

Events

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Project Paradiso: A Gateway to Dante's Heaven - Episode 11 - The End of Imagination (Paradiso 33)

March 22 @ 9:00 am - 10:30 am | Virtual Event

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Dante's *Paradiso* is the least studied and the least understood of the three parts of the *Commedia*. Yet it is arguably the most important for the dynamism and originality of the literary, theological, and philosophical inquiries that take place there. It is also a singularly important interpretive guide for a full understanding of the entire *Commedia*. It is a poem that asks to be tackled by a community of engaged readers: here it's your opportunity! This year-long series of webinar workshops led by world-renowned scholars will take you on a deep reading of the *Paradiso* and an unforgettable journey to the heart of Dante's universe. This virtual series will reward both first-time and expert readers of the *Commedia* with an opportunity to delve deep into one of the most complex and daring speculative poems ever written. We'll be meeting

online almost every other week from October to May. [See the Project Paradiso page for full schedule.](#)

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William Franke is a Dante scholar, a philosopher of the humanities, and a professor of comparative literature at Vanderbilt University. He has also been professor of philosophy at University of Macao (2013-2016); Fulbright-University of Salzburg Distinguished Chair in Intercultural Theology (2005-06); and Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung research fellow (1994- 95). His book *Dante's Paradiso and the Theological Origins of Modern Thought: Toward a Speculative Philosophy of Self-Reflection* received the Hermes Award: Book of the Year in Phenomenological Hermeneutics from The International Institute for Hermeneutics (IIH), 2021 and he became Honorary Professor (*Profesore Honoris Causa*) of the Agora Hermeneutica.

In addition to six monographs on Dante, Franke's critical theory books include *Poetry and Apocalypse: Theological Disclosures of Poetic Language* (Stanford University Press, 2009) and *A Theology of Literature: The Bible as Revelation in the Tradition of the Humanities* (Cascade, 2017). These works follow up on books tracing prophetic poetry from Homer and Virgil to Dante (*The Revelation of Imagination*, Northwestern University Press, 2015) and then forward from Dante through Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, Leopardi, to more recent modern classics including Baudelaire, Dickinson, and Yeats (*Secular Scriptures: Modern Theological Poetics in the Wake of Dante*, Ohio State University Press, 2016).

In conjunction with his work on prophetic poetry, Franke has developed what he calls *A Philosophy of the Unsayable* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2014) reconstructing the apophatic tradition in *On What Cannot Be Said* (Notre Dame, 2007, 2 vols.). His *Apophatic Paths from Europe to China* (SUNY, 2018, Chinese Philosophy series) extends this project into an intercultural philosophy. His *The Universality of What is Not: The Apophatic Turn in Critical Thinking* (Notre Dame, 2020) explores applications of this philosophy to media studies, postmodern identity politics of race and gender, and cognitive sciences in their struggle with the humanities.

Dante monographs by William Franke

Dantologies: Theoretical and Theological Turns in Dante Studies – New York: Routledge, 2023

(forthcoming) Routledge Studies in Medieval Literature and Culture

The Divine Vision of Dante's Paradiso: The Metaphysics of Representation – Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021 (304 + xx pages)

Dante's Vita Nuova and the New Testament: Hermeneutics and the Poetics of Revelation – Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021 (299 + xix pages)

Dante's Paradiso and the Theological Origins of Modern Thought: Toward a Speculative Philosophy of Self-Reflection – New York: Routledge, 2021 (334 + xxii pages) Routledge Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Literature Series

Dante and the Sense of Transgression: 'The Trespass of the Sign' – London and New York: Continuum [Bloomsbury Academic], 2013 Invited for New Directions in Religion and Literature Series, edited by Mark Knight and Emma Mason (200 + xv pages)

Dante's Interpretive Journey – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996 (242 + xi pages) Religion and Postmodernism series, edited by Mark C. Taylor

Presented by the Humanities Institute and the Department of Literature Italian Studies.

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