

The Tufts University Global Development And Environment Institute (GDAE) announces the publication of [two new working papers](#) by Julie Nelson:

### **THE RELATIONAL ECONOMY: A BUDDHIST AND FEMINIST ANALYSIS**

Julie Nelson, author of [Economics for Humans](#) (2006) and co-editor with Marianne Ferber of [Feminist Economics Today: Beyond Economic Man](#) (2003), addresses the issue of how to respond to a situation where our “scientific cleverness has outstripped our collective wisdom and level of social development.” She warns that the adoption by some Western thinkers of a "Buddhist " economic ideal characterized by cooperation, communalism, and small scale, may in fact conceal the assimilation of a non-Buddhist belief that “the economy is a non-relational, a-social machine.” This belief, common to both defenders and critics of neo-classical economics, oversimplifies the complexity of the real economy and underplays its relational aspects. Contrary to classical principles of Buddhist thought, such an approach encourages an unduly ideological and dogmatic method of thought, which prevents informed engagement with the complexities of the real economy.

### **CARE ETHICS AND MARKETS: A VIEW FROM FEMINIST ECONOMICS**

The idea of "care ethics," which originated with the work of Carol Gilligan, is often perceived of as conflicting with "justice ethics" derived from Western liberal philosophy. Similarly, interpersonal relations are often thought to belong to the social sphere, while the economic sphere is assumed to be governed by impersonal laws. As a result, it may be hard to see how care ethics, seen as interpersonal, could be applicable to business, when the latter is perceived as asocial. This essay uncovers the origins of these beliefs in unhelpful dualistic cognitive habits and in gender-biases in the development of the disciplines of philosophy and economics. In particular, feminist analysis reveals the mythical nature of both "economic man" and the belief in mechanical "profit maximization." The essay calls for unveiling and recognizing the ethical and connected dimensions that already characterize business life, and including these in thinking about how to create a more humane economy.

Download [The Relational Economy: A Buddhist and Feminist Analysis](#)

Download [Care Ethics and Markets: A View from Feminist Economics](#)

See more of GDAE's [Working Papers](#)

For more information on [GDAE's work and publications](#)