International Conference: Nature Religions, Science and Technology

22nd and 23rd September 2022

About the Conference

The ubiquitous presence of 'the digital', the levels of technological control and the prevalence of scientific understanding today are having profound effects, not only on our understanding of the mind-body relationship and what we conceive as real, but also on our very notion of humanity and our relationship with both the natural and the technological environment and beings. These ontological complications meet interesting perspectives in religion, especially in the neglected areas such as animism, contemporary paganism and pantheism which are known for their strong preference for immanent divine and embodied spirituality, their immersive and boundary-transgressing phenomenology of nature, and their links to Deep Ecology.

The international conference Nature Religions, Science and Technology seeks to bring into the contemporary discussion interdisciplinary debates in the fields of religion, science and technology, by focusing especially on philosophical, theological, anthropological and religious studies perspectives. The contributions include original research on selected topics in pantheism, animism and/or paganism — especially (but not exclusively) in their 'Western' forms — in relation to important questions about science and technology. In this way, the research presented and produced by both established as well as early career scholars, addresses contemporary cultural and intellectual sensibilities that arise in the intersection of these fields. A selection of the papers presented will be published in a special issue of journal Religions, titled Religion, Science and Technology in Pantheism, Animism and Paganism.

The conference is a part of the research project Creatures, Humans, Robots: Creation Theology Between Humanism and Posthumanism, based at the Institute for Philosophical Studies, Science and Research Centre of Koper (ZRS Koper), Slovenia, and funded by Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS). The conference is co-organized and supported by ZRS Koper, and the Centre for Religion, Health and Wellbeing at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen. It is taking place at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen, The Netherlands, on 22nd and 23rd September, 2022.

Gorazd Andrejč and Victoria Dos Santos, 18.09.2022

Conference Programme

Thursday 22nd September
- ▶ 10:30-13:00 Registration
- ▶ 12:00-13:00 'Standing lunch' (Main Hallway)
- ▶ 13:00-13:15 Welcome Address
- ▶ 13:15-14:20 KEYNOTE LECTURE: **Kocku von Stuckrad** The Nature of Things: Agential Realism and the Ontologies in Nature-based Spiritualities
- ▶ 14:20-14:25 SHORT BREAK
- ▶ 14:25-15:00 **Hans Van Eyghen** Animism and Science: Harmony and Conflict
- ▶ 15:00-15:35 **Ervik Cejvan** Cartesian Animism: The Question of the Nakedness of Automaton
- ▶ 15:35-16:00 COFFEE BREAK
- ▶ 16:00-16:35 **Nadja Furlan-Štante** Is There a Place for Pantheism in (Post)Christian Eco-feminist Reconstruction of the God-World Relationship?
- ▶ 16:35-17:10 **Noreen Herzfeld** "Grow Old with Me": Humanoid Robots and the Aging Process
- ▶ 17:10-17:15 SHORT BREAK
- ▶ 17:20-18:35 KEYNOTE LECTURE: **Victor Krebs** Digital Animism: Towards a New Materialism
- ▶ 19:30 CONFERENCE DINNER (Optional)

Friday 23rd September
- ▶ 9:00-10:05 KEYNOTE LECTURE: **Katherine Swancutt** Of Cosmological Visions and Creativity: Shaping Animism, Indigenous Science, and Forestry in Southwest China

Conference Programme

- ▶ 10:10-10:15 SHORT BREAK
- ▶ 10:15-10:50 **Julia Itel** Ecospirituality and the Adoption of an Ecocentric Posture
- ▶ 10:50-11:25 **Daniel Esparza** To Forgive a Bull
- ▶ 11:25-11:40 COFFEE BREAK (15 minutes only)
- ▶ 11:40-12:15 **Tijana Rupčić** Technopaganism and Cyberspace Spirituality in Dystopian Video Games
- ▶ 12:15-12:50 **Menahem Marmelsztejn** Beyond the Telescope They Found Time: Remedios Varo's 'Revelación'
- ▶ 12:50-14:15 LUNCH BREAK (self-organised)
- ▶ 14:10-14:45 **Victoria Dos Santos** (Techno)Paganism: An Exploration of Animistic Relations with the Digital
- ▶ 14:45-15:20 **Devin Proctor** Indexing Racialized Bodies in the Animist Internet
- ▶ 15:20-15:45 COFFEE BREAK
- ▶ 15:45-16:20 **Lenart Škof** On Nexum Metaphyicum in Schopenhauer
- ▶ 16:20-16:55 **Gorazd Andrejč** Hot and Cold Pantheism: A Science & Religion Perspective
- ▶ 16:55-17:00 SHORT BREAK
- ▶ 17:00-18:05 KEYNOTE LECTURE: **Andrei Buckareff** Pantheism, Omnisubjectivity, and the Feeling of Temporal Passage

- ▶ *Friday Evening: Drinks at Groningen Wine Festival* (optional)

Keynote Lectures

The Nature of Things: Agential Realism and the Ontologies in Nature-based Spiritualities

Kocku von Stuckrad

Recent discussions about other-than-human agency and the ontological status of the more-than-human world have challenged dichotomies that are deeply ingrained in Euro-American thinking. Across disciplines and intellectual fields—from philosophy to theoretical physics to ecology to cultural studies and religious studies—dichotomies between subject and object, between mind and matter, and between nature and culture have strongly been criticized. Alternatives to these interpretational schemes have been formulated and are in the process of being further developed. The lecture addresses some important topics in the ongoing discussion, focusing particularly on Karen Barad's theory of agential realism. It is argued that agential realism not only helps overcome the artificial distinction between the natural sciences and the humanities; we can also fruitfully combine it with new approaches to animism in the field of the study of religion. Nature-based spiritualities present an excellent test case for these theoretical considerations.

Digital Animism: Towards a New Materialism

Victor Krebs

My concern in this paper is to trace the ways in which the digital is changing our experience and understanding of the world. With the advent of 'the virtual world' we have naturally gauged the 'reality' of the virtual in terms of how close it comes to empirical experience. But I argue that the common association of the virtual to simulation depends on the very dualism that underwrites the characterization of matter characteristic of the Enlightenment, that rendered it inert and mute. From within that representational dualism the virtual is reduced to a simulacrum of reality, where we find ourselves split into two typical stances that polarize us and prevent us from seeing its real import. Virtuality, rather than related to simulation, refers instead to potentiality. And far from being something that first appears with the virtual world as a technological simulation of reality, the virtual constitutes an intrinsic dimension of human experience, a bare potentiality which is always subject to technological modulation. Despite the path of increasing abstraction marked by

the evolution of the technologies of communication, which, as Vilém Fusser argues, reaches its summit with the zero-dimensionality of the digital, the virtual world reverts the modern understanding of matter, revealing it as ineluctably vital and in permanent movement and transformation. The digital virtual thus lays the groundwork for an animistic ontology that lifts the modern disenchantment of nature. Rather than placing the human subject at the center, it decenters that emphasis, placing humans at the same level as the rest of a rhizomatic and entangled nature that is consonant with a new materialism.

Of Cosmological Visions and Creativity: Shaping Animism, Indigenous Science, and Forestry in Southwest China

Katherine Swancutt

How do 'cosmological visions' unsettle animistic and scientific ways of relating to the world? Animism and science may be built on different sensibilities, but both thrive on being creatively shaken up. Whereas animism is a way of relating to humans, animals, plants, things, forces of nature, spirits, and sometimes ancestors, transcendent gods, or robots, science is often an especially 'detached' way of relating to the objects (or subjects) of study, previous scientific discoveries, breakthrough developments, and methodological naturalism. Drawing on my ethnography of the Nuosu, a Tibeto-Burman group of Southwest China, I show how an ethnohistorian and priest set out, at the request of a local official, to address deforestation by 're-animating' their peers with a new cosmological vision. Travelling across the Liangshan mountains of Yunnan province in the mid-2000s, they made sacrifices to mountain spirits and encouraged Nuosu villagers to adopt an animistic and indigenous scientific approach to forestry. Many Nuosu, though, responded with a counter cosmological vision that showed respect for their mountain spirits but also a certain detachment from the world in animistic-cum-scientific terms. Creativity like this opens up spaces for re-envisioning what it means to be alive to the world as an animist, scientist, or both.

Pantheism, Omnisubjectivity, and the Feeling of Temporal Passage

Andrei Buckareff

By 'pantheism' I mean to pick out a model of God on which God is identical with the totality of existents constitutive of the universe. I have argued that if pantheism is true, then the universe must exhibit the sort of unity characteristic of a cognitive system (Buckareff 2019 and 2022). I take it that the following are implications of

such a model of God. First, the universe is the divine mind. Second, God is omnispatiotemporal, existing at every spacetime point (which is not to say that each spacetime point is itself God or divine). Third, if God knows everything that can be known in the universe, then God has knowledge of the contents of the minds of conscious creatures such as human persons. Furthermore, it is reasonable to hold that qua constituents of the divine mind, God's access to the conscious minds of creatures is first-personal. Therefore, God has knowledge de se of the minds of every conscious creature. Finally, if God has knowledge de se of the minds of every conscious creature, then divine omniscience implies omnisubjectivity.

Suppose that we live in a block universe and, hence, eternalism is true. Robust temporal passage is an illusion. But conscious creatures such as human persons experience robust temporal passage. A puzzle emerges at this juncture. If God has the attribute of omnisubjectivity, then God experiences temporal passage owing to God's having knowledge de se of the contents of the minds of conscious creatures. But God also has a unified experience of the entire spatiotemporal continuum. God's having these two perspectives creates a tension for pantheism given that God would seem to experience both temporal passage and an absence of temporal passage.

I compare two versions of pantheism: non-personal pantheism and personal pantheism and consider which one has better resources to answer the foregoing puzzle. On both, God is assumed to be identical with the universe and the universe is assumed to exhibit the sort of cognitive unity exhibited by a mind. But on personal pantheism, there is a self-other distinction between God and the discrete conscious sub-systems that are proper parts of God. I consider what a tenable personal pantheism would look like and conclude by considering some of the relative merits of non-personal versus personal pantheism as candidate naturalistic conceptions of God.

Conference Papers

Animism and Science: Harmony and Conflict

Hans Van Eyghen

Animism is often regarded as a backward view of nature surpassed by modern science. New scientific advances would have shown that plants and animals are not ensouled or endowed with some kind of elan vital, but strictly physical entities governed by the laws of physics. My aim is twofold. I argue that (1) the classical conflict between animism and science is misguided because of science's inherent reductionism and (2) that there is a genuine conflict between animism and science in science's instrumentalization of nature.

The (often tacit) argument for incompatibility between animism and science can be summarized as follows:

(1) If current scientific theories are true, plants and animals are strictly physical.
(2) Current scientific theories are true.
(3) Therefore, plants and animals are strictly physical.
(4) If plants and animals are strictly physical, animism is false.
(5) Therefore, animism is false.

I will argue against (1) and argue that current scientific theories (physics and biology in particular) do not show that plants and animals are strictly physical. Whereas plants and animals are often regarded as merely physical, this fact results from a particular stance or working-hypothesis, which is assumed in scientific practice. This stance can be regarded as reductionistic because it focuses on physical aspects of plants and animals. The reductionism is acknowledged by multiple top-scientists and philosophers of science. I argue that reductionism allows for pluralism with regard to the ontology of entities studied.

Having argued against the initial conflict, I argued that science conflicts with animism with regards to instrumentalization. In scientific practice, plants and animals are regarded as entities that may be freely used in experimental and different studies. This approach towards plants and animals does not chime well with animism where plants and animals should be treated with inherent respect.

Cartesian Animism: The Question of the Nakedness of Automaton
Ervik Cejvan

This paper discusses animism as a metaphysical position in theism. The discussion unfolds in the context of René Descartes' reconsideration of the theistic foundations of natural philosophy. On the one hand, Descartes repeats the doctrine of the distinction between soul and body. On the other hand, he insists on a clear and distinct understanding through creative engagement with the world. Descartes' diplomatic inscription of a scientific project within theistic rationality masks a heroic effort to overcome and even destroy its metaphysical edifice and its conditioning of knowledge. Descartes sought to improve the conditions of life by guiding the mind away from the metaphysical debasement of knowledge toward creativity and play, mathematical construction, and technological invention. Descartes' scientific idealism challenges the metaphysical foundations of knowledge. One such challenge, I propose, is offered by Descartes' remark on automata in the Meditations.

Drawing on Descartes' remark on automata, I propose the notion of Cartesian animism in distinction from the notion of animism as a metaphysical position in theism. The latter concerns the question of the soul, the former the question of the automaton. Although automatons may mimic animal or human behaviour and physique, such an imaginary projection does not offer the basis for accurate judgment. Imagining hats and coats covering automata, we judge them to be men, to paraphrase Descartes.

How to grasp the nakedness of automaton? Is an automaton merely a formation projecting human imagination? These questions pertain to the conceptual and theoretical approaches to technology, especially robotics and AI. The notion of animism, however, describes certain nature religions. It seems that the projection similar to the previous case is at work also here. Do we not impose a theistic concept on non-theistic religions? Do we not ascribe spirits to a special relationship with nature that we are yet to understand?

Is There a Place for Pantheism in (Post)Christian Eco-feminist Reconstruction of the God-World Relationship?

Nadja Furlan-Štante

This presentation explores the intersections that link environmental concerns and ethical issues related to understanding the relationship between nature, humans, and God from the perspective of theological ecofeminism and the possibility of intervention with the pantheistic understanding of the relationship between God and the world and consequently the understanding of the sacredness of all living natural creatures.

Ecofeminism assumes that the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature stem from the same constellation of phenomena: patriarchal domination, dualistic anthropologies, and (today) global hypercapitalism. Ecofeminism experiences patriarchy as a conflictual system based on an exploitative hierarchical relationship that displaces equality, unity, and the interconnectedness of all living beings in the web of life. It sees creation as a body that encompasses diverse ecosystems (Radford Ruether, Sally McFague). Much of ecofeminist theology assumes that being in relationship is primarily an ethical activity. This is where the core of the ecofeminist feminist ethic of relationality comes in - the interconnectedness of all beings in the web of life. From this perspective, we will examine the ecofeminist cosmology of the interconnectedness of all beings in the web of life. Ecofeminist theologians thus affirm the connection of human beings through the body to the material world, which is understood as the "web of life." The web of life is a widely used metaphor that originated in ecofeminism and poetically describes the dynamics of the collective feminine vision of a world of interconnected subjectivity. Rosemary Radford Reuther understands ecological interdependence in terms of a life-giving web as a panentheistic or transcendent-immanent web of life. This common source, she believes, nourishes and sustains a constant renewal of the natural circle of life, while empowering and connecting us to combat exploitative forms of hierarchical relationships and to strive to create renewed relationships of mutual recognition. From this vantage point, we will examine Grace M. Jatzen's defence of pantheism as an alternative to transcendent theism, as she further argues that divinity is found "in" the physical and material world-and nowhere else. We will explore the possibility of understanding pluralistic pantheism - pluralistic multiplicity (James Lovelock, Mary Jane Rubenstein) - as, at best, a bridge that undermines the separation between God and world, spirit and matter, man and woman, culture and nature, and so on.

"Grow Old with Me": Humanoid Robots and the Aging Process

Noreen Herzfeld

Aging is inevitable for biological creatures, intrinsic to the mechanisms of evolution and natural selection. It is built into our very being—each cell in our body has an expiration date as our telomeres shorten with each division. As we age, bodies weaken, beauty fades, and senses decline. Yet both the Christian and Buddhist traditions see aging as a time of spiritual growth and wisdom. Aging moves us from acquisition to relinquishment—of beauty, possessions, work, friends, and, ultimately, life itself.

What effect would relationships with humanoid robots, machines that neither age nor die, have on this aging process? While a robotic partner could remain an efficient and ever-present caregiver, as we see already in some nursing homes, relationships with humanoid robots might impair the contentment of aging, weakening our acceptance of diminishment and death. The non-aging robot might invite desperation for a similar technological immortality, a desperation the views death as "not a natural consequence but an outrage—a tragedy—to be resisted and overcome" through technological means (Waters).

While a robot cannot share our again, could it, nevertheless, have empathy? While a robot might make appropriate responses to our pain, it would become evident over time that these responses are superficial, that it cannot share nor fully understand what suffering or sorrow entail. Browning writes, ""Grow old along with me! …Our times are in His hand who saith, 'A whole I planned, youth shows but half.'" Ever youthful, humanoid robots bring to relationship only half.

Ecospirituality and the Adoption of an Ecocentric Posture

Julia Itel

Ecospirituality is a current within the nebula of "alternative spiritualities" that is widespread today and whose explicit objective is to connect with "Nature" and to engage in an ecological way of life. Using data from a multi-sited qualitative approach (interviews, observations and netnography) focused on the path of actors and based in both France and in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, my research intends to uncover the different practices and discourses implemented by the latter to connect with nature. Examples include ecopsychology, ecotherapies, neopaganism/neochamanism, botany, etc. In this paper, I will demonstrate that ecospiritual actors develop a particular sensitivity to their environment and, more broadly, to nature, which leads them to embody an ecocentric stance.

Far from being disconnected from 'modern' science (ecospirituals enrich their thinking with a great deal of scientific reading), their experience of nature, lived daily and intimately, mainly through non-rational approaches, invites them to develop an alternative knowledge system based on sensitivity and presence. Convinced that they are an intrinsic part of nature, they feel connected (and feel it deeply in their bodies!) to the whole of living things. Close to metanoia, this hyper-consciousness, of a phenomenological nature, is indicative of the existence of another ontology in modernity than the dualistic one. This paper thus proposes another way of being in modernity, neglected and scorned by the scientist hegemony, which nevertheless exists. To be modern is also to have sensitive, non-rational, embodied and non-dualistic experiences.

To Forgive a Bull

Daniel Esparza

What happens when a bull is pardoned in the arena? Domingo Ortega famously said bullfighting is "a very complex thing." Forgiveness is also complex. As Ricoeur argued, if forgiveness is difficult to give and to receive "it is just as difficult to conceive of". What does it mean, then, that the "ontologic asymmetry" bullfighting makes evident can be solved not only through death but also through forgiveness? Understanding the pardon —the indulto— the bull can be granted is then a venture that seems to be difficult twice over. Following Pérez Oramas, Bataille, and Kojève, I suggest the pardon that the bull is granted is a sacrificial action in which man recognizes if not his own continuity with the "animal darkness" Bataille refers to, at least its being-in-the-limit that separates (and, hence, unites) animality and humanity.

Technopaganism and Cyberspace Spirituality in Dystopian Video Games

Tijana Rupčić

From the beginning term, Technopaganism did not have a clear definition; however, it is usually used when describing the communities of neopagans that started using the web as a means of congregating and when talking about technological advancements in cyberspace as a new form of a spiritual dimension.

Once a niche part of the cyber community, video games today represent one of the major industries and "the combination of technology and spiritualist narratives."[1] In the cyberspaces dedicated to video game trivia, we can find intimate reports of players who claim that video games impacted them spiritually or that they felt unity with the spirit of the universe.

By analyzing four video games ("Cyberpunk 2077", "Everybody's Gone to the Rapture," "Death Stranding," and "Dreamfall Chapters") author aims to explore how spirituality and cyberspace interact in narratives that follow mentioned video games as well as the interface that pulls player deeper into the storyline.

Video games vary in styles and approaches and do not tend to support a view of one true God but are more oriented towards polytheistic and pagan spirituality. What makes afore mentioned games different and therefore interesting for examination is an intricate relationship between cyberspace, algorithmic patterns, and spirituality. The author aims to explore this unique perception of spirituality and ideas that influenced the creation of these new spiritual cyberspaces within video games, which managed to transcend into the player's reality.

Beyond the Telescope They Found Time: Remedios Varo's 'Revelación'

Menahem Marmelsztejn

Beyond The Telescope They Found Time: Remedios Varo's 'Revelación' is a an encounter with surrealist Spanish-Mexican painter Remedios Varo's dialectics of time and space, infinite and finite, creation and created, human and non-human. Drawing insights from phenomenology and philosophy of religion, the work investigates the ontological, theological, and epistemic implications of Varo's cosmological model – its alchemical roots, its queering of borders between species, and the poetics and politics of entanglement.

(Techno)Paganism: An Exploration of Animistic Relations with the Digital

Victoria Dos Santos

Technopaganism is a religious phenomenon that became popular during the '90 and was mainly characterized by the use of technological devices in practices linked to contemporary Paganism. There, the digital sphere and spiritual experiences are mutually integrated, overcoming some of the dualisms that have characterized Western modernity in relation to `the machine' and the non-human. While the notion of technopaganism eventually started to lose its popularity during the first decade of the 2000s, many contemporary practices - directly or implicitly understood as technopagan - continue to characterize the online context, observable especially in virtual reality platforms and video games.

These expressions of technopaganism in the digital environment continue to engage in a variety of practices existing in contemporary paganism, but rewriting the ways in which the digital non-human reality is conceived and, therefore, allowing intimate

and nonutilitarian relationships with it. Such practices answer to a relational strategy that echoes profoundly in the notion of new animism, where beings and environments are not ontologically separated even if there are distinctive and clear differences among them. Animism usually seeks for a 'two-way' relation with the other-than-human beings instead of a 'one-way' mechanical approach.

In this presentation, we will explore contemporary expressions which are directly or implicitly connected to the notion of technopaganism, and analyse how animism can be perceived in practices of religious nature taking place online. With the help of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and posthumanist reflections on human-machine relationships, I will present a fresh reinterpretation of animism which can help us understand the ways in which technopaganism challenges the instrumental approaches to computational media. In such a way, the digital is considered as a genuine environment that we inhabit and can, therefore, be perceived also as a place that can welcome the sacred and religious transformations.

Indexing Racialized Bodies in the Animist Internet

Devin Proctor

What does it mean to have race without a body? This paper asks, specifically: What does it mean to be "white" in digital spaces where your only form is an index to a body elsewhere in non-digital space? By tracing the definitions and performances of "whiteness" in online white-power extremist sites—where the purported race of members is stringently policed—I explore how groups can culturally construct racial identity in the non-bodied space of the Internet. This study builds from a foundational theoretical assertion—cybernetic animism—which argues that the contemporary landscape of near-ubiquitous Internet mediation has introduced people in the Western world (i.e., Global North/Industrialized Societies) into an animistic experience of Being. Similar to how people in more traditionally defined animist worldviews exist within an ecology of spirits and non-human entities in nature, those in the West practice daily life among virtual non-human agents of the digital: bots, algorithmic search logics, and AI personal assistants. Mainstream Western culture, however, does not have the cultural vocabulary (e.g., magic, spirits, kinship with natural elements) to recognize this type of virtuality as an animistic relationship. What we do have are the virtualities of language and Internet technology. Thus, our existence in this cybernetic animist paradigm is semiotic in nature; indexical to our bodies, "pointing to" a body somewhere else, rather than a type of embodiment. Race, it would seem, has no place here, so how does it reassert itself among those for whom it is singularly important to their identities?

On Nexum Metaphyicum in Schopenhauer

Lenart Škof

Based on the teachings of Amalric of Bena (1150–1206/07), Giorgio Agamben argues pantheistically in The Coming Community (La communità che viene) that »God is all in all«and, as a consequence, that »the pure transcendent is the taking-place of every thing«. For Agamben, thus, the being-worm of the worm, and the being-stone of the stone, are both equally divine. Based on this idiosnycratic and obscure teaching we will focus on Schopenhauer's 1854 work On Will in Nature (Über den Willen in der Natur) and point to the importance of this German thinker for what we will call a new ontology of the post-Christianity. According to Schopenhauer, and as based on his doctrine of the Will, there is a continuity in nature between both the anorganic and organic realms, and his metaphysics of the Will thus installs a strong semantical bridge between natural sciences (in particular quantum theory), philosophy of nature and religion. For Schopenhauer, following Angelus Silesius here, in case that, per impossible, even the slightest single being were entirely annihilated, the world itself would inevitably be destroyed with it. In this presentation we will elaborate on the hidden or subterranean connection in Schopenhauer, called nexum metaphysicum and understood it as a principle of synchronicity, enabling to interpret Schopenhauer's philosophy in light of the contemporary views on natural religion(s), quantum entanglement of matter (Catherine Keller) and, finally, a potential of Schopenhuer's pantheistic philosophy of nature for theology.

Hot and Cold Pantheism: A Science and Religion Perspective

Gorazd Andrejč

Talking of pantheism as lived religion can be tricky since pantheist belief is normally combined with elements which tend to 'take over' in lived religious practices and identities - pantheism can be combined with such different forms of life as Paganism, Liberal Christianity, or a self-consciously non-religious lifestyle. Nevertheless, it makes sense to analyse both the religious/experiential as well as intellectual "drives" which tend to bring people towards pantheism. In this sense, we can talk of hot and cold pantheism. The former is marked by pantheist spirituality intertwined with experiential nature religion and (often) animist sensibility, while the latter is a recognizably rationalist, intellectual(ized) form of pantheism which focuses or rests on a more detached reflection about the nature of god and the world.

In this paper, I approach these two forms of pantheism and the relationship between them from a Wittgensteinian Nonoverlapping Magisteria (NOMA) perspective on science and religion. After briefly responding to the most frequent criticisms of NOMA, I will explain the Wittgensteinian NOMA approach as that which emphasises the importance of the categorial difference between religious/spiritual beliefs, claims or interpretations of the world on the one hand, and the scientific ones on the other. From such a perspective, a natural-theological approach to arguing for pantheism does not work for similar reasons such an approach does not work for theism or any other theological interpretation of the world, although this does not entail that all of them are equally reasonable or equally compatible with science.

NOMA puts significant limitations on both cold and hot pantheism and the ways they can combine. For one thing, both have to recognize its reliance on 'preaching' and give up natural-theological ambitions (strongly understood) in order to remain credible. The resolute affirmation of natural sciences that we often find in contemporary naturalistic pantheism and which is sometimes emphasised as its distinctive trait among religious/spiritual perspectives, needs to be done with due caution in order not to misrepresent pantheism as logically following from scientific claims or theories - as the very name 'scientific pantheism', used by Paul Harrison and the World Pantheism movement, for example, tends to do.

Keynote Lecturers

Andrei Buckareff

Andrei A. Buckareff is Professor of Philosophy and Co-Director of the Cognitive Science Program, at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Marist College, USA.

His research interests focus on issues related to the ontological foundations of action theory, working out the implications of an ontology of causal powers for how we think about human action and agency, and pantheism. He is the author of *Pantheism* (2022), and an editor of *Causing Human Actions: New Perspectives on the Causal Theory of Action* (2010, with J.H. Aguilar), and *Alternative Concepts of God: Essays on the Metaphysics of the Divine* (2016, with Y. Nagasawa).

Katherine Swancutt

Katherine Swancutt is Reader in Social Anthropology and Director of the Religious and Ethnic Diversity in China and Asia Research Unit at King's College London. She has conducted anthropological fieldwork across Inner Asia for more than two decades, writing extensively on shamanism and animism in China and Mongolia, and is currently Project Lead of the European Research Council Synergy Grant 'Cosmological Visionaries: Shamans, Scientists, and Climate Change at the Ethnic Borderlands of China and Russia'. Author of *Fortune and the Cursed: The Sliding Scale of Time in Mongolian Divination* (Berghahn, 2012), she is co-editor of *Animism Beyond the Soul: Ontology, Reflexivity, and the Making of Anthropological Knowledge* (Social Analysis, special issue 2016 and Berghahn, 2018), editor of *Crafting Chinese Memories: The Art and Materiality of Storytelling* (Berghahn, 2021), and editor of *Demons and Gods on Display: The Anthropology of Display and Worldmaking* (Asian Ethnology, special issue forthcoming in 2023).

Kocku von Stuckrad

Kocku von Stuckrad is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Groningen, and a co-founder and co-director of Counterpoint: Navigating Knowledge, a research center and information hub, located at the interface of academic and non-academic knowledge practices and traditions.He has published extensively on topics related to the cultural history of religion, science, and philosophy in Europe and North America. He is the autor of *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge* (2005), *The Scientification of Religion: An Historical Study of Discursive Change, 1800-2000* (2015), and *A Cultural History of the Soul: Europe and North America from 1870 to the Present* (2022).

Victor Krebs

Victor J. Krebs is Professor of Philosophy at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, and coordinator of Hermes, a contemporary philosophy research group at the Center of Philosophical Studies. His current work is focused on Philosophy of Technology, Psychoanalysis and the Philosophy of Language. He is the author of: *Del alma y el arte* (1998), *La recuperación del sentido* (2008), *La imaginación pornográfica* (2014), and co-author (with Richard Frankel) of *Human Virtuality and Digital Life: Philosophical and Psychoanalytic Investigations* (Routledge 2022).

Conference Paper Presenters

Daniel Esparza
Dr. Daniel Esparza is Professor and Researcher at the Ramon Llull University.

Devin Proctor
Dr. Devin Proctor is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Elon University.

Ervik Cejvan
Ervik Cejvan is a researcher in philosophy of religion, affiliated at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University.

Hans Van Eyghen
Hans Van Eyghen is Assistent professor of philosophy at Tilburg University.

Gorazd Andrejč
Gorazd Andrejč is Assistant Professor of Philosophy of Religion at the University of Groningen, and Researcher at the Science and Research Centre of Koper.

Julia Itel
Ph.D. Candidate in Religious Studies, University of Fribourg (Switzerland).

Lenart Škof
Lenart Škof is Professor of Philosophy and Head of the Institute for Philosophical Studies at the Science and Research Centre of Koper.

Menahem Marmelsztejn
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Science and Research Centre of Koper
www.zrs-kp.si/index.php/en/institutes-units/ips/

Centre for Religion, Health and Wellbeing
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen
www.rug.nl/research/centre-for-religious-studies/research-centres/centre-religion-health-wellbeing/

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