as to open up alternative horizons of cultural and personal imagination adequate to addressing the broad range of menace to human dignity which cultural warfare currently and progressively poses.

TOK Society Conference

Between Fact and Value: Sartre and the Problem of Ultimate Justifications

Dr. Steve Quackenbush

The writings of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) constitute what may be the most ambitious attempt of the 20th century to achieve an authentically unified psychology. Seemingly preoccupied with a parochial account of human freedom, the mature Sartre was interested in nothing less than an ideal synthesis of the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Insofar as human reality is haunted by the problem of value (i.e., the question as to what we ought to do), any such synthesis is necessarily unstable (or metastable). Yet, the mature Sartre recognized that an authentic ethics can be rooted in the vicissitudes of human need. Sartre uses the term “integral humanity” in reference to an ideal state of affairs in which all human needs can be met. At present, human reality must be characterized as a lack of integral humanity. To employ theological language, we are fallen creatures seeking to become whole. Significantly, this implies that a fragmented empirical psychology can offer us nothing more than a portrait of humanity in its fallen state. As such, a vision of values for the 21st century requires that we return to the very roots of our ethico-historical condition and consider what we are in light of who we should be.

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Biographies of Conference Presenters

Dr. Frank Ambrosio is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University. After studies in Italian language and literature in Florence, Italy, he completed his doctoral degree at Fordham University with a specialization in contemporary European Philosophy. He is the founding Director, with Edward Maloney, of the Georgetown University “My Dante Project” a web based platform for personal and collaborative study of Dante’s *Commedia*. In 2014, he acted as lead instructor for the launch of an ongoing web-based course (MOOC) on [Dante offered by EDX](#) which currently has been utilized by over 20,000 students. His most recent book is *Dante and Derrida: Face to Face*, ([State](#) University of New York Press). He has received five separate awards from Georgetown University for excellence in teaching. He is the former Director of the Doctor of Liberal Studies Program, and in 2015, he received the Award for Faculty Achievement from the American Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs. In October 2009, The Teaching Company released his course, "[Philosophy, Religion and the Meaning of Life](#)," a series of 36 half-hour video lectures which he created for the "Great Courses" series. At Georgetown, he teaches courses on Existentialism, Postmodernism, Hermeneutics, and Dante.



His current research and writing center on Cultural Genetics, an historical and hermeneutic approach to understanding the origins and development of worldviews, and current tensions within the major traditions of meaning and value structures by which contemporary societies attempt to address the correlative questions of human dignity and planetary sustainability. His most recent publication in this area is "[Measuring the Horizon: Objectivity, Subjectivity and the Dignity of Human Personal Identity](#)."

TOK Society Conference



Blaine Fowers, Ph.D. is Professor of Counseling Psychology at the University of Miami. He conducts theoretical and empirical investigations of virtue and flourishing. Fowers is the author of *The Evolution of Ethics: Human Sociality and the Emergence of Ethical Mindedness* (2015, Palgrave Macmillan), *Virtue and Psychology* (2005, APA), and *Beyond the Myth of Marital Happiness* (2000, Jossey Bass), and a co-author of *Re-Envisioning Psychology* (1999, Jossey Bass) and *Human Frailty and Flourishing: Necessary Virtues* (2017, APA). He and his research team study virtues, higher order goals, and their links to choice-worthy goods and human flourishing. Fowers has published over ninety peer reviewed articles and book chapters. He was a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Birmingham, England in 2016. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and a recipient of the Joseph B. Gittler award for contributions to the philosophical foundations of psychology.

Dr. Gregg Henriques is a Professor in the Department of Graduate Psychology at JMU and a core faculty member of the Combined-Integrated Program. He received his Master's Degree in Clinical/Community Psychology from the University of North Carolina-Charlotte and his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Vermont (APA-Accredited). His primary area of scholarship is in the theoretical unification of psychology and has published a book outlining his system, called *A New Unified Theory of Psychology*, and regularly authors blogs on Psychology Today (*Theory of Knowledge*). He has also published numerous articles on his work, including two special issues of the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* and a special section in *Theory and Psychology*. In terms of current research projects, Dr. Henriques is currently utilizing his system to systematically study and develop systems for improving college student mental health, he is also working to develop systematic assessments of psychological functioning in the form of a well-being checkup, and to develop a more unified approach to psychotherapy. Dr. Henriques is a licensed clinical psychologist in Virginia.



TOK Society Conference



Dr. Steve Keffer has worked professionally as an actor, carpenter, baker, sedimentologist (in the Middle East) and academic in the JMU Department of Biology where his scholarly interests focused on comparative insect morphology and the evolution of human behavior. He currently resides in Washington, DC.

Dr. Nancy Link began her career as a clinical psychologist working on the psychiatric floor of a general hospital. She married developmental theorist, Robbie Case, and the couple had two children. Mid-career, she switched paths and became a school psychologist. The final 14 years of her career were spent as the Clinical Director of the School and Child Clinical Psychology Program at the University of Toronto. She retired in 2012.

Throughout her professional life, she felt deeply dissatisfied with the state of knowledge within the discipline of psychology. In particular, she pondered the problem of emotion. Despite emotion being central to clinical work, psychology has no clear description of what it is or how it has its impact. In 1993, she recognized how this problem could be solved and began writing a book entitled: *Emotion and the Evolution of Consciousness, A Framework for Integration*. Last year, she completed the final chapter.



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Joseph H. Michalski earned a PhD in sociology from the University of Virginia. He currently serves as the Associate Academic Dean at King's University College at Western University in Canada. His primary research interests focus on comparative studies of different types of violence, ranging from

domestic conflict to international terrorism. Additional articles have addressed a range of theoretical and substantive issues, such as the determinants of criminal behavior, rape, knowledge production, poverty, altruism, social inequality, and animal rights. His edited book, *Sociological Theory, Methods, and Perspectives*, will be released next month.

Dr. Chance McDermott is a recent graduate from the JMU CI program in Clinical and School Psychology. Dr. Gregg Henriques served as his advisor and he studies dreams, The Unified Theory of Psychology, human ethology, and meditation.



TOK Society Conference



Dr. Dave Pruett is Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at James Madison University. In addition to three decades of mathematics teaching at various levels, he has worked for a decade in NASA-related aerospace research. Dr. Pruett is also the author of *Reason and Wonder* (Praeger, 2012), the outgrowth of an award-winning JMU Honors seminar that explores the nexus of science and spirituality, as will his conference talk.

Steven W. Quackenbush is Professor of Psychology at the University of Maine, Farmington. Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, he completed his Ph.D. in social-personality psychology at Kansas State University in 1996. Though a generalist by inclination, he has a longstanding interest in cognitive-developmental and narrative approaches to the study of moral development. Representative publications include "And yet Your Duty Is to Hope: The Positive Psychology of Jean-Paul Sartre" (Quackenbush, Lockwood, & Cyr, 2016) and "Theoretical Unification as a Practical Project: Kant and the Tree of Knowledge System" (Quackenbush, 2008).



TOK Society Conference



Dr. Elena Savina received a Ph.D. in Developmental and Educational Psychology from Moscow State Pedagogical University, Russia and a Ph.D. in School Psychology from the University of Central Arkansas (APA-Accredited). She completed her postdoctoral residency at Methodist Behavioral Hospital, Maumelle, Arkansas. Dr. Savina also practiced for several years as a Child Psychologist at SOS Children's Village, Lavrovo, Russia, an international welfare organization that provides long-term care for orphans and neglected children. Dr. Savina's areas of teaching and research expertise include assessment, child/family psychotherapy, children with behavioral and emotional problems, transitioning children from residential treatment to school, teacher consultations, teaching of psychology, and socio-cultural psychology. Her most focused current research interests are in the area of self-regulation in children from different cultures. She is a Licensed Psychologist in Virginia.

Waldemar Schmidt, MD, PhD, is a retired academic pathologist who has been a clinical affiliate faculty member at the University of Utah and on the full-time faculties of The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, as well as the Oregon Health and Sciences University. Waldemar has a life-long interest in and dedication to the afflictions of the hermeneutic hominids (*Homo sapiens*). Retirement has allowed Waldemar to actively and intensely focus on human psychology for the past decade as a means to further understand the nature and features of the "human condition."

TOK Society Conference



Dr. John Torday

MSc (1971), PhD (1974) from McGill University, Experimental Medicine. Post-Doc, Reproductive Endocrinology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, NIH Reproductive Endocrinology Program (1974-76); Harvard University, Pediatrics/Physiology (1976-91); University of Maryland, Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology (1991-98); he has been at UCLA, as a Professor Pediatrics, in the Obstetrics and Gynecology, Evolutionary Medicine Program since 1998.

I am trained in Endocrinology, specializing in Fetal Endocrinology. My career was launched conceptually by the discovery that the hormone cortisol could effectively accelerate physiologic lung development in preterm human fetuses *in utero*, preventing Hyaline Membrane Disease/Respiratory Distress Syndrome, the primary cause of death among such infants, leading to the survival of tens of millions of preterm infants world-wide. I have spent my laboratory career trying to determine the mechanism of cortisol action on physiologic development, initially determining how cortisol stimulates the cell-cell interactions in the lung in cell culture, subsequently spending 20 years in determining why males do not respond to the hormone treatment, gaining insight to the evolutionary strategy of sexual dimorphisms. In 2007, we published a comprehensive description of the mechanism of alveolar physiology, complete with the way in which cortisol affects this process. The realization that this could not have evolved by chance was the impetus for 70 peer-reviewed articles and 4 books on epigenetic evolution of vertebrate physiology. Most recently, that approach to evolution has given insight to the fundamental evolutionary nature and properties of Consciousness, which is most pertinent to the Theory of Knowledge Conference.