

# *Rethinking Science and Religion in the Modern World* **-Reflections on a YouTube Debate with Atheists-**

**Prof. Dr. Christian Uhl**

*(Dept. for Languages and Cultures, Ghent University, Belgium)*

Commentator: Dr. Viren Murthy

*(University of Wisconsin-Madison)*

Recently I succumbed to the temptation to allow my newborn YouTube avatar to philosophically intervene in a discussion between some atheists and a couple of defenders of religion. This discussion unfolded in the comments section to a video about a new psychological study, which suggested that, when put under stress, atheists use science in the same way in which religious people make use of their belief. I decided to take on one of the atheists, and suggested that the link between atheism and religion is structural and much more fundamental than the merely aesthetic objection that some atheists tend to be as zealous as the most fanatic Bible-thumpers, imply. This suggestion caused an ever expanding chain reaction of replies and counter replies, ranging from more or less sophisticated statements down to the sheer display of entertainingly offensive language. The first part of my paper will be dedicated to a recapitulation and analysis of this experience from the battlefield between science, religion and philosophy. This analysis then shall serve as a point of departure for a more in-depth inquiry into the triangular relationship between the three. I will argue that this relationship can only be properly understood when seen against the backdrop of its larger context, namely, the modern order of knowledge, as it is manifesting itself most strikingly in the structure and set up of the modern university. And I will conclude, that this modern order of knowledge again, has become possible and thinkable only under the historically specific conditions of the capitalist social formation.

Seminar Room, 2nd Floor, Building 101,  
University of Tokyo, Komaba

**16:00-18:00, Tuesday, July 2, 2013**

Language: English | Admission Free | No Registration Required