



Humans and Other Animals: Multifaith Responses to the Significance and Symbolism of Animals in Science and Religion Dialogue



Conference Programme & Abstracts

**Westminster College, Cambridge
31st August– 2nd September 2023**



Schedule Day 1 Thursday 31st August

	Healey Room	Senatus Room	Assembly Room
12:00 – 13:00		<i>COMMITTEE MEETING (including lunch)</i>	
13:00 – 14:15	REGISTRATION (in Foyer)		
14:15 – 14:30	Opening Remarks		
14:30 – 15:00	PAPER 1: Loneliness or Solitude? The Symbolic Value of Leaving Wildlife Alone	PAPER 2: Humanimals of Earth: an ethical perspective on wholeness in the dialogue between quantum mechanics and Buddhist philosophy	PAPER 3: The Continuity of Creaturely Death in the New Creation
15:00 – 15:30	NEW VOICES 2: Science as Ancilla Theologiae? A Critical Appraisal of Nature as Creation in Alister McGrath's Scientific Theology		
	NEW VOICES 1: The Shoulders of Giants: Influence of Christian Heresy Catalogues on Isaac Newton's Rhetoric		
REFRESHMENTS (in Dining Hall)			
16:00 – 17:15	KEYNOTE 1: 'We See in a Glass Darkly: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Virtue and Vice Beyond the Species Boundary'.		
17:30 – 18:00	Peacocke Prize Awards Including Sixth Form Commended Entry Presentation & Q&A: Do Humans Have An Enduring Self? <i>Apianka Ananthavadivel</i>		
DINNER (served 18:00 – 19:00) Paying Bar Available (18:00 – 21:00) Both in Dining Hall			
19:30 – 21:30	GOWLAND LECTURE: From Larvae to Leviathan: Living with Animals in the Book of Job		



Schedule Day 2 Friday 1st September

	Healey Room	Senatus Room	Assembly Room
	BREAKFAST (served 7:30 – 9:00)		REGISTRATION for new attendees (in Foyer 8:30 – 9:00)
9:15 – 10:30	KEYNOTE 2: Should Commodities Flourish? Farmed Animals, Christian Ethics, and Veterinary Behavioural Science		
REFRESHMENTS (in Dining Hall)			
11:00 -11:30	PAPER 4: Imagining, Imitating, and Being	PAPER 5: 'Dominion' and 'Subjugation': Whither and Whence	PAPER 6: The use of brain-machine interfaces (BMIs) in human and non-human beings: philosophical-theological implications for morality
11:45 – 12:45	PAPER 7: Nonhuman Im/morality and Nonhuman Sin	PAPER 8: The Spiritual Consequences of Global Biodiversity Loss: A Theological Exploration	PAPER 9: Among the Animals? The Human-Animal Distinction in (Christian) Theological Anthropology
	PAPER 10: Do animals laugh and/or cry? Exploring the question within Quran and hadiths commentaries	PAPER 11: "You have made them equal to us": Using Psychology to Examine Religious Resistance to Animal Rights	PAPER 12: Should We Call Planet Earth Sacred – and What Difference Would That Make?
LUNCH (Served 13:00 – 13:30)			
13:40 – 14:55	KEYNOTE 3: Explorations of the Non-Human in Global Histories of Evolution and Religion		
15:10 – 15:40	PAPER 13: Indigenous Religious Myths of Sustainable Future for Human and Nonhuman Animals: A Yorùbá Worldview	PAPER 14: The Deity no longer Combats the Tiger: Transformation of a Syncretic deity to a Hindu Goddess	PAPER 15: Non-human Animal Symbolism in the Qur'ān : A Modern exegesis of Qur'ānic Verses Based on the Mother Archetype by Carl Gustav Jung
REFRESHMENTS (in Dining Hall)			
16:00 – 17:15	KEYNOTE 4: Learning from the Crows: Worship and Wisdom with the Birds in the Hebrew Bible		
17:30 – 18:00	PAPER 17: Taking the Non-Research-Oriented Sciences Seriously in Religion-and-Science	PAPER 16: Public knowledge of primates: results of a survey and a proposal for a new project	
DINNER (served 18:00 – 19:00) Paying Bar Available (18:00 – 21:00) Both in Dining Hall			
19:30 – 20:00	After Dinner Speaker: Revd Canon Dr Vicky Johnson, Canon Precentor York Minster (Dining Hall)		

Schedule day 3 Saturday 2nd September

	Healey Room	Senatus Room	Assembly Room
	BREAKFAST (served 7:30 – 9:00)		REGISTRATION for new attendees (in Foyer 8:30 – 9:00)
9:15 – 10:30	KEYNOTE 5: Future Togetherness: Drawing Inspiration from Teilhard de Chardin		
REFRESHMENTS (in Dining Hall)			
11:00 -11:30		PAPER 18: Plato and the animals: What is the purpose of philosophy in an age of environmental crisis?	PAPER 19: What kind of man is this? a biological ecclesiology of the Body of Christ
11:45 – 13:00	KEYNOTE 6: Animals and Ancient Religion: What can Prehistoric Art Tell Us?		
LUNCH (Served 13:00 – 13:30)			
13:45 – 14:45		<i>FORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Members Only</i>	
15:00 – 15:45	PEACOCKE STUDENT ESSAY PRIZE: How to Say Thou to a Conscious Machine		
15:45 – 16:15	Closing Remarks		
REFRESHMENTS (in Dining Hall)			



2023 Gowland Lecture

GOWLAND LECTURE: From Larvae to Leviathan: Living with Animals in the Book of Job

Lecturer: Dr Suzanna Millar & Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg (Responding)

ABSTRACT: In the beginning, God created humans to have dominion over other animals... This simplification of Genesis 1 is sometimes thought to epitomise the “biblical” perspective on human-nonhuman relations. But later in the Bible comes another depiction of the cosmos and its faunal life, one which radically decentres humanity. In the Book of Job, a creation-loving God celebrates the wild creatures beyond the human ken, including the monstrous Behemoth and Leviathan. Earlier in the book, Job himself ruminates on the maggots which infest his deteriorating body, the wisdom of birds and fish, and the lion-like predilections of his God. This paper will explore this animal menagerie, discerning a tension in Job between identifying with other creatures and recognising their radical otherness. Guided by Job, it imagines alternative possibilities of living with other animals, from larvae to Leviathan.



Suzanna Millar is a Chancellor's Fellow in Hebrew Bible / Old Testament at the University of Edinburgh. Her first monograph – Genre and Openness in Proverbs 10:1-22:16 – came out with SBL Press in 2020. Her main research interest is in the roles and representations of nonhuman animals in biblical texts, and she is currently working on her second monograph, provisionally entitled Animals and Power in the Books of Samuel. She is editing a forthcoming Oxford Handbook of the Bible and Animals, and is a co-chair of research units around animal studies for the European Association of Biblical Studies and Society of Biblical Literature.

Jonathan Wittenberg is Senior Rabbi of the New North London Synagogue and Masorti Judaism UK. He has always had a deep love of nature and has been increasingly involved in environmental work, from tree planting to campaigning. He is a co-founder of EcoJudaism, which, learning from Eco Church, guides communities on a journey towards reducing their carbon footprint and engaging in local and national climate and biodiversity work. He writes and broadcasts widely, including on Radio 4's Prayer for the Day and Thought for the Day.



Join the Gowland Lecture online live, and take part in the Q&A: <https://youtube.com/live/v4iwf6QSCC4>



Keynote Lectures

KEYNOTE 1: 'We See in a Glass Darkly: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Virtue and Vice Beyond the Species Boundary'

SRF Vice President Dr Celia Deane-Drummond

ABSTRACT: This lecture will argue that a close analysis of animal ethology enables a richer understanding of humanity's basic tendencies for good or ill, expressed in the twin concepts of virtues and vices. Human morality is not added on to an otherwise brutish nature, rather, it has co-evolved with other animal species, many of whom have sophisticated social lives and associated rules for that behaviour. By way of illustration, I will consider fairness/justice and deception/lying as just two examples of virtue and vice, which illuminate the distinctiveness yet commonality between species. I will also discuss both the risks and benefits of anthropomorphizing to try and understand animal behaviour alongside the philosophical issues that arise when doing so.

*Celia Deane-Drummond is currently Director of the Laudato Si' Research Institute and Senior Research Fellow at Campion Hall, University of Oxford. She is honorary Visiting Professor in Theology at the University of Durham, UK. Her work at the interface of theology, ethics and the biological and human sciences stems from her prior academic experience in plant physiology. She is a trustee of the International Society for Science and Religion (ISSR). She was chair of the European Forum for the Study of Religion and Environment from 2011-2018. She received the Civitas Dei award from Villanova University in 2020. She has published hundreds of academic, pedagogical or popular articles/chapters and either written or edited 33 books. Her recent single author book publications include, *The Wisdom of the Liminal: Human Nature, Evolution and Other Animals* (2014), *The Evolution of Wisdom Volume I: Theological Ethics Through a Multispecies Lens* (2019) and *Shadow Sophia: The Evolution of Wisdom Volume II* (2021).*



KEYNOTE 2: Should Commodities Flourish? Farmed Animals, Christian Ethics, and Veterinary Behavioural Science

Dr Margaret B. Adam

ABSTRACT: What counts as high, poor, or good-enough farmed animal welfare? How much improvement in welfare is worth paying for, especially when these are animals who exist only because of their value for human consumption?

Recent research in Christian Ethics draws on biblical, theological, and political Christian resources to argue that farmed animals should be cared for in ways that promote their flourishing, even as they are commodified for human benefit. Christian Ethics also draws on recent research in Veterinary Behavioural Science that assesses farmed animals' cognitive processes, preferences, and expressions of comfort and stress, and identifies what animal husbandry practices help animals thrive. These theological and scientific descriptions of farmed animal flourishing undermine justifications for good-enough welfare standards. Farmed animals should flourish. The commodification of animals for human pleasure should not take precedence over ethical and behavioural recommendations for animal—and human—flourishing.

Margaret is a Christian Ethicist interested in the intersections of Christian doctrine and daily life practices. Her PhD is from Duke University, and she has taught at Loyola University Baltimore, University of Glasgow, and University of Chester, as well as Anglican seminaries in Edinburgh, Salisbury, and—currently—St Stephen's House, Oxford. Recently, she has been the post-doctoral research fellow for the AHRC-funded Christian Ethics of Farmed Animal Welfare project, drawing on animal research and theological resources to develop a policy framework for Christian institutions and materials for school teachers. Margaret is passionate about murder (fictional), beginning and ending of life ethics (real), chocolate, puzzles, and her two little rescue dogs.



KEYNOTE 3: Explorations of the Non-Human in Global Histories of Evolution and Religion

Dr Alexander Hall

ABSTRACT: Across diverse national and religious contexts, the depiction of animals has been central to how both evolution and religion have been communicated in popular media. Whether being used to popularise harmony or conflict between science and religion, or simply to communicate evolutionary science to religious communities, in this keynote talk, the historian of science, Dr Alexander Hall will reflect on the function of the non-human in popular representations of evolution and religion.

Drawing on cutting-edge scholarship from an exciting forthcoming volume, *Most Adaptable to Change: Evolution and Religion in Global Popular Media*, Dr Hall will introduce diverse case studies from considering evolution/religion in Japanese anime, to the history of feral children in India. By connecting these case studies to wider trends in scholarship on the history of science and religion, Dr Hall will argue that for global histories of science and religion to incorporate complexity, while also remaining comparatively useful, scholarship must centre local cultural perspectives, whether through the nuance of local religious denominations, media structures, or a societies' cultural affinity with animals.



*Alexander Hall is an [Assistant Professor in Science Communication](#) at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada. Dr Hall is a historian of science whose work combines mixed-methods research and science communication practice to better understand the development of popular science media and the public understanding of science in society. Dr Hall was previously a Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham on the large-multidisciplinary project, *Science and Religion: Exploring the Spectrum*. His 2021 monograph, [Evolution on British Television and Radio](#) explored how religion, philosophy and other secular worldviews have shaped the way that evolution has been communicated via broadcast media. Dr. Hall is a co-founder of the [International Research Network for the Study of Science & Belief in Society](#), and a former History of Science Section Recorder for the British Science Association.*

KEYNOTE 4: Learning from the Crows: Worship and Wisdom with the Birds in the Hebrew Bible

Dr Peter Altmann

ABSTRACT: This paper reflects on the variable roles of animals, especially birds, take as models, mentors, and intermediaries between humans and the divine in the Hebrew Bible. Beginning with the murky dietary prohibitions of various flyers, it investigates this heightened human-animal relationship as a topos for imagining divine presence and guidance (and their limits) in the rejection and embrace of various types of human engagement with animals.



*Peter Altmann just began as the David Allen Hubbard Associate Professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena). He completed his doctorate in biblical studies from Princeton Theological Seminary in 2010 on the topic of *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel: Deuteronomy's Identity Politics in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context*. He has since worked as a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Zurich, where his scholarship has focused on issues of economics, food, and the reception of law in ancient Israel and early Judaism. His publications include the monographs *Banned Birds: The Birds of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14* (2019) and *Economics in Persian-Period Biblical Texts* (2016).*



KEYNOTE 5: Future Togetherness: Drawing Inspiration from Teilhard de Chardin

Dr Louis Caruana SJ

ABSTRACT: Current literature on transhumanism explores technological innovations that impact the individual and society. Questions deal with enhancement, extended lifetime, cyborgs, the transfer of minds into mechanical bodies, super machine intelligence, and so on. What is typically missing in such accounts are attempts to foresee the kind of future togetherness that is not limited to human society but includes other species. Accordingly, this paper begins to fill this gap by drawing some insights from the work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. After clarifying some of his philosophical presuppositions, the paper focuses on two keywords: cephalization and socialization. The former refers to the evolutionary trend in which, over many generations, the mouth, sense organs, and nerves become concentrated at the front end of an animal, producing a head region. For Teilhard, this trend indicates that humans are like the head of the biosphere, taken as a whole. The second keyword, socialization, refers to the direction human betterment must take, given the empirical evidence. This paper argues that these two positions can be brought together by highlighting how the responsibility associated with being the head of the biosphere entails accepting a kind of communitarian progress that includes other species. The paper concludes by proposing some innovative concepts to articulate what is at stake in such responsibility.



Louis Caruana started his education with a first degree in mathematics and physics, and then proceeded with a master's degree in philosophy (London) and another one in theology (Paris). He was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1991 and then obtained his doctorate at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. He is now Professor at the Philosophy Faculty of the Gregorian University in Rome and Adjunct Scholar at the Vatican Observatory. From 2005 to 2013, he was at Heythrop College, University of London, where he was appointed Reader in 2013. From 2014 to 2020, he served as Dean of the Faculty in Rome, and in 2020, he was the holder of the St Ignatius Loyola Chair at Fordham University, New York. His research deals with the interaction between philosophy of science, philosophy of nature, metaphysics, and philosophy of religion.

KEYNOTE 6: Animals and Ancient Religion: What can Prehistoric Art Tell Us?

Dr Anne Solomon

ABSTRACT: Images of animals predominate in Palaeolithic cave paintings in Europe and are prominent in rock arts worldwide. Initially the Palaeolithic art was regarded as secular, but that changed in the late nineteenth/ early twentieth century when thinking shifted, to understand it in relation to 'magic' – and religion. No longer were animal images seen as pictures of dinner. Investigations of the significance of animal depictions has invoked various types of religious systems and practices, such as shamanism and totemism. In recent years, many researchers have embraced 'new animism' in interpretation. Researchers have long relied on accounts of hunter-gatherer religions (such as that of indigenous Australians). But how apt is this? This can be evaluated by considering the well-documented hunter-gatherer rock art of southern Africa and the extensive allied ethnographies that illustrate the particular role(s) of animals in the imagination of the rock artists.



Anne Solomon is an archaeologist specialising in southern African rock art and hunter-gatherer ethnographies, myth and lore. She was awarded her Ph.D. by the University of Cape Town in 1995, and thereafter received a Post-doctoral Research Fellowship from the Getty Centre for the History of Art and the Humanities, Los Angeles. She formerly worked at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum as a Senior Curator (Archaeology). Her work has (twice) appeared in Scientific American. Her ongoing interests include understanding southern African rock art and myth in phenomenological terms as 'artistic' works, rooted in human creativity and imagination, rather than as historical records or products of neurological 'hard-wiring'.



PEACOCKE STUDENT ESSAY PRIZE: How to Say Thou to a Conscious Machine

Andrew Proudfoot

ABSTRACT: With the release of Open AI's Chat GPT, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been made available to the general public, thus confirming its transition from science fiction to science fact. With their ability to emulate human responses in any dialogue, some people even seek to build a relationship with AI-powered chatbots. However, for all their impressive command of language, something fundamental is missing: there is no one "at home" with whom to have a relationship with. Whether computers will forever lack the consciousness required to enable true relationship remains contentious, and theological engagement with the possibility has been sparse. In this essay I attempt to redress this by assuming *arguendo* that conscious machines will arise, and by asking what type of relationship it would be appropriate to have with them. Using the relational framework of Martin Buber as a guide, I will show that the allowances Buber makes for I Thou encounter between dissimilar entities enables legitimate asymmetrical I Thou encounters between humans and conscious machines, but highlights our responsibility to nurture these machines into the I Thou world. The alterity of such machines and concomitant lack of mutuality with humans would mean they could not be substitutes for humans, but if their level of consciousness reaches Buber's threshold of creating a mental world of independent agents, then it will be possible to say Thou to a conscious machine.



Andrew Proudfoot is a PhD student in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Nottingham under Michael Burdett. Andrew graduated in Computer Science from the University of Strathclyde in 1984, after which he pursued a career applying computers and robotics to automate real-world processes. Andrew has always been fascinated by the prospect of Artificial Intelligence. Seeing little positive engagement from theologians with the possibility of artificial consciousness, he took the opportunity to step back from his commercial career to investigate this more thoroughly. After gaining his MA in Systematic and Philosophical Theology from Nottingham in 2022, Andrew is continuing his research into the theological implications of artificial consciousness at doctoral level. He is currently investigating possible metaphysical frameworks which would allow for consciousness in an artefact and be consistent with orthodox Christian belief.



Short Papers

PAPER 1: Loneliness or Solitude? The Symbolic Value of Leaving Wildlife Alone

Andrea Villalba Cuesta; The University of Texas at Austin

ABSTRACT: Self-isolation is the norm for some non-human animals, including blue whales, snow leopards, and orangutans. Their choice to live in *solitude*, outside of essential activities like eating and breeding, contrasts strikingly with the human need for connection. Unsurprisingly, recent work on animal-human relations has focused on *loneliness*. For example, Thomas Berry (2015) predicts an existential crisis of loneliness in response to the perishing of non-human animals. As Berry himself acknowledges, our need for more-than-human companionship is nothing new. It echoes the message put across by Chief Seattle, leader of the Suquamish and Duwamish Native American tribes, in 1854: "Humans would die of loneliness" without non-human animals.

While our aversion to loneliness informs efforts to meet the crises of species extinction and biodiversity loss, it can't explain the value of leaving wildlife alone - notably, its symbolic value. For that, we would need to take a closer look at solitude. Drawing on work by Robert Merrihew Adams (1997), I argue that the symbolic value of letting non-human animals be wild derives from the opportunity to testify, not just *about* something, but *for* or *against* something. After discussing several possibilities of what this could be, I suggest an answer: "ethical solitude." In this manner, I argue that Berry's view of non-human animals as "subjects to be communed with" is incomplete. Non-human animals may prefer communion with themselves.

PAPER 2: Humanimals of Earth: an ethical perspective on wholeness in the dialogue between quantum mechanics and Buddhist philosophy

Allan Furic; University of Edinburgh

ABSTRACT: This paper stems from some preliminary reflections of a doctoral research focused on theories of the whole in the dialogue between quantum mechanics and Buddhist philosophy. More specifically, the paper intends to investigate the relation between physicist David Bohm's ontological 'implicate order' of reality and the *Huayan* school of Chinese Buddhism, and to extract thereof an ethical stance on human-animal relationship. Both strands of thought share a commonality of the preponderance of the whole, understood as a process of reality and respectively expressed through the underlying unbroken wholeness of the implicate order by Bohm and interpenetration in *Huayan* philosophy. Although caution needs to be exerted when establishing such convergence of ideas – owing to the multifarious differences in methodologies, concepts, and languages in both fields of inquiry – a recurring and pervasive 'principle of wholeness' can be inferred from this dialogue, which constitutes but one exemplification of the phenomenon of wholeness of reality. In turn, this principle of wholeness, despite being theoretical as it stands, can be interpreted in an ethical way, providing a muchneeded heuristic tool to encourage a revision of humanimal relationships, nurtured by a revived moral dedication. Indeed, in a fundamentally interconnected universe, animals no longer represent an unfathomable and controllable 'other', but become an instance of a reciprocal togetherness, an echo of the undifferentiated whole. As such, the argument will be expressed in three parts: first, attention will be given to how Bohm and *Huayan* Buddhism each promote a holistic reading of nature, thereby reinforcing a 'similar intuition' for wholeness; then the ethical viewpoint emerging out of this dialogue will be laid out; finally, some potential objections and immediate drawbacks will be identified and, it is hoped, countered.



PAPER 3: The Continuity of Creaturely Death in the New Creation

Daniel Button

ABSTRACT: Based on the typically broad interpretation of Rev 21:4 'there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away', Christian eschatology generally assumes a complete end to physical death. Although rarely discussed, by extension this is taken to apply not only to humans but to all living things – animals, birds, fish, plants, even microbial life – because death itself is universally abolished in the new creation. This entails a static state in which participants in the 'new creation' no longer change, grow, develop, consume, replace, reproduce, etc. If all life consumes other life to survive and reproduce, then 'no more death' must imply a radical change in the very nature of life. Polkinghorne and other scientist-theologians suggest precisely such a radically transformed state of all matter. But a narrower, more contextual reading calls this into question. The passage is specifically focussed on human beings, physical death is intrinsically part of a 'good creation', and the 'end of death' refers to the spiritual separation from God which has plagued humanity since the advent of sin in the Garden. This separation is finally resolved in the joining together of heaven and earth and the dwelling of God once more with his resurrected people - a new order of things indeed.

What then of death in animals? If animals are not in mind here, then human resurrection is a unique exception, but the eschatological picture of new creation entails a far greater *continuity* of natural life and death than is usually anticipated. This paper explores the continuity of creaturely death from creation to new creation, postulating that new creation is not static, but abundant life, filled with growth, change, dynamism, and evolutionary continuity – and therefore by necessity – death. Physical death in such a scenario is not detrimental, but rather a life-giving and life-sustaining component of eternal life, part of God's plan for all of creation. Such a view opens a new vista of eschatological thinking, but also implies a contingent relationship between creaturely life in the present and the future, such that biodiversity loss and extinctions today will impact deeply on the nature of the new creation to come.

PAPER 4: Imagining, Imitating, and Being

Gavin Hitchcock

ABSTRACT: Drawing from a comparative analysis of the respective disciplines of mathematics, science and art, this talk will consider the nature of human creativity and how it relates to the apparent 'creativity' of other animals on the one hand, and of artificial intelligences (AIs) on the other hand. Imagining fantastic beasts and other worlds – including abstract mathematical worlds, humans exhibit and exercise the god-like capacities of the *Imago Dei* of Genesis 1, where the honour and responsibility of stewardship in Nature comes along with the gift of creativity. The mandate to 'name the animals' has been taken as a challenge to humans to study animals scientifically; but it also challenges us to enter imaginatively into the world and living experience of the animal. And 'being a beast' in loving imaginative identification is infinitely harder than studying the beast objectively.

Since Nature provides the raw material for our science and our art, and also our understanding of ourselves, we explore the question of how imitation can lead to transcendence. 'Nothing is invented, for it's written in nature first. Originality consists of returning to the origin' (Antonio Gaudi). And yet: 'ideas are almost like aliens trying to come into the real world, and we're just pregnant with them' (Francis Pedraza). A pure mathematician may resonate with Pedraza rather than Gaudi. We will show that all creative work, mathematics included, begins with imitation, reflection, and assimilation (in the metaphors of C. S. Lewis) but transcends these in the production of genuine novelty. 'The image of the artist and the poet is imprinted more clearly on his works than on his children' (Nicholas Berdyaev). We consider (following Dorothy L. Sayers) the striking analogy between the mind of the human artist and the mind of the Trinitarian Creator

God as formulated in the Christian creeds. In our best artistic work we come closest to *creatio ex nihilo*. We consider whether this distinguishes humans from other animals in kind or degree. In any case, it is a critical demarcation from AIs, which are in some sense in *Imago hominis* and may even present as conscious, self-aware, thinking or loving creatures. 'Being a beast' and 'being a human' may be compared; can 'being a machine' have any meaning at all?

PAPER 5: 'Dominion' and 'Subjugation': Whither and Whence

Rebecca Watson; University of Cambridge

ABSTRACT: The language of 'dominion' and 'subjugation' Gen. 1:26,28 prompts one of three responses: assertion of human dominance and entitlement, repudiation and critique, or retrieval. Even the latter is not unproblematic, since the notion of 'stewardship' is not native to Genesis 1 and, like the idea of continuing God's work of subduing chaos, is itself predicated on human superiority and control. This paper offers a careful semantic study of the Hebrew terminology by considering other occurrences of these lexemes. It then reads Gen. 1:26,28 against its socio-cultural background (and, if time permits, together with other texts such as Genesis 9, Isa. 11:1-9, 65:17-25, Ezek. 34:25, Lev. 26:3-13) to argue that 'have dominion' and 'subdue' are fair translations of the Hebrew but that this is expressed from a position of weakness. It is then argued that just as Genesis 1 and 2 offer contrasting aspects of God as both exalted above the earth and as intimately connected with it, so also they offer parallels in their understanding of humanity. The 'blessings' of Genesis 1 offer a counterbalance to the human limitations and 'curses' in the following origins story so that in combination the two accounts reflect the paradoxical nature of human existence. This encompasses both the struggle to survive and thrive in the ancient world and God's blessing on and through humanity. The paper concludes by drawing implications for the present context of the position of humanity vis-à-vis God and other creatures, concerning human power, vulnerability and limitation, and responsibility.

PAPER 6: The use of brain-machine interfaces (BMIs) in human and non-human beings: philosophical-theological implications for morality

Luca Settimo; University of Nottingham

ABSTRACT: This paper aims to reflect on the philosophical-theological implications deriving from scientific evidence in relation to the use of brain-machine interfaces (BMIs). Nowadays, human beings who suffer paralysis of their limbs are in fact able to move their artificial limbs by using BMIs through the thoughts in their brain. By reflecting on the use of BMIs in relation to criminal responsibility, Nita Farahany (a legal and ethics scholar) has distinguished freedom of choice (which is the freedom of generating and imagining all sorts of ideas in our head) from the freedom of action (the freedom of deciding to actually carry out the action which was contemplated as the result of the freedom of choice). Farahany argues for the key role played by freedom of action (rather than freedom of choice) to account for legal and moral responsibility. However, it has been demonstrated that, similarly to human beings, also monkeys can use BMIs to perform their desired movements with robotic arms; I will discuss these studies and argue that also non-human beings actualise their intended actions by deliberating through their freedom of action. This strongly suggests that morality is not a uniquely human phenomenon but it is present, although to a much lesser extent, also in non-human creatures. Thus, arguably, what distinguishes human and nonhuman beings is not a difference of kind but of degree in the ability to reason and make moral choices. I will argue that this has also an impact on the way we describe the notion of *imago Dei*.



PAPER 7: Nonhuman Im/morality and Nonhuman Sin

Ellen Grace Lesser; University of Exeter

ABSTRACT: The doctrine of sin is one of the most important doctrines in Christian theology. Much like many Christian doctrines, it has not been spared historical anthropocentrism. Christian theologians are largely of the opinion that sin is an exclusively human phenomenon, for a variety of reasons. Yet while this is an overwhelmingly popular opinion in Christian theology, it is not a universal one. Some Christian theologians working on the theology of nonhuman animals argue that nonhuman sin is indeed possible. A prominent figure in this regard is David Clough, who uses the example of chimpanzee infanticide and cannibalism to argue for the presence of sin among, at least, nonhuman primates. Clough's discussion of nonhuman sin, however, is inextricably linked with morality and, to a lesser extent, legality. The actions often identified as sinful among nonhuman animals - such as but not limited to murder and cannibalism - are usually identified as sinful because they are considered immoral in the human societies of the theologians writing about nonhuman animals. There is an assumption in Christian theology that one must first prove the possibility of nonhuman im/morality before one can prove the possibility of nonhuman sin. Biologists and philosophers such as Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce, as well as Frans de Waal, have investigated the possibility of nonhuman im/morality and have argued that nonhuman animals do indeed exhibit behaviour(s) which can be described using the language of morality. I argue that such discussion of the possibility of nonhuman im/morality is unnecessary when attempting to establish the possibility of nonhuman sin. Rather, I argue that sin and im/morality are two different categories: the former theological and the latter philosophical. Nonhuman sin is possible even if nonhuman im/morality is not.

PAPER 8: The Spiritual Consequences of Global Biodiversity Loss: A Theological Exploration

Eva van Urk-Coster; Vrije Universiteit

ABSTRACT: Empirical research in environmental psychology shows that non-human nature and biodiversity are potentially rich sources of spiritual experiences for humans. In this connection, Christianity classically espouses that 'creation', with its magnificent variety of life forms, may provide spiritual insight. That is to say, there has always been the shared vision that the natural world is not closed in on itself but shows forth 'signs' of the Creator, particularly God's eternal power, wisdom, and goodness. In this paper, it is thus assumed that God not only reveals Godself in Scripture and the life of the church but also, though less fully, in the works of creation. If that is true, it seems that the human-caused global destruction of biodiversity must somehow impede the vitality of human spirituality, since the variety of creation was intended to communicate God's character and presence to us in multiple and surprising ways. Therefore, as humans are rapidly driving other species into extinction, this paper explores the spiritual implications of biodiversity loss as viewed from a sacramental perspective on nature's transparency to the divine. Although God, from a traditional soteriological perspective, is not dependent upon creation to reach human beings, this paper's thesis is that to lose nature is to lose experience of God. Also, to lose nature means to lose vital and 'lively' ways of discerning and addressing the Creator of this world. Part of our spirituality, in the face of ecological loss, should be the acts of mourning, lament, and confession of guilt.



PAPER 9: Among the Animals? The Human-Animal Distinction in (Christian) Theological Anthropology

Paul Gesting

ABSTRACT: One topic of concern in the field of Science and Theology has to do with the human-animal distinction. It is common for Christian theologians in this field to reduce or eliminate this distinction in this interdisciplinary discussion. The thesis of this paper is that the Bible clearly posits an ontological distinction between humans and animals, and that reducing or eliminating this distinction negatively impacts other areas of theological anthropology. I will approach this topic from a Christian standpoint.

In the first part of this paper, I will survey the biblical data. I will examine the early chapters of Genesis in detail, but will also cover portions in the prophets and writings in the Old Testament where this distinction is clear, as well as the Gospels and letters of the New Testament. I will then synthesize the biblical teaching that humans and animals are ontologically distinct. Major themes that I will discuss include the image of God, the nature of Adam's headship, and morality. I will show that the biblical category of sin is limited to humans alone, though the effects of human sin reverberate throughout all creation (including animals). This "cosmic" effect of sin arises because humans are image-bearing vice regents over creation: when they sin against God, animals suffer. I will also show that the redemptive work of Christ applies to humans only, though all creation is reconciled to God when the effects of human sin are eradicated.

In the second part of the paper, I will analyze the theological anthropology of a few major Christian theologians who discuss the animal-human distinction in conversation with science, and I will show that their theological conclusions lack a biblical warrant (my dialogue partners will include Joshua Moritz, David Clough, Andrew Linzey, and others). Moreover, their conclusions often directly *contradict* the biblical data.

In the final part of this paper, I will show that when the animal-human distinction is obliterated, other aspects of Christian theological anthropology (such as the nature of the soul and morality) as well as Christology are negatively affected. I will conclude that the human-animal distinction is essential to Christian theology because it rests on the biblical account of what it means to be human. My conclusions therefore help inform how the science and religion dialogue with regard to non-human animals should take place within a Christian understanding.

PAPER 10: Do animals laugh and/or cry? Exploring the question within Quran and hadiths commentaries

Samia Touati; Ecole pratique des hautes études EPHE/PSL

ABSTRACT: The Qur'an tells the story of prophet Sulayman who once smiled after hearing an ant's speech (Quran, 27 :18-19). This episode is particularly significant in exploring the issue of emotions and interactions that animals are capable of, according to Muslim primary scriptures: Qur'an and hadiths. If an ant is able to make a prophet laugh, the question of its own capability to laugh raises legitimately. Other stories in numerous hadiths show animals talking or crying on various occasions. More broadly speaking, this article will endeavour to explore the way classical commentaries on Muslim scriptural sources tackled the question of emotions commonly seen as human and how they conceded easily the possibility of other elements of nature, mainly animals, to share and show these feelings.



PAPER 11: “You have made them equal to us”: Using Psychology to Examine Religious Resistance to Animal Rights

Jennifer Brown

ABSTRACT: “You have made them equal to us” is the complaint made in the parable of the workers (Matt 20.1–16) by those who have worked the whole day and yet find that those who have worked only the last hour of the day have received the same recognition (wages). The complaint is based on the idea that those who have worked the longest have given more and are therefore more valuable than those who have worked less. A similar argument is often heard by those who are opposed to extending animal rights, namely, that humans are of greater value than animals and it is therefore wrong to give animals legal rights analogous to our own. Studies have shown that Christians, particularly those from more conservative traditions, have a low concern for animal welfare and are less supportive of animal rights than non-Christians (e.g. Jerolmack, 2003; DeLeeuw et al., 2007). While this may be due in part to theology and doctrine, for example the concept of human dominion over creation (Genesis 1.26), this is unlikely to be the only cause. Several passages of the Judeo-Christian scriptures and much in the history and tradition of the Church promote a positive view of animals and Christian responsibility towards non-human creation. Using the science of psychology as a lens through which to view Christian attitudes towards animal rights, this paper will consider ingroup bias, along with the role of religion in creating a sense of group identity, and will additionally consider psychological research on memory and information processing to explore why references to animal welfare in scripture and the Christian tradition may fail to persuade Christians to affirm animal rights. Finally, drawing on the psychological findings discussed, some practical suggestions for generating positive attitudes towards animal rights among Christian congregations will be proposed.

PAPER 12: Should We Call Planet Earth Sacred – and What Difference Would That Make?

Gijsbert van den Brink; Vrije Universiteit

ABSTRACT: It is often argued that in order to develop an ecologically robust theology we need to envisage a more intimate relationship between God and nature than has been allowed for in traditional Western theology. One of the ways to flesh out this suggestion is to stipulate that life, or matter, or nature, or planet earth, or the entire cosmos, or creation, should be seen as sacred, in the sense that a hidden divine presence is to be discerned in it which should evoke awe and reverence in humans. Some theologians are reticent, however, to support this proposal, since it seems to blur the qualitative ontological difference (Kierkegaard) between Creator and creature. In this paper, it will be argued with an appeal to biblical and historical theology that this is not the case, but that – in light of biblical notions of holiness and divine presence – from a Christian point of view the earth might be called sacred, provided that it is carefully stipulated what that implies (and what it does not imply). In light of the many ecological crises, there is even ample reason to consider planet earth as sacred today.



PAPER 13: Indigenous Religious Myths of Sustainable Future for Human and Nonhuman Animals: A Yorùbá Worldview

Adewale O. Owoseni; University of Ibadan

ABSTRACT: Do indigenous religious myths, mysteries, common sayings and beliefs circulated among the Yorùbá (Southwestern Nigeria) people aid the advancement of a sustainable future for human and nonhuman species? This discourse attempts an exposition of indigenous religious myths, mysteries and common sayings as anchor of a people's cultural and social consciousness about phenomena that are explainable or unexplainable. The extent to which these circulated contents are undergirded by the relative epistemology of the community of people who embrace them demands critical engagement for discerning its relevance (if any) for contemporary issues that extend beyond the context of such community. Through critical and hermeneutic methods of analysis, this discourse argues that indigenous religious myth, mysteries, common sayings and beliefs circulated within Yoruba communities reinforce ongoing contemporary sustainable development agenda for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge contributions toward the mitigation of undesirable future for human and nonhuman species. The idea of indigenous sayings/beliefs providing complementing function to extant philosophical and ecological thoughts speaks to the importance of all hands being on deck for the mitigation of undesirable future for human and nonhuman species. This is explicated with reference to the inherent 'paradox of essence' reflected in the circulated myths, mysteries, common sayings and beliefs embraced by the Yoruba community, in view of the realization of a sustainable future for human and nonhuman species.

PAPER 14: The Deity no longer Combats the Tiger: Transformation of a Syncretic deity to a Hindu Goddess

Anaka Das; Indian Institute of Technology

ABSTRACT: Known for its inter-religious character, the Sundarban delta in West Bengal is eulogised for its harmony and unity. This acquiesces with the dominant mythical narrative of the sylvan deity Bonbibi, or Lady of the Forest, who both Hindus and Muslims of Sundarban allegedly venerate. As goes the myth, Bonbibi is a Muslim holy woman, believed to have come from Mecca to the Sundarbans, to protect humans from the man-eating Royal Bengal Tiger. A typical Bonbibi shrine is a thatched roof structure that displays the idol of a woman in jewels set in combat with a ferocious tiger. Owing to the precarious and contested nature of human-nonhuman relationship in the Sundarban, Bonbibi remained the most prominent religious figure until the mid-20th century, gradually after which, her essence started to fade. Present day relationship of the Sundarban islanders with the deity have undergone radical transformations, where the syncretic roots of Bonbibi are conditionally omitted, along with the erasure of the tiger combatting the deity. In many upland islands of the Sundarban, the tiger in the idol appears as a pet of the deity, on which the deity sits, or in other instances, the tiger is omitted totally. The deity in these regions is also being referred to as Bon-durga, or Bon-devi, thereby situating her in a *Puranic* Hindu ideal. Why this transformation? In this paper I argue that people's changing relationship with the tiger, along with their detachment with the forest, the radical transformation of the Sundarban landscape from forest dependent to agricultural/otherwise, and the entry of the neoliberal market forces affecting the relationship of humans with the forest produce, are behind this alteration in the religious tenets of Bonbibi. My paper presents an ethnographic study of Bonbibi veneration (presently being called as Bondevi) as they take place in the Pathankhali island of the Indian Sundarban. Grounded in the "praxis" framework, it examines the extent of inter-religious faith practices, and offers a contemporary study of lived religion, as is observed at Pathankhali. Additionally, it theoretically demonstrates the spatial and temporal aesthetics of Bondevi (as is known as at Pathankhali) shrines as they lie scattered throughout the island and offers a thick description of contemporary ritual practices at both the household and public shrine spaces.



PAPER 15: Non-human Animal Symbolism in the Qur'ān : A Modern exegesis of Qur'ānic Verses Based on the Mother Archetype by Carl Gustav Jung

Ghasem Darzi; Qur'ānic Interdisciplinary studies Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University

ABSTRACT: Archetypes are the common patterns that have accumulated in the human mind and influence human behavior. These Archetypes are ingrained in the collective unconscious of humanity and create their collective representations; representations that are observable in a significant number of people and civilizations. These representations are the same images, patterns, and mental symbols that revolve around a specific axis and provide a general perspective for humans. Jung considered the mother archetype to be the most important one. The mother archetype is like the earth, both nurturing and devouring, and is the source of all spiritual development. Therefore, the mother archetype is a bipolar archetype: the greatest mother containing infinite nurturing, care, and support, and the very bad mother (terrifying, horrible) representing fear, suffocation, death, and captivity. Animals such as cow, snake, and serpent are representations and symbols that embody these two main meanings of the mother archetype. "Cow" symbolizes nurturing, rebirth, and fertility, while snakes and dragons symbolize devouring, destruction, and anger. This textual study based on Carl Gustav Jung's psychoanalytic approach seeks to present a modern and different interpretation of some animals in the Qur'ān and thus eliminate many ambiguities that have existed about naming such animals in the Quran. These animals have a prominent appearance in the Surahs and verses of the Quran: the largest Surah in the Qur'ān is named "Cow" (*al-Baqarah*) and the story of "Cow of the Children of Israel" (the Qur'ān, 2: 62) plays a prominent and central role in this Surah: Cow in this story and generally in this Surah symbolizes rebirth, and it seems that the main theme of various scattered stories in this Surah is to revive humans with "faith." The importance of "cow" in this section of the story has made this animal so important in the collective unconscious of the Children of Israel that a little later in the Qur'ānic story, we will witness the "calf worship" of the Children of Israel (the Qur'ān, 2: 93). In one of the most complete stories in the Qur'ān, namely Sūrah Yūsuf, the story also revolves around cows: where the king dreams that seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean (the Qur'ān, 12: 43 & 46). In this symbolic story which is completely related to dream interpretation and psychoanalysis, "cow" is directly related to "fertility" and "drought," and the same symbolic concept of death and life that was discussed in the second Surah is also emphasized here. "Snake" (*Ḥayyah*) and "serpent" (*Thu' bān*) are two other prominent animals that are also considered symbols for the emergence of the mother archetype in Jung's Archetype and are generally reflective of the angry and devouring mother. In the story of Moses and his confrontation with God and also Pharaoh, these two animals play a key role. Snake and serpent in this story are considered symbols for devouring deception, trickery, and evil, and numerous verbal indications in Qur'ānic narrations confirm this modern interpretation of verses.



PAPER 16: Public knowledge of primates: results of a survey and a proposal for a new project

Yvan Russell; Middlesex University

ABSTRACT: Great apes are fascinating to watch. Sometimes, they seem so human (like when chimpanzees gently groom each other's fur, appearing to show love). Other times, they seem so animalistic (like when chimpanzees fight, bare sharp teeth, and draw blood). Because of their partial resemblance to humans, the great apes are particularly compelling in both science and religion. However, it appears that the general public has poor knowledge of primates in general (they are influenced more by movies than by science). Here, I will present the results of an online survey testing the public knowledge of primates. In my survey, more than 2,400 participants answered questions about apes, monkeys, and prosimians, including true/false questions, and a quiz to identify photographs. In addition to presenting these empirical results, I would like to focus on a sampling problem that I had: I suspect that I under-sampled highly religious populations. With a research background in both primatology and the cognitive science of religion, I hope to design a new survey, specifically focusing on the influence of religion on the public perception of primates.

PAPER 17: Taking the Non-Research-Oriented Sciences Seriously in Religion-and-Science

Adam Chin, University of California

ABSTRACT: The non-research-oriented (or "non-basic/non-academic") sciences are often left out of our dialogues concerning religion-and-science, in fact sometimes explicitly excluded. This, of course, is by no means unique to the religion-and-science literature; philosophy, history, and even sociology of science tend to leave out these more practical, theory-averse forms of science as well.

But, I'll argue, this is deeply problematic, especially for those in religion-and-science who wish to engage with the religion-and-science dialogue as a matter of public concern. For the non-research-oriented sciences are widely present in public conceptions of science—witness *Gattaca*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Breaking Bad*. Furthermore, these sciences comprise the vast majority of practiced science. Indeed, as the US Bureau of Labor Statistics' May 2021 report indicates, of the almost 1.3 million individuals employed in "Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations," only about 24% of them are embedded in research contexts (combining the "Research and Development" and "Universities" sectors). The other roughly 76% perform other kinds of science—developing non-novel assays, running water quality tests, producing makeup, sequencing genomes, saving local species. The "average" individual, then, is much more likely to encounter science in its non-research-oriented form. And so surely these nonresearch-oriented sciences contribute to public understandings of science, which in turn impact their experience of the relationship between religion and science—all of which means that scholars ought to pay more attention to these sciences.

I start by introducing the concept of the non-research-oriented sciences, outlining the general contours of this rather amorphous idea, and then argue why scholars of religion-and-science should care about it. Not only will taking the non-research-oriented sciences seriously help our accounts of science-religion interactions better match reality, but it will also make our work more relevant to the publics we so often wish to reach. I conclude with some general remarks about what it would look like to start with the nonresearch-oriented sciences and make a few recommendations for how scholarship could—and should—proceed in this vein.



PAPER 18: Plato and the animals: What is the purpose of philosophy in an age of environmental crisis?

Louise Hickman; Newman University

ABSTRACT: Greek mythology is full of animals but in the fourth century BCE, rational investigation of their nature saw them become the object of 'zoology'. The assumption is widespread that this shift coincides with the Attic philosophers declaring reason to be the hallmark of 'man' by which 'he' is distinguished from the animals. At this juncture, *mythos* is thought to have been divided from *logos*, heralding the dawn of a rational, more 'scientific' way of thinking. This paper, however, will argue that Plato's creative use of animal related myths and analogies sets his philosophy apart from Aristotle's rationalism. The Platonic corpus is replete with *mythos* and animals, both of which are much overlooked elements of his philosophy. This paper will show how *mythos* should be understood in relation to the concept of *chora*, the unthinkable space in between. The result is that through the use of myth, the Platonic corpus contains a troubling of the categories of human and animal. The more familiar dualistic, world-denying interpretation of Plato will therefore be challenged by the consideration of a less familiar poetic Plato, who points us towards enchantment and the contemplation of nature. Plato's zoology through *mythos* or, as it might be called, 'ornitheology,' affirms the interconnected nature of systems, knowledge, ethics and politics, one which calls for the consideration of the non-human world to be put back at the heart of contemporary theology and philosophy.

PAPER 19: What kind of man is this? a biological ecclesiology of the Body of Christ

Deborah Mackay; University of Southampton

ABSTRACT: The body of Christ is a foundational metaphor for the church, with multivalent attestation in scripture not only to the person of Jesus, but to the bread that he shared with his disciples at their last common meal, to the Christian communities in the Pauline epistles, and the cosmic body with one spirit, 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all'.

While Paul wrote that the body 'does not consist of one member but of many', contemporary biology recognises that bodies are made up not only of members but of cells in vast numbers. Bodies live and thrive precisely because the life of the whole emerges from but cannot be reduced to the features of its members. Multicellular creatures, including humans, are not so much objects as organized systems of processes, inherently emergent within and from their relationships with their environment, and maintaining their identity not despite change, but because of it.

There is profound resonance between emergent, processual ideas of biological bodies and the theological Body of Christ, and moreover with recent process-theological descriptions of creatures as open-ended processes interacting within a creation that is sustained within the boundless loving wisdom and creativity of the Creator.

I will explore a biological metaphor for the Body of Christ which offers insights into the interactions between Scripture, tradition and context in the life of Christian communities. I will consider the consequences of imagining the Body of Christ in human or other creaturely form.



New Voices in Science and Religion

These papers were all Highly Commended submissions to the Peacocke Student Essay Prize. Authors are invited to submit their full paper for publication in *Reviews* so keep your eyes peeled!

NEW VOICES 1: The Shoulders of Giants: Influence of Christian Heresy Catalogues on Isaac Newton's Rhetoric

Scott Urdall; University of Edinburgh

ABSTRACT: In this paper I present a novel argument for the influence of patristic (Irenaeus, Justin Martyr) heresy catalogues on Isaac Newton's rhetoric in the debates about his work in physics and calculus, especially his letters and the content of the "General Scholium." A brief outline of the relationship between science and rhetoric, Geoffrey Smith's research on heresy catalogues, and Newton's well-known interest with the patristic period of Christian history is followed by two main supporting pieces of evidence. The first is covering Irenaeus's influence on the theological portion of the "General Scholium," establishing a concrete connection between an ancient heresy catalogue and Newton's Principia. The second is establishing a list of nine parallels which show similarities between Newton's efforts to establish a scientific orthodoxy with patristic efforts to establish a religious orthodoxy, such as: rhetorical methods, ways of conceptualizing opponents, and a tendency towards dichotomization which characterizes both the categories of heresy/orthodoxy and hypothetical/experimental philosophy. Because Newton never made such an influence explicit in his writings, it is unlikely that a definitive case can be made, but the ways in which future research could make this proposition transition from plausible to highly likely are discussed. Understanding the historical interplay between religious dialogues with scientific dialogues can complicate the separation of these two categories, offer interesting interpretive opportunities (is the "General Scholium" an "Irenaean" text?), and gives us a better understanding of some of the greatest minds in theological and natural philosophical history.

NEW VOICES 2: Science as Ancilla Theologiae? A Critical Appraisal of Nature as Creation in Alister McGrath's Scientific Theology

Ning Xu; University of Oxford

ABSTRACT: Alister McGrath's scientific theology, undergirded by a deep commitment to the traditional credal Christian orthodoxy, explores the ontological compatibility between the working assumptions and methods of the natural sciences and theological knowledge. In his attempt to ground theological knowledge as an *a posteriori* engagement with reality, I shall argue that McGrath's scientific theology highlights the innately *a posteriori*, as opposed to *a priori*, nature of Christian theological knowledge, by making an important contribution to reconciling the epistemic tension inherent between the transcendence of God and our attempt to grasp the divine in a physical world. Anchored by the question, 'is Christian theological knowledge intuitive or a posteriori?', I shall first examine Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR), which argues that the nature of theological knowledge is intuitive, in that it is self-evident to the human person, before demonstrating how McGrath's scientific theology, in seeing nature through the lens of creation, re-establishes theological knowledge as not only deeply *a posteriori* but innately interdisciplinary.



NEW VOICES 3 (Not being presented): "The Confucian Answer to the Situationist Critique: How the Moral Psychology of Hagop Sarkissian Can Show the Effects of Embodied Confucian Ritual and Ethics"

Cade Chrastina, University of Oxford

ABSTRACT: In this essay I will assess how Hagop Sarkissian studies the effects of Confucian ritual and ethics on moral behaviour. I will particularly look at situationism and the situationist critique. Situationism is a response to the idea that humans can act morally across a diversity of situations. The situationist critique questions this position by asking where humans get an innate sense of morality from and, if humans really can be moral, can they be moral in any given situation. I will evaluate the thought and writings of Sarkissian, who sees an answer to the situationist critique in Confucian ritual and ethics. Confucianism seeks to cultivate character in individuals and the writings of Confucius in the *Analects* offer wisdom for a broad range of moral situations. I will investigate the empirical findings of moral psychology, an emerging philosophical field which seeks to bridge the gap between the humanities and science, to see if this Confucian answer to the situationist critique holds up scientifically. I will use the writings of Confucius and Xunzi as my primary sources through whom to critique Sarkissian because they were both early Confucian thinkers who wrote much about morals and ethics and because their writings are traditional sacred texts in the Confucian tradition. Often regarded as a philosophy or system of virtue ethics, Confucianism will here be approached as a religion seeking social balance and harmony in interpersonal relationships.





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The Science and Religion Forum (SRF) had its inception in a series of discussions involving scientists, theologians and clergy which took place in Oxford in the early 1970s. The key figure in the early discussions was Arthur Peacocke who was to become the Forum's first Chairman, and later a Vice President and then President.

Today, SRF exists to promote discussion between scientific understanding and religious thought on issues at the interface of science and religion, and membership is open to people of any religion or none.

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In 1972, informal consultations began in Oxford between a group of scientists, theologians, and clergy who were concerned to relate their scientific knowledge and methods of study to their religious faith and practice. This group, gradually increasing in size, met annually.

It was decided at a meeting in Durham, in 1975, to inaugurate the SCIENCE AND RELIGION FORUM to enable further discussion of the complex issues that arise at the interaction between scientific understanding and religious thought. Such issues need close attention and continuing re-assessment. Together with the social and ethical decisions demanded by scientific and technological advances, these issues have formed the subject of the Forum's meetings since that date.

The Forum received charitable status in 1994. In 2005 the Science and Religion Forum merged with the Christ and the Cosmos Initiative. (The latter had been founded by the Revd Bill Gowland, a past President of the Methodist Conference, with the intention of bringing the latest knowledge of scientific thinking within the orbit of the enquiring layperson.

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