

A New Philosophy for a New Age
Memory as Compassion, Impermanence as Understanding

Julien Lamberto
Professor Knepper
Philosophy of Religion
May 17, 2013

Introduction

We live in a global age, one in which the values of diversity in cultures, religions, philosophies, and political orientation are upheld as conditions worth striving towards. What this has led to, is not only a greater sense of appreciation for, and respect of, the various beliefs and customs that are important to other cultures, but also a greater sense of compassion between communities, because the fundamental commonalities that define humans, regardless of race, religion, sex, or creed, become more and more pronounced, while our differences matter less and less. As Georen Kopf, a prominent religious scholar explains, “I believe that the key to intercultural understanding is the communal tragedies and traumas of cultures and nations.” (citation needed) This is especially the case when we witness the suffering of another human being – when we see or hear about the suffering of another human being, and move beyond our own suffering, or the suffering of our community, we cannot help but feel a greater sense of compassion for humanity as a whole. Like other traumatic events such as death, war and genocide, suffering represents an integral aspect of both the individual’s sense of self as well as a community’s sense of reality:

In the history of every community, be it particular cultures, religions, or humanity as a whole, there are cataclysmic events that I call “unique inescapable ruptures.” With this term, I refer to tragedies like massacres and catastrophes that shape the identity and self-understanding of a community. (Berger, 25)

However, despite the progress that has been made towards engendering a greater sense of compassion in the hearts and minds of individuals around the world, those philosophies that herald obscurity and abstraction that have lost touch with the realities of human existence. These abstract philosophies constitute the “hegemonic ideologies” that, “arise either from the fruitless efforts of human vanity, which would penetrate into subjects utterly inaccessible to the understanding, or from the craft of popular superstitions, which, being unable to defend themselves on fair ground, raise these entangling brambles to cover and protect their weakness.” (Hume pg. 536) The deceivers have made their intentions clear, they seek to undermine the movement which threatens

to uncover their fragile underbellies and ruin the grounds that had founded their beliefs for so very long namely, inequality, fear, and superstition. Most often, these dissenters place authority in transcendental objects, or think in dualistic terms (i.e. good and evil, us and them, self-regarding versus other-regarding). But as Kopf explains, these “hegemonic ideologies,” will no longer suffice in an age characterized by its diversity. What we must do, is to cultivate a philosophy that holds true in this new age, in order to destroy the false and adulterate that exist only to serve the irrational fears of human beings. (Hume, 536) It means we must throw off the age old, black and white view of reality, and embrace the fact that human life is impermanent, that our identities are wholly dependent upon the existence of others, as well as not falling prey to those who speak in absolute terms, as even the stoutest antagonist, “if he remits his watch a moment, is oppressed. And many, though cowardice and folly, open the gates to the enemies and willingly receive them with reverence and submission as their legal sovereigns.” (Hume, 536) Indeed, the new age that we live in – characterized by its constant exchange of values and beliefs, calls for us to reexamine and reassess our traditional views, and to adopt a new philosophy, one that does not simply insulate our thoughts by worshiping man-made creations, but encourages us to open our minds, exact skepticism wherever possible, and embrace our own impermanence. In so doing, humans will no longer view the suffering of others indifferently, but will instead view suffering as something which afflicts all of us as a species and unites us. The moment of self-realization will occur, only when humans adopt a “philosophy of understanding,” and an “ethics of memory,” that is, a philosophy which not only embraces impermanence and memory at its core, but one that is in touch with human reality, not lost in transcendental abstraction. Only then will humanity reach its full potential namely, by becoming more compassionate towards the suffering of others.

My critique of society and the way individuals think of reality, is not limited to purely religion vis. a vis. its worship of man-made objects as being in some way god like or possessing transcendental powers, my critique is more broadly a criticism of any and all dogmatic trains of thought, regardless of political/religious affiliation, that create a dualistic black and white view of reality, uphold a particular object or ideal as somehow

ontologically valid (whether it be human reason, as a secularist would argue, or God, in line with many religious traditions), or teaches us not to critically evaluate the usefulness and validity of the inherently constructed nature of rules, laws, or religious beliefs. Simply by looking at the limits of human cognition and our relative inability to explain or justify many of life's phenomena, there can be no doubt that anyone who claims to know the "Truth" or heralds absolutes, should be cast down, not only for their fallacy, but because they espouse dangerous ideologies that have historically resulted in the slavery of man to one idea or belief over another. That is why, it must be understood that both religion and human reason are finite – not to be taken as ultimately valid or supreme by any means – they are in their totality, the products of society.

I am not so bold as to claim that society has no need of religion, or that religion was purely founded upon the superstitions and fears of humans (albeit, this is often the case), I do, in fact, recognize that as biological organisms, human beings cannot help but to try and attempt to form explanations and justifications for the everyday phenomena that characterize our existence. This is the role religion has historically served, by explaining the formerly unexplainable. As Karen Armstrong claims, because human beings "cannot endure emptiness and desolation," we will inevitably "fill the vacuum by creating a new focus of meaning." (Armstrong, 5) Historically, religion has served such a purpose by providing a rationale for human existence and by legitimating social institutions within a cosmic frame of reference. However, in the context of modern society many religious traditions have become out of touch with human reality as they still maintain dualistic distinctions such as, good and evil, right and wrong, which has created issues in their efforts to hold onto legitimacy in an era recognized for its growing sense of diversity. What is missing, as Professor Gereon Kopf claims, "is a genuine philosophy of diversity," that is, "a philosophy that takes into account the fact of diversity without succumbing to either particularism or universalism." (Kopf, EoU, 22) In order to do this, we must reexamine the conditions necessary for diversity, so that we can uncover "a philosophical position that takes seriously the diversity of cultures, traditions, and positions, without denying their individual particularities and idiosyncrasies, on the one hand, and yet allows the theorist to envision a philosophy that does justice to the

postmodern predicament, on the other.” Our search for such a philosophy of understanding is a philosophy that speak to the reality of human life namely, one which is finite, impermanent, and does not transcend human existence in any manner.

For the majority of religious and philosophical traditions, suffering is something which presents an obstacle for human beings, and thus, must be explained away. We seek a philosophy, however, that does not view suffering as something which threatens to unravel humanity and so, must be forgotten or whitewashed, but suffering as a uniquely human event which renders us more compassionate towards the suffering experienced by others. In the following section, I will explain both sides of this distinction: on the one hand, the view that suffering is a threat that must be justified (usually in terms of some transcendental authority), and on the other, that suffering should be remembered as it engenders compassion for others.

Peter Berger in *The Sacred Canopy* explains that suffering and death present threats to the human self-conscious. As Berger explains, human life on Earth is “characterized by a built-in instability” that arises from the very nature of man. Similar to Armstrong, Berger asserts that as biological organisms, we are “constantly at odds with the world” because the world is never fixed and permanent as we would like it to be, but we nonetheless, endlessly attempt to erect some form of permanence, but in the end, Berger stresses, that our efforts merely end in appearances of permanency, as true permanence can never be attained. When encountered with phenomena such as, suffering or death viz. “marginal situations,” our “socially defined reality” becomes endangered, limited in its ability to explain or justify these types of occurrences. And so, our socially constructed world is revealed for its “innate precariousness.”(Berger, 22) If marginal situations are left unexplained or unjustified, Berger claims, the human conscious is placed in a dangerous predicament as “the fundamental order in terms of which the individual can ‘make sense’ of his life and recognize his own identity will be in process of disintegration.”(22) Berger goes on to say, that this leads not only to the loss of our own sense of “moral bearings, with disastrous psychological consequences,” but also, “[we] become uncertain about [our] cognitive bearings as well.”(22) Hence, for Berger,

“marginal situations” such as suffering and death, threaten to unravel the very fabric of our minds in a “shattering metamorphoses.” By allowing the looming fears and doubts that the “normal world” we perceive may, in fact, be “fragile or even fraudulent,” the “central areas of [our consciousness],” become sporadic, and we essentially go nuts – “what modern psychiatry would call neurotic or psychotic.” (23)

What protects us from this fate? Berger claims, that society is what insulates us from the reality of suffering and death: “[s]ociety [act as] the guardian of order and meaning not only objectively, in its institutional structures, but subjectively as well, in its structuring of individual consciousness.” (21) In other words, it is the socially constructed norms, or *nomos* that a society founds itself upon, that keeps the “potent and alien forces of *chaos*” at bay (*anomy*) through the process of *legitimation*. Legitimation is any form of “socially objectivated ‘knowledge’ that serves to explain and justify the social order.” (pg. 29) In other words, legitimations provide answers concerning “why” certain institutional arrangements exist in a particular collective or society. Berger explains in the *Sacred Canopy*, that religion is just one of the many forms of legitimation that serve to “maintain reality” because it is able to explain and justify life’s phenomena as defined by a particular individual or collectivity. (pg. 35)

The main factor which gave rise to the first religions was the material conditions of death, and suffering, or what Berger refers to as “marginal situations.” These marginal situations, Berger explains, threaten our socially constructed view of reality because human beings are unable to justify or explain such phenomenon within the context of rules and laws alone. Unique to religion, however, is its ability to legitimate “marginal phenomena,” by placing them within a cosmic or sacred framework. In so doing, humanly constructed norms or “*nomoi*” are given the appearance of reality. Historically, this why religions have been the “most widespread and effective instrumentality of legitimation” because of their ability to relate the socially defined reality of institutions to the “ultimate reality of the universe, in reality ‘as such,’” and so, “the inherently precarious and transitory constructions of human activity are given the semblance of ultimate security and permanence.” (Berger, 22-26)

Berger asserts that nearly every human being desires this “taken-for-granted” view of reality and that religion is able to satisfy this desire, and on this point, Berger is exactly correct, as the majority of human beings are, in fact, so preoccupied in their attempts to erect a false reality that they forget the necessarily contingent nature of their own lives. Is such a reality truly desirable, however, one that encourages us to forget? How would this impact our understanding of suffering, especially in the context of atrocities such as the Holocaust or the Nanjing Massacre? However, A society in which forgetfulness and obedience to social intuitions are held up as virtues, while memory and critical evaluation are seen as vices, a people raised never to never question, never to disobey, never to see or believe anything other than the way society or religion intends for it to be seen or believed, is not a society of people, but sheep on a farm. This is especially apparent in the context of many modern religious institutions, because every contingency of our world is given the semblance of “inevitability, firmness and durability [of] the gods themselves.” (36)

In such a society, religion becomes “the opium of the people,” as Karl Marx said, it is “the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions.”(Marx) It is for this reason, that any social institution whether it be rules, laws, or religion are simply distractions that prevent us from grasping true nature of reality, it become like all the small pieces coal thrown onto a fire, whose smoke clouds our vision and continued maintenance consumes the greater portion of our lives. Religion is merely the edifice erected by man to create a sense of permanency in an impermanent world, but the values and beliefs that give rise to a religion are products of the material conditions that created a necessity for that particular belief or ideal, as Karl Marx asserted with regards to mans belief in religion:

The foundation of irreligious criticism is: *Man makes religion, religion does not make man* [italics added]. Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself, or has already lost himself again. But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man – state, society. This state and this society produce religion, which is an inverted consciousness

of the world, because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, and its universal basis of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence since the human essence has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion.

There is no outside the cave, in other words, as Plato's allegory of the cave might have us believe. Our reality lies within the cave, and those who focus only on what is outside of the cave, live in a world of falsity and become disconnected with reality. A religion is only valid in the sense that it merely represents a mirror image of man and his material conditions. God did not create man in his image, man created God, by simply removing the finitude of what man perceived to be good or valid. The same goes for those who worship human reason, as if reason alone were capable of explaining all the complexities that characterize the world and our universe. Our ability to reason, like the values and beliefs that make up a religious tradition, are wholly constructed by society, and thus, it would be just as fallacious and dangerous to rule by reason, as it would be to rule by a transcendental authority, as both human reason and religion derive meaning from the material reality of our world. As David Hume famously argued in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, "the idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind and augmenting, without limit those qualities of goodness and wisdom." (Hume, 539) In other words, Hume is arguing that reason alone, cannot furnish us an understanding of that which cannot be experienced (i.e. God, heaven, hell) as our understanding of an object is limited to only that which is immediately available to our sensory perception (i.e. taste, smell, touch) and our experience of those sensory perceptions.

Daniel Dennett, an important cognitive and biological philosopher, argues along similar lines, when he claims that human beings no longer need the crutch that religion represents, just as Dumbo no longer needed the feather to figure out he could fly. Indeed, it's harmful to hang on to religion, Dennet claims, especially when looking to the history of cult suicides and death sentences for blasphemy. But religion is most harmful as a

threat to a rational world view. And how does religion differ from other factors that disable rationality, such as drugs or alcohol? Only religion, Dennett said, “honours the disability”. (Dennet, *Freedom Evolves*, pg. 238)

Another prominent Biblical scholar that sheds further light on the current issue at hand is Hector Avalos. In his book *Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence* (2005) Avalos explains the role of religion in perpetuating violence according to the scarce resource theory. Avalos argues that all conflict is, more often than not, the result of some resource that is either scarce or perceived to be scarce. This could range from love in a family to energy on a global scale. When religion causes violence, it does so because it has created a new scarce resource somewhere. Such scarce resources could include sacred space ("The Holy Land"), group privileging, and eternal life. Violence may result from the effort to maintain or acquire these religiously-created resources, and people may be willing to give or take life in pursuit of these resources. However, unlike scarcities that are verifiable (e.g., water, oil), resources such as eternal life are unverifiable and created entirely by religious belief. Therefore, when one kills for religious reasons, one is usually trading actual lives for resources that are either not scarce or cannot even be verified to exist. Although this has historically been the case within the mainstream religious traditions (i.e. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hindu) not all religions can be characterized in this manner. This problem arises because authority is located within some godlike figure which eliminates the need for critical evaluation, because as Berger explained, actions are justified in terms of the cosmic or sacred. Not all religious traditions function upon such grounds; however, here exist certain religions, which do not place authority in some mythical transcendental object, or attempt to evade the reality of impermanence by inadvertently advocating for unquestioning obedience to a man made code of law.

The once beneficial role that many religious traditions served in maintaining our socially constructed view of reality, has reached a critical turning point in history. Now, instead of attempting to create a false sense of permanence which can never truly be attained but must continually be manufactured? Berger suggests that religion is useful as it allows “the people [to] forget that this order was established by men and continues to

be dependent upon the consent of men,” but , in fact, the main source of instability in modern society. As Berger himself claims, “ human activity was shaped by the goal of establishing permanence and order, this is in fact

Suffering and the Holocaust – Katz

In a world where God exists, how do we, as human beings, reconcile the fact that tremendous acts of evil and suffering have taken place throughout human history if God is all good and all-powerful? Perhaps the greatest act of evil took place during the Holocaust, in which millions of innocent Jewish people were wiped off the face of the Earth. Why would a just and benevolent God allow such atrocities to occur to a people who had clearly not done something so terrible as to justify their punishment? This has presented a major obstacle to Jewish theodicy, as well as the Jewish people themselves, who are still coping with the mass murdering of millions of their that took place during the Holocaust. It is a dilemma that all religious traditions have had to wrestle with at some point or another viz. why does suffering exist, if God is supposedly all good and all-powerful? There are a variety of theories that have arisen to address this issue: One is to say that humans have free will and as a result, evil exists because of mans own actions; another claims that suffering exists because we as humans have sinned, and as a result God has turned his face from us, this example being recognized as the “hidden face of God”; yet another method is to say that God is directly responsible for suffering viz. God punishes those who have fallen from his grace. With regards to the Holocaust, however, these responses to suffering have proven problematic as they either take away the all powerful characteristic of God, or claim that God is directly responsible for the suffering of millions.

Dr. Katz takes in his book *Wrestling with God: Jewish Theological Responses During and After the Holocaust*, has sought to vindicate the Jewish people for the suffering that they endured during the Holocaust while seeking to preserve the fundamental beliefs of Jewish theology. Katz attempts to generate viable responses to the Holocaust that are in line with Judaism’s core principles, however, it is a view which upholds the Holocaust as a uniquely Jewish event and ignores the suffering endured by

others such as, the Roma, gays, Russians, and blacks. Katz's emphasis that the Holocaust is a uniquely Jewish event, although it clearly did afflict the Jewish community to the greatest degree, in essence disregards the suffering experienced by all members of the event.

Christianity and Slavery – Avalos

The traditional view that through the bible individuals were able to realize that slavery was wrong, and as a result of the moral and ethical principles found in the bible, people were led to the desire to abolish the institutions of slavery. But, as Avalo demonstrates, to make the claim that it was the bible that paved the way to abolition is absurd -- if one is to simply read the bible, many instances can be found which support both the practice of slavery, and the natural dominance of one race or people over another. Demonstrative of this, can be seen by the actions taken by Christians over the past 2000 years, “[it was] self-described Christians who kept slavery, in some form or another, a viable institution.” (Avalo, pg. 4, 2011) Christian scholars, as well as historians, in response to these claims have done everything in their immediate power to whitewash the issue viz. through the use of reinterpretation and by attempting to downplay the strong undertones of inequality seen in the bible, while emphasizing the moral and ethical ones. Avalo makes a similar claim when he states, “any credit to the Bible for ethical advances concerning freedom is usually the result of arbitrary exegesis of the Bible, reinterpretation, and the abandonment of biblical principles.” (Avalo, pg. 5, 2011)

In response to the suffering found in slavery, Avalos would argue, I believe, that suffering is dependent upon the place and time in which it arose. Avalos himself is opposed to the idea of slavery, based on modern standards of moral and ethical conduct, but if one is to look back to the various civilizations that have existed throughout human existence, the practice of slavery was not uncommon. What separates Biblical support of slavery, however, from other accounts of slavery, such as the type of slavery found in the Roman culture, is that the Bible attaches a moral stigma to slavery viz. the slaves are in

some way less human than their masters. This view is that which Avalos is opposed to – a slavery which subjects a certain class of people based on these claims.

Buddhism – A New Philosophy for a New Age

When looking to the atrocities that have unfolded over the course of the 20th century alone, a dark and pessimistic view of human nature will likely enter the consciousness of the beholder. That is why, rather than either focus on our own suffering or forget the suffering of others, as Kopf suggests we must remember, as it is the remembrance of suffering and the suffering of others that will enable us to become more fully compassionate. Kopf gives the example of the play “Nun Singen Sie Wieder” by Swiss playwright Max Frisch, to illustrate the necessity of memory in our sense of compassion:

In a poignant scene, townspeople whose city has been attacked by air-raids meet in a bunker. Seeing a child, a woman says, “The child will not know anything of the war when he is grown up. Think about that!... Wherever no one can remember the war, their life begins again.” To this a voice from the back responds, “Or the next war.” Asked why, the voice responds, “Because there is no one there to remember it.”

This is where Buddhist philosophy comes in, particularly Zen Buddhism. Buddhist philosophy not only provides an alternative to dualism and essentialism but also recognizes memory as the method to transform suffering into compassion. A Zen practitioner, for example, attempts to embody non-discriminatory wisdom *vis-a-vis* the meditational experience known as “satori” (enlightenment). “Satori” consists of a process by which wisdom culminates in the experiential dimension, whereby, the equality of “thing-events” is apprehended and discerned. Zen demands an overcoming of the evanescent transcendentalism that seems to consume the everyday life of most individuals, instead, Zen promotes the overcoming of such a view which may practically be achieved by instilling a holistic perspective in cognition.

As Kopf explained at the Comparison Project, according to legends,

the historical Buddha was shaken out of the complacency of his royal life by the awareness of suffering when he first encountered sickness, old age, and death. This confrontation with suffering that threatened his own life and the life of his loved ones became the reason for his religious life. However, before he realized the solution to the problem of suffering, so the legends tell us, he was able to see his own past lives as well as the past lives of everyone else. It was this memory that led him to wisdom, that is, the understanding of reality as it is and ultimately compassion towards his fellow humans.

Kopf explains that from this we learn that there are two lessons from this legend: First, that “knowledge of one’s own failures leads to wisdom and compassion and thus to a transformation of suffering.” (Kopf) And secondly, that the “self and other are not separated,” and that, “[the] knowledge of the self leads to knowledge of the other and ultimately the recognition of our common humanity.” According to mainstream Buddhist beliefs, awareness of one’s own failures and the resulting self-awareness is the necessary condition for compassion and the acceptance of the other.

For Buddhism, the feeling of pain and suffering is what allows us to be compassionate. Memory grants us the ability to remember the suffering that others have experienced and allows us to render compassion upon them. Compassion in Buddhism is not understood as a moral imperative, rather, a metaphysical condition that is actualized naturally when we remember instances of suffering. With regards to the Nanking Massacre, also referred to as “The Rape of Nanking” Buddhism has reflected carefully upon the mass killings that took place as a result of Japanese aggression within the Chinese province of Nanking. Central to Buddhism’s explanations of Nanking is the notion that there is no ‘self’ an idea which states that because there can be no understanding of the concept of self, because ‘I’ am simply a socially constructed being, when looking to acts of violence or suffering the goal is not to find blame in others but to find compassion. Thomas Kopf, a University professor at Luther College in Iowa, was able to speak at the comparison project on Thursday regarding Buddhist responses to the Nanking Massacre.

To illustrate the importance of memory in compassion for Buddhist philosophy, let us apply a Buddhist perspective to the Nanjing massacre. With regards to Nanjing, there have been four types of narratives developed to explain the suffering that was experienced by the Chinese people. The first is an ideological one viz. good (Chinese) versus evil (Japanese). But, Buddhism questions the traditional distinction between good and evil – each of these terms are relative to the particular times and conditions in which they arose. If one is to understand this, there comes a point where one realizes there can be no good and evil in a moralistic/absolutist perspective, simply good is the process of reality which is attained through understanding of what Kopf refers to as *lishiwuai* – *shishiwuai*. This was a highly enjoyable talk, by far my favorite unit so far not simply because of the deep philosophical principles that guide Buddhist thought, but because Buddhism is a very humble, modest, and in my opinion enlightened tradition and if any religion is to survive the rising tide of science and realism that has come to characterize the 20th and 21st centuries, it will be Buddhism.

Kopf began by explaining in depth the philosophical principles that underlie Buddhist thought and it clear that Buddhism literally is a selfless religion. Kopf explains that tragic events that occur in human history represent unique and inescapable ruptures, or a “point of no return.” Events like the Holocaust, the first nuclear drop, and the Massacre at Nanking shape have shape the process of identity formation not simply for the individual or the community, but for individuals around the world. An event not formerly mentioned, but nonetheless important in explaining the role of remembrance in promoting compassion is the massacre that took place at Wounded Knee. A tragic event in American history whereby over 300 unarmed Lakota men, women, and children were indiscriminately slaughtered by the U.S. 7th Calvary Regiment in 1890. This event has shaped not only the way the Lakota view themselves, but has shaped the way Americans think, and how globally this has impacted other peoples perspectives of the U.S.

Should we continue to hold onto a dying fiction as many religious traditions continue to do? Should we obsess over transcendental objects as a being a reliable source of meaning or happiness or should we recognize the true source of human happiness as existing right here on Earth viz. through our everyday actions with others and the kind

acts we do towards one another in the process of alleviating human suffering. The demand that we give up those religions that find happiness in God or heaven is the demand for the material conditions that give rise to that happiness. As Marx famously said,

The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo. (Marx)

Hence, should we continue to prop up a dying and false view of reality that our lives are somehow permanent, or would we be better off accepting that impermanence is an inextricable aspect of reality which cannot be erased or forgotten, but should be remembered. With the rise of modern society, multiculturalism, “intercultural philosophy,” religious dialogue, political multilateralism, technology, and weapons of mass destruction (i.e. nuclear bombs), (in other words, the rise of a global age) has led to an overall questioning and de-legitimation of many religions and the role they have served in maintaining a community’s sense of reality because, in addition to an increased sense of interconnectedness between each community, the global age has also brought to bear, more and more frequently, the socially constructed nature of human existence. As we have already shown, religion, like every other social institution, is simply a product of human activity in the process of “world-building,” brought into existence by material conditions namely, the finiteness of the world versus the view of permanence that humans seek to maintain, to create world built upon the appearances of reality.

Works Cited

- Avalos, Hector. *Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2005. Print.
- Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy; Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967. Print.
- "Comparison Project to Feature Lecture on 'Buddhism and the Ethics of Memory' | Newsroom | Drake University." *Newsroom Drake University*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 May 2013.
- Dennett, D. C. *Freedom Evolves*. New York: Viking, 2003. Print.
- Hume, David, Lewis Amherst Selby-Bigge, and P. H. Nidditch. *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding, and concerning the Principles of Morals*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975. Print.
- Katz, Steven T., Shlomo Biderman, and Gershon Greenberg. *Wrestling with God: Jewish Theological Responses during and after the Holocaust*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007. Print.
- Kopf, Gereon. *Beyond Personal Identity*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001. Print.
- Marx, Karl, and Frederic L. Bender. *Karl Marx: Essential Writings*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972. Print.