



## **“Religion, Nature, and Progress”**

3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference of the  
International Society for the  
Study of Religion, Nature & Culture (ISSRNC)  
at the University of Amsterdam  
23–26 July 2009

**PROGRAM AND ABSTRACT BOOK**



# Content

Introduction to Conference Theme.....	4
Conference Venues.....	6
Program.....	8
Abstracts and Presenters.....	15

## Introduction to Conference Theme

Welcome to the conference “Religion, Nature, and Progress” at the University of Amsterdam! The initiative for this conference is the result of an on-going academic effort to come to an understanding of the intersections between religion, nature, and culture. Such understanding is especially critical in view of the rising concerns about dwindling biocultural diversity and climate change. The international public debate is concerned with a simple, yet indispensable and pressing question: How might humanity achieve greater social equity as well as environmental sustainability? The context of threatened habitats and increasing cultural homogenization makes such concerns evermore pressing. The currently emerging academic field covering these intersections may contribute to the intensifying efforts around the world to counteract the loss of cultural and biological diversity by testing new interdisciplinary models that are based on a spiritual, humanistic, social, and ecological framework on the one hand, and on rigorous academic contextualization and critique on the other. It was with this background that the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture (ISSRNC) started its activities in the fall of 2005 (see the Society’s homepage at [www.religionandnature.com/society](http://www.religionandnature.com/society)). This was preceded by the publication of the award-winning *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (2005)—a result of a worldwide interactive academic process.

The ISSRNC is a community of scholars who are engaged in critical inquiry into the relationships among human beings and their diverse cultures, environments, religious beliefs and practices. The Society facilitates scholarly collaboration and research, and disseminates research findings through regular conferences and the affiliated *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* (London: Equinox Publisher). An inaugural conference “Exploring Religion, Nature, and Culture” was held in Gainesville, Florida, USA, in April 2006, followed by a second conference in Morelia, Mexico, in January 2008, titled “The Re-enchantment of Nature across Disciplines: Critical Intersections of Science, Ethics, and Metaphysics.” Both conferences were attended by over 200 participants from over two dozen countries and were characterized by lively interdisciplinary debate on a wide range of subjects in an energizing atmosphere. Highlights were published in the *Journal*. Based on this success, the Board decided to organize a third conference in the Netherlands in 2009, this time on the theme of ‘progress’ in relation to the Society’s core themes.

### Explanation of Conference Theme

The intrinsic relation between ideas of progress and the impact that such progress has on ecosystems and natural environments is a central aspect of discussions about the ecological crisis. Notions of progress can take on quite different meanings, from economic progress to social improvements to progress in the natural sciences; religious discourses, too, often make use of metaphors of progress. Usually, these discussions seem to imply that the concepts involved—progress, nature, crisis, etc.—have a clear and simple meaning. Closer reflection, however, reveals that such concepts are themselves elements and products of a larger discourse, or worldview, that conceptualizes ‘nature’ and the human relation with it in a par-

ticular way. Many underlying presumptions and evaluations have a long history in (Western) culture, and often they are informed by religious views on the status of nature and humanity, views that vary widely and are often contradictory to one another. The Western background of these concepts is apparent and should be the object of critical investigation.

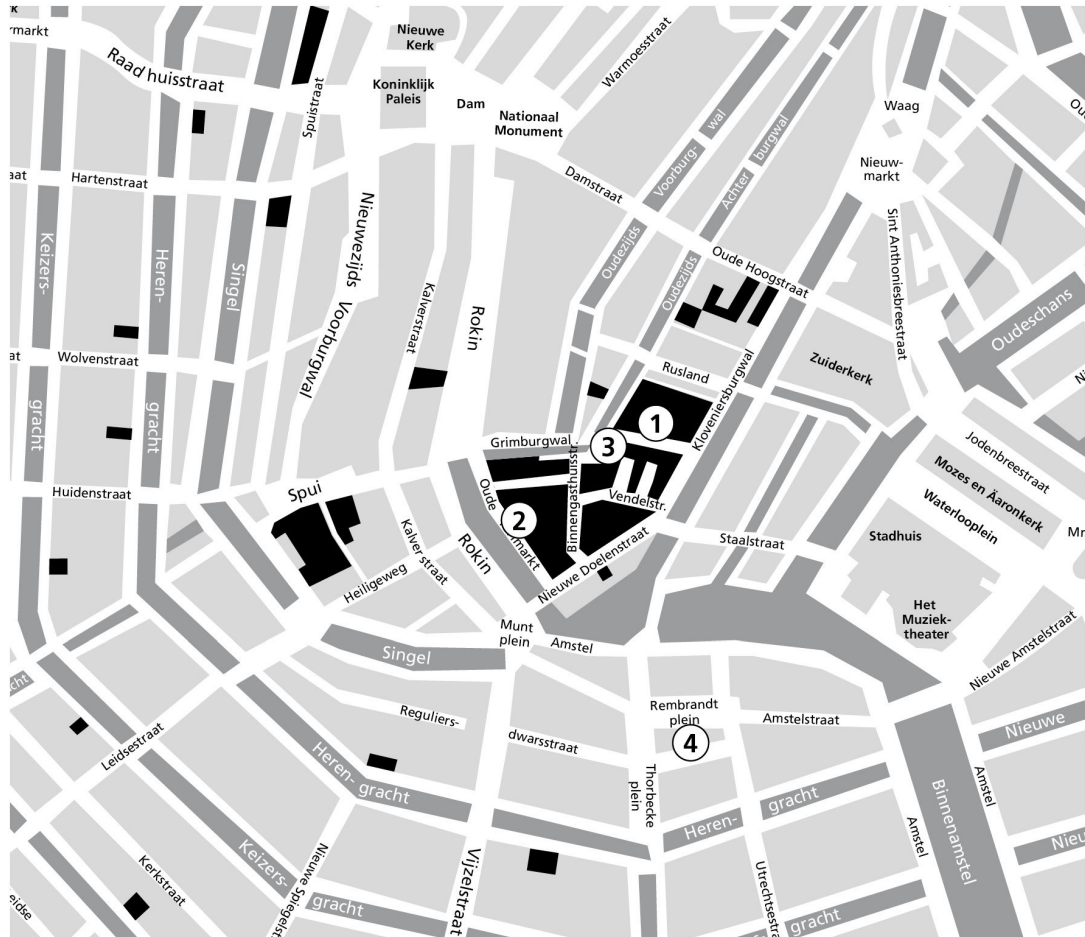
This international conference addresses the critical intersections of religion, nature, and progress in a multidisciplinary way, in order to give insight into the different positions of these subjects both in history and vis-à-vis the current debates on climate change, environmental policy, and cultural development. It is increasingly acknowledged that religions and metaphysics, which inform worldviews and notions of progress, have played and still play an important role in these debates and that a clear understanding of them is indispensable for policies and practices striving to solve the environmental, climate, and other crises. The overall theme provides a spectrum of subtopics and questions that can be engaged in a critical dialogue among various disciplines, such as the academic study of religion, history, anthropology, philosophy, cultural studies, theology, the natural sciences, social sciences, economics, politics, architecture, urban planning, etc.

The conference takes place in Amsterdam, situated in one of the most densely populated areas in the world, facing many ecological challenges that ask for reflection and active response. The Netherlands have a long history of ‘improving nature,’ from protection against sea water to creating new land and learning to set up natural environments in highly populated spaces. The city of Amsterdam has committed itself to an ambitious plan of environmentally sustainable development. Therefore, the conference theme, although international and global in perspective, fits the conditions of this modern western European city very well. The following questions will be addressed:

- What does ‘progress’ mean? What are the parameters of progress and what are they based on? Which different conceptualizations of progress exist worldwide? And what does progress mean with regard to nature? Is nature in need of improvement or salvation? Or has nature to be protected from the impact of human activity? And is that ‘progress’?
- Controlling nature has for centuries—particularly in Western societies—been identified with ‘progress.’ How can this be explained? And are recent notions of ‘managing planet earth’ perhaps new versions of the same idea, put into a more environmentally positive form?
- Talking of progress seems to imply improvement and an ultimate goal that has to be achieved. What are the underlying principles of evaluation and diagnosis? Are they self-evident or do they have a contested and changing genealogy? What are the cultural and intellectual sources where ideas of progress come from?
- Many concepts of progress apply a model of time and salvation that is based on religious worldviews and traditions. How do ideas of salvation history and religious apocalypticism interact with secular notions of progress and of nature?
- Cross-cultural comparison shows that in different cultural contexts there exist different ideas regarding progress. Are contemporary concepts of progress typically Western? Do certain religious traditions lend themselves more naturally than others to endeavors to ‘improve’ nature and humanity?

## Conference Venues

Overview of conference venues:

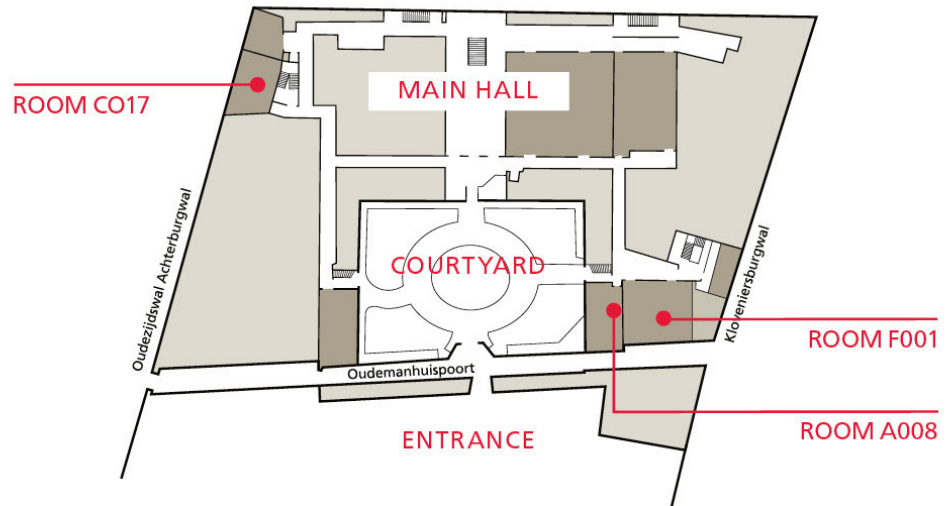


1. Conference venue, Oudemanhuispoort 4–6
2. Conference opening venue / departure for excursion, Allard Pierson Museum / Library Special Collections, Oude Turfmarkt 129
3. Atrium (lunch), Oudezijds Achterburgwal 237
4. NH Schiller (conference dinner), Rembrandtplein 26–36

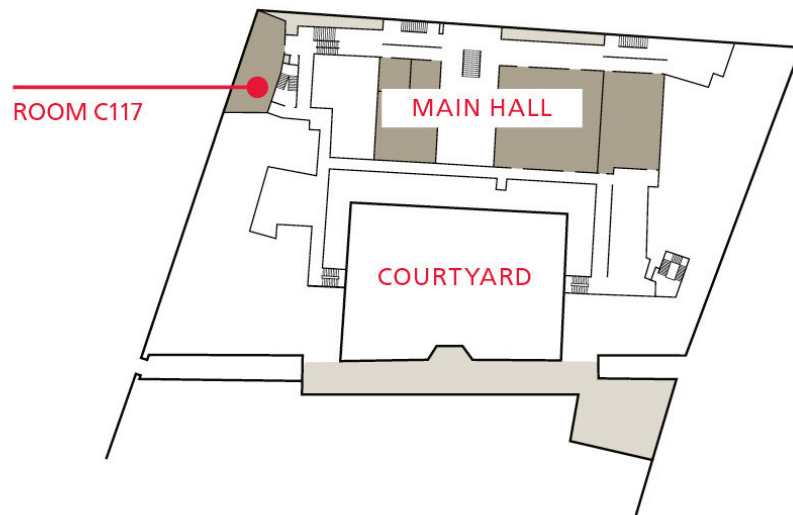
Public transport to Oudemanhuispoort: take tram number 4, 9, 16, 24 or 25; get off at stop called Spui. Cross the water and take the narrow street called Langebrugsteeg. This street will continue as Grimburgwal after 50 meters. At the end of the street (you cannot go any further) turn left (Oudezijds Achterburgwal) and enter the small gate at your right after 20 meters. Proceed straight ahead and turn left under the archway.

Map of conference building Oudemanhuispoort 4–6:

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



# Program

## Thursday, 23 July 2009

- 14:00–16:00**    **Conference Registration**  
Location: Allard Pierson Museum, Library Special Collections, Oude Turfmarkt 129
- 16:00–16:30**    **Opening of the Conference**  
Location: Allard Pierson Museum, Aula, Oude Turfmarkt 127  
Karel van der Toorn, President of Board, University of Amsterdam  
Kocku von Stuckrad, University of Amsterdam, President-Elect ISSRNC
- 16:30–17:30**    **Presidential Address**  
Location: Allard Pierson Museum, Aula  
Presiding: Kocku von Stuckrad  
Bron Taylor, University of Florida, Gainesville (USA), President ISSRNC:  
“Terrapolitanism or Totalitarianism: Considering the Progress and Peril of Dark Green Religion”
- 17:30–18:15**    **Plenary Session 1: Progress and the History of Science**  
Location: Allard Pierson Museum, Aula  
Presiding: Jan Boersema  
William R. Newman, Indiana University (USA): “Isaac Newton and the Perfecting of Nature”
- 18:15–19:30**    **Reception, Sponsored by the Publishing Houses Brill (Leiden & Boston) and Equinox (London)**  
Location: Allard Pierson Museum, Library Special Collections

## Friday, 24 July 2009

- 9:00–11:00**    **Plenary Session 2: Progress: Methodological and Historical Considerations**  
Room: Oudemanshuispoort 4–6 (OMHP), F001  
Presiding: Kocku von Stuckrad  
Jan Boersema, Free University of Amsterdam (Netherlands): “In Defense of Progress”  
Nina Witoszek, University of Oslo (Norway): “Leonardo da Vinci Our Contemporary? The ‘Other’ Renaissance and Its Views on Religion and Progress”
- 11:00–11:30**    **Coffee and Tea Break**



**11:30–13:00 Parallel Sessions**

11:30–13:00 Session 1: Apocalypse, Eschatology, Utopia  
 Room: OMHP, F001  
 Presiding: David Haberman  
 Stefan Skrimshire: “Apocalypse and the Philosophy of Progress: The Roots of Crisis Thinking”  
 Egil Asprem: “Utopia and the Paranormal: Degeneration and Progress in the Parapsychology of William McDougall and J. B. Rhine”  
 Jane Compson: “Ecological Teaching: Using Contemplative Techniques in the Academic Classroom”

11:30–13:00 Session 2: Progress: Theoretical Approaches  
 Room: OMHP, A008  
 Presiding: Luke Johnston  
 Patrick Curry: “Enchantment and the Paradox of Progress”  
 Peter and Joanne Kirschenmann-Raby: “What is to Replace the Belief in Progress, and on What Grounds?”  
 Jim Freund: “The Roots of Unsustainable Progress”

11:30–13:00 Session 3: From the Shaman’s Circle to the Ivory Tower: Progress, Spirituality and Psychedelic Thinking  
 Room: OMHP, C017  
 Presiding: Anna Waldstein  
 Participants: Cameron Adams, Ivan Casselman, and Anna Waldstein

**13:00–14:00 Lunch**

Location: Atrium (Oudezijds Achterburgwal 237)

**14:00–16:00 Parallel Sessions**

14:00–16:00 Session 4: Discussion Forum: Responding to Climate Change: Religion and Southern Perspectives on ‘Light’ Development  
 Room: OMHP, A008  
 Presider: Hans Opschoor  
 Discussion Moderator: Hans Opschoor  
 Louke van Wensveen: “Responding to Climate Change I: Faith-based Development Practice and ‘Light’ Development”  
 Chander Khanna: “Responding to Climate Change II: Hindu Traditions and ‘Light’ Development”  
 - Response from development practice: Radj Bhondoe (Seva)  
 Michael Northcott: “Responding to Climate Change III: Christian Traditions and ‘Light’ Development”  
 - Response from development practice: Attie van Niekerk (NOVA)  
 Discussion

- 14:00–16:00 Session 5: Culture, Civilization, and Progress: The Technological Vortex versus Spiritual Achievement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
 Room: OMHP, F001  
 Presiding: Sylvie Shaw  
 Graham Harvey: “Cannibals and Cyborgs: The Consuming Monsters of Animism and Modernism”  
 Adrian Ivakhiv: “Technology, Enchantment, and the Politics of Becoming: Spiritualities of Immanence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”  
 Michael York: “Full of Sound and Fury; Signifying Nothing: Earth Religion and the Experiential”  
 Response: Barbara McGraw
- 14:00–15:30 Session 6: Philosophical Reflections I: Western and Eastern Approaches to Ecology and Technology  
 Room: OMHP, C117  
 Presiding: Colin Campbell  
 Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam: “The Modern Metaphysical *Weltbild* as the Humus for the Conceptual Roots of the Ecological Crisis and as ‘Under-Lying’ the Notion of Progress”  
 Bronislaw Szerszynski: “The Technological Mastery of Nature: Religious Roots or Virgin Birth?”
- 14:00–16:00 Session 7: Nature, Ecosystems, and Ethics  
 Room: OMHP, C017  
 Presiding: Cathrien de Pater  
 Almut Beringer: “Right Earth Relations and Ecology of the Heart: Conceptual and Practical Considerations toward the Re-Enchantment of Nature”  
 Christopher Chapple: “Disappearing into Nature: Vasistha’s Elemental Embrace”  
 Ruyun Hung: “Is Taoism Friendly or Unfriendly to Nature: Feng shui and Its Implications for Environmental Ethics”
- 16:00–16:30 Coffee and Tea Break**
- 16:30–18:00 Plenary Session 3: Islamic Perspectives on Progress**  
 Room: OMHP, F001  
 Presiding: Willem Drees  
 Jonathan Benthall, University College London (UK): “Progress and Circumscription in the Greening of Islam”  
 Odeh Rashid Al-Jayyousi, IUCN, Amman (Jordan): “Re-Thinking Sustainability and Progress: Islamic Perspectives”

## Saturday, 25 July 2009

- 8:00–9:00**     **Members' Meeting of the ISSRNC**  
 Room: OMHP, C117  
 Presiding: Bron Taylor and Kocku von Stuckrad
- 9:00–11:00**     **Plenary Session 4: Eastern Traditions and Their Impact on the West**  
 Room: OMHP, F001  
 Presiding: Albertina Nugteren  
 David Haberman, Indiana University (USA): "Tracking Progress in the  
 Voices of the Trees"  
 Colin Campbell, York University (UK): "The Easternization of the West and  
 the Rehabilitation of Nature"
- 11:00–11:30**     **Coffee and Tea Break**
- 11:30–13:00**     **Parallel Sessions**
- 11:30–13:00     Session 8: Sacred Space I: Building Nature  
 Room: OMHP, A008  
 Presiding: Cathrien de Pater  
 Sylvie Shaw: "Water-Ways: The Serpentine Soul of Brisbane"  
 Eugenia Ellis: "Mimēsis and (Eco)Logical Design: The Cosmotheistic Basis  
 of Sustainable Architecture"  
 Takeshi Kimura: "Historical Formation of Sacred Shinto Space: Modern  
 Knowledge and the Allocation of Secular Space for Developing Pro-  
 gress in Modern Japan"  
 Annick De Witt: "Changing Worldviews in the Netherlands and the Impact  
 on the Environment"
- 11:30–13:00     Session 9: Progress and Scriptural Religions  
 Room: OMHP, C017  
 Presiding: Odeh Rashid Al-Jayyousi  
 Eldad J. Pardo: "Progress, the Environment and Religious Politics in Mod-  
 ern Iran: A Historical Assessment and Outlook"  
 Walter E.A. van Beek: "Religion, Time and the End of Nature"  
 Shelley Elkayam: "Progress in the Hebrew Model of Time: The Seventh-Unit  
 Messianic Ecosystem"
- 11:30–13:00     Session 10: Indigenous Perspectives on Progress  
 Room: OMHP, F001  
 Presiding: Kristina Tiedje  
 Wolfgang Kapfhammer: "Fast Religion, Slow Food: The Paradox of Pro-  
 gress in an Indigenous Society in the Brazilian Amazon"  
 Sanni Saarinen: "The Idea of Sustainable Development from the Local Point  
 of View in Peruvian Amazon"  
 Peter Boomgaard: "Religious Beliefs of the Forest Communities of Java,  
 1500–2000"

- 11:30–13:00 Session 11: Philosophical Reflections II: Nature and Ethics  
 Room: OMHP, C117  
 Presiding: Kocku von Stuckrad  
 Whitney Baumann: “*Natura Naturans*: Opening Space for Political Dialogue”  
 Almut Beringer: “The Religious Order of Nature as Moral Imperative for the Human-Nature Relationship”  
 Christian J. Greer: “An Orphaned Movement: The Hazards and Potentials of Deep Ecology’s Identity Crisis”
- 13:00–14:00 Lunch**  
 Location: Atrium (Oudezijds Achterburgwal 237)
- 14:00–16:00 Parallel Sessions**
- 14:00–16:00 Session 12: Farms, Gardens, and Forests  
 Room: OMHP, A008  
 Presiding: Yamini Narayanan  
 Donna Seamone: “Farm Religion: Rethinking Religion, Progress and ‘More than Human Nature’ in/through Ritual Performance”  
 Terry Terhaar: “Foresters and Their Eternal Forests”  
 Jane Weiss: “Manufacturing Eden: Horticulture and Spirituality in Industrial America”  
 Eleanor Finnegan: “Making Meaning in an American Medinah and Mazar: Defining Progress among Muslim Farm Communities in the United States”
- 14:00–16:00 Session 13: H<sub>2</sub>O: Water and Spiritual Progress  
 Room: OMHP, C017  
 Presiding: Dieter Gerten  
 Dieter Gerten: “Paradigm Shifts in Water Management: Where Does Spirituality Enter?”  
 Sylvie Shaw: “The Spirit of Resilience: Fishers in the Deep Blue”  
 David Groenfeldt: “Water Development and the Nature of Progress”  
 Robin Globus: “Adding Ethics to Watershed Management”  
 Discussion Groups formed in the audience  
 Final Discussion
- 14:00–16:00 Session 14: Indigenous Traditions and Intercultural Contacts  
 Room: OMHP, F001  
 Presiding: Gerard Persoon  
 Christina Welch: “Civilizing the Redman: Locke, Smith, Land and Social Darwinism”  
 Amanda Holmes: “Yorùbá Religion, Nature and Pedagogy: Using Video as a Tool”  
 Luke Johnston: “Resuscitating Relics and Taboos: Imagined Pasts and Sustainable Futures”

- 14:00–16:00    **Session 15: Animism as a Path to Decolonizing the Academy**  
 Room: OMHP, C117  
 Presiding: Priscilla Stuckey  
 Participants: Mary Jeanne Barrett; Linda Hogan; Shauneen Pete; Priscilla Stuckey  
 Respondent: Graham Harvey
- Speaking together and independently as Indigenous and non-Indigenous animist scholars, panelists and respondents discuss the transformative potential of animism to reshape Western frameworks of knowing.
- 16:00–16:30    **Coffee and Tea Break**
- 16:30–18:00    **Plenary Session 5: Indigenous and Pagan Perspectives**  
 Room: OMHP, F001  
 Presiding: Sarah Pike  
 Kristina Tiedje, University of Lyon (France): “Nahua Science/Western Science: Climate Change and Agency in the Huasteca”  
 Graham Harvey, Open University (UK): “Progressive Animism: Sustaining Diversity among the Co-Creators of the World”
- 19:30–23:00    **Dinner**  
 For pre-registered participants  
 Location: NH Schiller Hotel, Rembrandtplein 26

## Sunday, 26 July 2009

- 9:00–11:00    **Plenary Session 6: Political and Philosophical Implications**  
 Room: OMHP, F001  
 Presiding: Bron Taylor  
 John Barry, School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy Belfast (Northern Ireland): “The Transition to Sustainability and the Redefining of Progress: Vulnerability, Resilience and Green Political Economy”  
 Eric Katz, New Jersey Institute of Technology (USA): “The Paradox of Progress: Domination and Autonomy”  
 Donald Worster, University of Kansas (USA): “John Muir and the Religion of Nature”
- 11:00–11:30    **Coffee and Tea Break**
- 11:30–13:00    **Parallel Sessions**
- 11:30–13:00    **Session 16: Presentation of Ongoing PhD Research**  
 Room: OMHP, C017  
 Presiding: Sarah Pike  
 Katharine Wilkinson: “The Climate of Creation Care: American Evangelical Discourses on Global Climate Change”

Jaana Kouri: "Narrative Environment as Moral Witness"

Hanna Schösler: "Clarifying the Influence of Worldviews on Food Consumption"

Shemsi Krasniqi: "Beliefs and Ritual Practices among Kosovo Albanians: Reflections on Eco-Culture"

11:30–13:00 Session 17: Pantheism and Paganism

Room: OMHP, A008

Presiding: Michael York

Bernie Zaleha: "Pantheism, Panentheism, Paganism, Atheism, Theism: Sorting out Conflicting and Inconsistent Terminology"

Leon A. van Gulik: "On the Pagan Parallax: A Preliminary Account of the Inventions of Tradition in Contemporary Nature Religions"

Ian Jamison: "How Green is My Paganism? Some Reflections on Ethical Implications of Competing Discourses of Nature in Contemporary Western Paganisms"

11:30–13:00 Session 18: Sacred Space II: Sacred Sites and the Sense of Place

Room: OMHP, C117

Presiding: Whitney Bauman

Yamini Narayanan: "Inspiring Sustainability beyond Sustainability: Religion As Both Value and Strategy"

Francesca C. Howell: "Dragons, Witches and Polenta: Sense of Place and Festival in Northern Italy"

13:00–13:30 **Concluding Discussion**

Room: OMHP, F001

Presiding: Bron Taylor and Kocku von Stuckrad

14:00–19:30 **Post-Conference Excursion**

Departure: In front of Allard Pierson Museum, Oude Turfmarkt 127/129

## Abstracts and Presenters

**Adams, Cameron**, University of Kent, UK (Session 3)  
C.L.Adams@kent.ac.uk

Participation in session “From the Shaman’s Circle to the Ivory Tower: Progress, Spirituality and Psychedelic Thinking.”

See description under Anna Waldstein.

**Al-Jayyousi, Odeh Rashid**, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Amman, Jordan (Plenary Session 3; Session 9)  
odeh.al.jayyousi@iucn.org

“Re-Thinking Sustainability and Progress: Islamic Perspectives”

This paper aims to shed some light on the notion of sustainability from an Islamic perspective. It is intended to frame an enlightened Islamic discourse to address global environmental issues and to contribute to the definition of progress based on Islamic perspectives. The paper argues that Islam as a way of life is to be seen as the mercy to all humanity that can provide some remedies and insights to the global debate on progress, sustainable development and good life (*Hayat Tayyebah*). The essence of knowledge, pursuit of happiness, enoughtness (*Zohd*) and the role of the community (*Ummah*) and the human as a steward and a witness (*Khalifa*) will be presented. A framework for sustainability which represents balanced and harmonious progress will be outlined.

**Asprem, Egil**, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Session 1)  
e.asprem@uva.nl

“Utopia and the Paranormal: Degeneration and Progress in the Parapsychology of William McDougall and J.B. Rhine”

This paper examines ideas on social degeneration and the promise of progress in discourses on parapsychology in the period between the world wars. The focus is on two central actors in the development of modern parapsychology: the British psychologist, anthropologist and social critic William McDougall, and the American botanist-turned-psychologist who is often considered the father of modern experimental parapsychology, Joseph Banks Rhine. Both these researchers were also authors commenting on wider cultural topics, including religion, the worldview of science, the relation of mind to matter, social challenges and their possible solutions – including policies of eugenics.

The paper attempts to make connections between the diverse discourses that parapsychology was embedded in by these two authors, with a special emphasis on the role of discourses on social degeneration, the relevance of science and (Lamarckian) evolution to such questions, and the promise of a better future society through research on the paranormal.

**Barrett, Mary Jeanne**, University of Saskatchewan, Canada (Session 15)  
mj.barrett@usask.ca

See panel description under Priscilla Stuckey.

**Barry, John**, School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy Belfast, Northern Ireland (Plenary Session 6)  
j.barry@qub.ac.uk

“The Transition to Sustainability and the Redefining of Progress: Vulnerability, Resilience and Green Political Economy”

This paper begins from the proposition that the transition to a sustainable, green, low carbon future requires the redefining of progress. Part of this cultural and political redefining of this foundational concept requires an engagement with and acknowledgement of human vulnerability (collectively and individually) in face of the sustainability crisis (viewed as operating across the ‘triple bottom line’ of social/cultural, economic and ecological dimensions). Vulnerability and related ideas of dependence are noticeable by their absence in Western political and moral thinking but are, it is suggested, central to developing new modes of ‘resilience’ (in our thinking, practices and cultural adaptation) which are required to ‘cope with’ socio-ecological problems such as biophysical limits to orthodox economic growth, climate change and so on. A key aspect of the redefining of progress is the need for new models and practices of ‘green political economy’ to replace or supplement the ideological hegemony existing neo-classical economic policies and thinking. Examples from the growing ‘Transition Towns’ movement in the UK and Ireland will be used to illustrate grass-roots civil society articulations of redefining progress and experiments in alternative forms of green economic thinking and practice

**Baumann, Whitney**, Florida International University, USA (Session 11)  
whitneyabauman@mac.com; wbauman@fiu.edu

“*Natura Naturans*: Opening Space for Political Dialogue”

This paper explores the erasure of human and earth “other” that results from a linear understanding of time using two phenomena as primary examples: “The Dark Ages / Renaissance” and the “*Convivencia* / Age of Discovery.” In both cases, a narrative of progress forces an “internal” erasure of “other” cultural influences and an “external” erasure of “others” in nature. In this paper, I argue that only an evolving present toward an undetermined future makes *natura naturans* possible and that some version of *natura naturans* is the only *viable* option we have for defining “nature” as political. The move is from the “global gaze” toward planetary possibilities for a multi-natural future. In this process, both “religion” and “science” become political, persuasive, and open toward the space that makes democracy possible. It is this very space that is opened up, paradoxically, by the uncertainty of global climate change. Global climate change is, among many things, the re-politicization of the natural world and all therein: including all that we might call culture, religion, society, or human. From the linear time of progress, which always paves over democracy, we move into a planetary time of emergence. It is with this understanding of time that time itself opens up toward the space of democracy.

**Benthall, Jonathan**, University College London, UK (Plenary Session 3)  
jonathanbenthall@hotmail.com

“Progress and Circumscription in the Greening of Islam”

Rival ideas of progress—material, intellectual and moral—were debated in classical Islam, balanced by an acceptance that the world is circumscribed by God’s omniscience. This framework for discussion will be juxtaposed with analysis of current activist campaigns for a ‘green’ Islam, which is grounded both in Quranic texts and in the specific geographical setting where Islam was founded. Benthall’s paper will also ask why the arguments underpin-



ning such campaigns have met with little response from the *ulama*—concluding that the contentiousness of the political sphere in the Muslim world has tended to marginalize such concerns. However, innovations such as the Seven Year Plan for Islamic Action on the Environment, agreed in Kuwait in October 2008, suggest that change may be in the air. As with attempts to harness other religions for the environmental cause, the challenge will be to enable high-principled doctrines to get the better of popular fatalism.

**Beringer, Almut**, University of Wisconsin, USA (Session 7; Session 11)  
beringer@netconnect.com.au

Paper 1: “Right Earth Relations and Ecology of the Heart: Conceptual and Practical Considerations toward the Re-Enchantment of Nature”

Critics of the western worldview highlight the desacralization of nature and the lack of spiritual interventions in the human relationship with nature as underlying unsustainability. Many analysts agree on the importance of religion and spirituality in sustainable development. Spirituality or an explicit metaphysics seems fundamental to conceptual interpretations as well as practical expressions of sustainable living. Using the term ‘ecology of the heart,’ the paper analyzes what some spiritual leaders as well as re-interpretations or advancements of spiritual traditions encourage toward restoring humanity’s role as member rather than exploiter of the ecosphere: the education and development of the human heart, to complement the education of the mind. The paper extends the normative principle of Right Human Relations (RHR), known in the Divine Wisdom/the perennial philosophy, to the human-nature relationship, to become Right Earth Relations (RER) – an applied environmental ethics which hold promise for healing the human-nature relationship.

Paper 2: “The Religious Order of Nature as Moral Imperative for the Human-Nature Relationship”

The traditionalist notion of the religious order of nature has guided the human-nature relationship for centuries. The scientific revolution of the 16/17th centuries and the resultant scientific worldview surpassed ageless understandings of the order of the cosmos including the human-nature relationship; it largely replaced indigenous metaphysical understandings and corollary explicit environmental ethics and religious-spiritual knowledge of nature. The paper draws on the writings of Seyyed Hossein Nasr to explore fundamental principles of the religious order of nature. It asks whether the traditionalist worldview, or elements of it, need to be recovered to address the global crisis of unsustainability at its root cause to set humanity onto a more path toward sustainable futures.

**Boersema, Jan J.**, IVM, Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Plenary Session 1; Plenary Session 2)  
jan.boersema@ivm.vu.nl

“In Defence of Progress”

“If you’re walking down the right path and you’re willing to keep walking, eventually you’ll make progress” (Barack Obama)

Our Western type of achieving progress through economic growth is often criticized as being the root cause of the present environmental crisis. Most notably the way we harness our natural resources is deemed to be unsustainable. A *sustainable development* is called for and from the late eighties on the prime question has become how such a development can take shape. According to economists external effects have to be taken into account in order to adjust for negative impacts on the natural environment. Negative side effects and losses should be economically valued and natural resources still available for free should get a

proper price. By doing so market distortions could be repaired. Over the last decades this idea turns out to be theoretically and practically not sufficiently viable. Due to the present financial and economic crisis the very idea of a free market economy is questioned. This gave way to the development of new ideas and growing support for earlier pleas for more radical changes. One of the concepts under attack is the idea of progress that is perceived to be the ideological engine that steers our society and fuels an ever growing human appropriating of the natural resources. In my paper I will argue that progress is intricately bound to our western culture and that it is neither necessary (from an environmental viewpoint) nor desirable (from a philosophical stance) to abandon this idea or resort to more aloof non-Western ideas.

**Boomgaard, Peter**, Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies at Leiden (KITLV) & University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Session 10)  
Boomgaard@kitlv.nl

“Religious Beliefs of the Forest Communities of Java, 1500–2000”

Between the fifteenth and the twentieth centuries, Islam was the expanding religion on the island of Java (Indonesia), while Animism, Hinduism and Buddhism were on the retreat, even if they would leave many traces among the Muslim Javanese. In this paper, I discuss the implications of these developments for the forests and their inhabitants. Islam started in Java’s coastal urban centers, so the question is whether the forest people were easily converted. What was the role of the indigenous and colonial states in all this? I also discuss data on tree spirits, forests spirits, sacred, haunted, or forbidden forests, sacred trees, and similar phenomena, including guardian tigers, and the ways in which forest dwellers, Javanese outsiders and Europeans dealt with these supernatural features of the forests. I also discuss how these beliefs changed when the forests as good as disappeared.

**Campbell, Colin**, York University, UK (Plenary Session 4; Session 6)  
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“The Easternization of the West and the Rehabilitation of Nature”

The cultural changes that mark the modern history of the West can be understood as a process in which fundamental assumptions that have long characterised this civilization have been set aside in favour of those more typical of a Far Eastern worldview. A key feature of this Easternization of the West has been the transformation of nature from its former profane status to something akin to sacredness as the historic Western dualisms of God and nature, flesh and spirit, and mind and body, have been set aside in favour of Eastern-style conceptions of cosmic holism and interdependence. Crucial to the processes through which this transformation has occurred have been developments in Western intellectual traditions, especially those in Protestant theology and Marxist thought, as well as the emergence of post-Newtonian science; taken together these developments, in conjunction with the changing cultural needs of a new generation of young idealists, have worked to undermine the historic basis of Western civilization.

**Casselman, Ivan**, University of Kent, UK (Session 3)  
ic40@kent.ac.uk

Participation in session “From the Shaman’s Circle to the Ivory Tower: Progress, Spirituality and Psychedelic Thinking.”

See description under Anna Waldstein.

**Chapple, Christopher**, Loyola Marymount University Los Angeles, USA (Session 7)  
christopherkeychapple@gmail.com; cchapple@lmu.edu

“Disappearing into Nature: Vasistha’s Elemental Embrace”

The eleventh century was a time of great literary exuberance in the development of Indian Sanskrit literature. In the Kashmir Valley, a celebration of human potential reached its culmination in a text called the *Yogavasistha*, a verse epic of more than 20,000 verses. In a sequence of chapters that describe his own inner journey, the legendary sage Vasistha describes to his young protege, Prince Rama, how to perform concentration (*dharana*) on the elements. Beginning with an encounter with the great goddess, from whose outstretched arms grow the forests that adorn India’s landscape, Vasistha probes deeply within himself to see and experience how the great elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space envelope, enclose, and expand his consciousness.

In this presentation, original translations will be shared that demonstrate the intimacy between self and world that characterizes this remarkable work. By describing the connection between human and cosmos with such splendid imagery, Vasistha creates a literary context for enhanced environmental awareness that remains instructive for our progress-obsessed world.

**Compson, Jane**, University of Central Florida, USA (Session 1)  
jcompson@mail.ucf.edu

“Ecological Teaching: Using Contemplative Techniques in the Academic Classroom”

In this paper I discuss the concept of progress in the context of the academic classroom in a world that may be on the edge of ecological apocalypse. I compare a teleological approach to teaching with an ecological approach. On the teleological model, students are very goal-oriented and are vulnerable to a consumerist mentality where they ‘acquire’ knowledge and grades in order to ‘progress’. On the ecological model, students engage with course material in a more holistic way, fostering emotional as well as intellectual engagement with the subject matter. I argue that a more wholesome relationship with the environment requires an emotional shift, and that the teleological model does not help to effect this change. I describe some teaching methods that I use in attempt to implement an ecological approach, and discuss their effectiveness.

**Curry, Patrick**, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK; University of Wales, Lampeter, UK (Session 2)  
pmcurry@gn.apc.org

“Enchantment and the Paradox of Progress”

I shall briefly characterise the experience of enchantment, then its differences and commonalities with both nature and religion. With those in mind, we will look at the relationship between enchantment and progress, including the paradox: how can you re-enchant the world (as a gesture, at least, of progress) if it cannot be used as such?

**de Pater, Cathrien**, Independent consultant & researcher, Rheden, The Netherlands (Session 7; Session 8)  
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**de Witt, Annick**, Free University Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Session 8)  
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“Changing Worldviews in the Netherlands and the Impact on the Environment”

This study aims to scrutinize whether the ‘Western worldview’ is indeed undergoing profound and far-reaching change, as several scholars in the domains of sociology and philosophy claim, and explore what the (potential) environmental impacts of these changes consist of, in terms of environmental behaviour, public support for environmental policies and initiatives for cultural and societal change. A questionnaire has been developed which translates Campbell’s two *ideal-typical* worldviews of ‘materialistic dualism’ and ‘metaphysical monism’ (building forth on Max Weber), into fifty Likert-items, which state the different polar positions regarding ontology, epistemology, human image, the good life and the organization of society. The questionnaire, which also consists of a list of open and semi-open questions exploring environmentally significant behaviours and opinions, is conducted by a representative group of 1000 people in the Netherlands, testing the claims of a ‘newly emerging worldview’ and attempting to clarify the relationship between worldviews and environmental behaviour.

**Drees, Willem B.**, University of Leiden, The Netherlands (Plenary Session 3)  
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**Elkayam, Shelley**, Bar Ilan University & The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel (Session 9)  
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“Progress in the Hebrew Model of Time: The Seventh-Unit Messianic Ecosystem”

Progress signifies a steady improvement in time through the application of reason. For secular progress, time is even and linear. In the Hebrew model of time each seventh day the community symbolically returns to the completion stage of the world and the people, manifested in two perfect events: creation’s seventh day and the granting of the *Torah*. Joy, praises and thanksgiving are set with no attempt to improve nature or the world, but avoiding activities of managing nature or manipulating, which results in harmony with nature and the environment. The Hebrew model of time interacts with secular Western notions of progress six days a week. I will argue that, theologically, the seventh-unit model of Hebrew time offers an ecosystem of a *messianic time without a visible Messiah*. During the three appointed times mentioned, *Shabbat*, *Shmita* and *Shavuot*, progress means flowing back in time and re-joining an existing perfect world with an invisible heaven joined by people on earth. A messianic ecosystem thus emerges.

**Ellis, Eugenia**, Drexel University, Philadelphia, USA (Session 8)  
genaellis@drexel.edu

“Mimēsis and (Eco)Logical Design: The Cosmotheistic Basis of Sustainable Architecture”

A new environmental awareness has been demanded of our culture due to the way we have ‘managed planet earth.’ Scientific progress in architectural building systems has allowed us to defy nature through new construction technologies that could hermetically seal buildings from the environment to operate independently from prevailing natural conditions. The result of this effort to ‘perfect nature’ in architecture regardless of natural conditions has created a global environmental catastrophe that threatens the very future of humankind. Today there is an international effort to reduce energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels to achieve *carbon-neutral* buildings by the year 2030. This paper will demonstrate how the pre-

sent-day (eco)logical practice of *biophilia* in architecture is an act of *mimēsis* in the original sense of the word, an imitative process that considers the products of nature and the cosmos as divine resources for architectural design.

**Finnegan, Eleanor**, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA (Session 12)  
finneged@gmail.com

“Making Meaning in an American Medinah and Mazar: Defining Progress among Muslim Farm Communities in the United States”

Cities have long been seen as important places of progress. However, in the United States, there are groups of American Muslims who have decided to move away from cities to live by communal farms, often as a part of intentional communities. By looking at two communities, New Medinah in Mississippi and the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship in Pennsylvania, my paper will investigate how these people envision and attempt to live out ideas about progress and success. This information will contribute to understandings of different conceptualizations of progress worldwide, the cultural and intellectual sources of ideas about progress, and the role that religious worldviews play in crafting ideas about progress.

**Freund, Jim**, Lancaster University, UK (Session 2)  
j.freund@lancaster.ac.uk

“The Roots of Unsustainable Progress”

In nature, the expression of the will to power is limited to useful goals, but human culture and technology amplifies power until it becomes a self-defeating liability. The ‘progress’ motivated by this unconscious drive is now rapidly destroying the natural world on which we depend. It is therefore important to become aware of the existence of the will to power within ourselves, our religions and societies, and to identify other values to focus on to counteract its negative effects. I have conducted primary research into Personal Eschatologies in which respondents can be seen to possess a worldview in which the ultimate value is power, or one centred on being and spirit (Fromm 1976). Religion has a central place in the creation of the ‘ontodelic’ awareness and practices that could create a new consensus concerning sustainability and progress, and a new more balanced relationship of humanity and nature.

**Gerten, Dieter**, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany (Session 13)  
gerten@pik-potsdam.de

“Paradigm Shifts in Water Management: Where Does Spirituality Enter?”

The talk provides from an eco-hydrological perspective a brief overview of the looming global water crisis—the increasing scarcity of freshwater in relation to climate change, population growth, and demands for land. Promising ecologically and ethically informed strategies to cope with water scarcity are presented. The oft-cited ‘paradigm shift’ in water management is critically reflected in terms of its underlying ideas of ‘progress’. In light of this, the formation of a new water ethos is outlined, focused on the role of religion/spirituality within this process.

**Globus, Robin**, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA (Session 13)  
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“Adding Ethics to Watershed Management”

This paper examines a conundrum facing managers of a small lake near Gainesville, Florida, whose murky waters and unpleasant odor have been worrisome to local stakeholders. Whether this unpleasant state is of natural or anthropogenic origin will determine what actions managers will take, including removing a native fish known to exacerbate pollution, or restoring the lake to a state similar to more pristine-looking lakes in the area. Both options are premised on contrasting notions of the ecological good. This case study will help reveal how differing notions of what is “natural” and good underlie conflicts over how Earth’s water resources should be managed. It will also illustrate a little noted but significant problem posed by the increasing spread of management: The proliferation of moral dilemmas. I conclude by suggesting that good management should entail public discussion of the ethical implications of prospective decisions.

**Greer, Christian J.**, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., USA (Session 11)  
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“An Orphaned Movement: The Hazards and Potentials of Deep Ecology’s Identity Crisis”

As a result of its inclusive structure, Deep Ecology has had difficulty defining itself as a coherent movement outside of its "radical" orientation. Through employing Arne Naess’s “pluralist ethic,” the competing conceptions of Deep Ecology can be reconciled, thereby creating a vision for the movement better suited to legitimize its nonanthropocentric ethic within the larger environmental discourse.

**Groenfeldt, David**, Santa Fe Watershed Association, Santa Fe, USA (Session 13)  
dgroenfeldt@newmexico.com

“Water Development and the Nature of Progress”

Freshwater ecosystems, such as the Santa Fe River in New Mexico, USA, are routinely sacrificed to support materialist notions of progress. Modern water development depends on engineering solutions for water storage and control, and institutional incentives to enhance the economic productivity of water. An extension of this strategy in response to the increasing climatic variability and more severe droughts associated with climate change, threatens even greater devastation of rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Sustainable water development demands a reformulation of the concept of ‘progress’ from human conquest over nature to a quest for synergies between human and natural economies. The necessary technologies and water management principles are already well understood. What is lacking are shared ethical principles and spiritual beliefs about the sacredness of water and water ecosystems. This talk proposes a process of “culture therapy” to identify, understand, and apply water teachings found within indigenous spiritual traditions, to help establish a shared water ethic.

**Haberman, David**, Indiana University, USA (Plenary Session 4; Session 1)  
dhaberma@indiana.edu

“Tracking Progress in the Voices of the Trees”

An academic conversation about progress that emerges by paying attention to representations of tree worship will be tracked from the nineteenth century to the present. Although

there was much diversity of opinion among influential scholars of religion and society during the nineteenth century, one view shared by many of them was a developmental one that understood human society to advance through various stages on the march toward civilization. Embedded in this shared view was the idea of progress, which meant in this case specifically moving away from the idea that spirit was present in nonhuman life forms. Primitive religion was regarded pejoratively in terms of “animistic” and “anthropomorphic” beliefs, both of which were to be abandoned in the progressive movement forward. Consideration of trees and tree worship often figured significantly in such scholarly arguments; any society that took seriously the sentience of trees was suspect from the perspective of the progressive agenda. Today, however, this particular notion of progress is beginning to be questioned deeply. After inheriting a problematic world that is truly animated only by human beings, there is renewed interest in the study of cultures that are yet invested in animistic conceptions and in reviving human perspectives that might allow meaningful interaction with trees.

**Harvey, Graham**, Open University, UK (Plenary Session 5; Session 5; Session 15)  
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Paper 1 (plenary): “Progressive Animism: Sustaining Diversity among the Co-Creators of the World”

Recent research has led to a new usage of the term “animism” arising from respectful dialogue with indigenous knowledges about relational ontologies. The “new animism” is not only about viewing the world as a community of living beings, “human and other-than-human persons”, but insists on the full participation of humans in the wider world-community. Among animism’s out-workings in practice, totemism and shamanry label means of negotiating sustainability and progress for humans and other-than-human species as they impact on one another. Indigenous and ethnographic presentations of animism have attracted the attention of environmental philosophers (especially Val Plumwood), activists, and others. This lecture will address the question of what “sustainability” and “progress” might mean among animists. More radically, it will ask how progress might be made towards increasing the sustenance of the still diverse community of all those beings who co-create the world.

Paper 2: “Cannibals and Cyborgs: The Consuming Monsters of Animism and Modernism”

Consumerism defines the hyper-technic world of modernism. Its dominance was almost complete when proffered as the solution to the 2008 “credit crunch” of systemic over-consumption. (Popular reluctance to return to market too quickly evidenced at least residual resistance.) Seemingly benign terms like progress mask the proliferation of mechanisms of unjust distribution and unequal access to life-sustenance. Earthen spiritualities join with transcendentalist monotheisms in protesting the appropriation of cosmological and other ritual performances to propel a progress that they contest. In turn, they offer their own notions of progress entangled with alternative visions of “good living”. These cannot be without technology or consumption but, in various ways, narrate and perform both as inescapably ambiguous. Animist relationships with object-persons (baskets, masks, ancestor-carvings, weapons, pointing-sticks) exemplify modes of personhood prefiguring academic theorisation of hybridity. Technology may not be tame but it is integral to community while, in contrast, cannibal myths and rituals demonstrate the threat of over-consumption and denial of relationship. Media reception of cyborgs (oncomouse and the ozone hole) illustrate the whirlwind of modernity’s ambiguous achievements. Reference to the “monsters” of animism and modernism will be utilised in an argument about the revitalisation of animism in contest with modernism.

**Hogan, Linda**, writer in residence and lecturer on the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, USA (Session 15)

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See panel description under Priscilla Stuckey.

**Howell, Francesca C.**, Open University, UK (Session 18)

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“Dragons, Witches and Polenta: Sense of Place and Festival in Northern Italy”

Two villages in Northern Italy conserve traditions in their annual festival cycle which introduce liminal space through ritualized poetics of dwelling: a mythical beast is captured on Epiphany, to give a speech before a two day feast; to the southwest witches are memorialized at a harvest fair named for a saint, where townsfolk wear black cloaks in commemoration. The foods at both fairs are local, the recipes carried out at home according to tradition.

Theories from Bakhtin, Ingold, Turner and others, as well as themes exploring the meaning of progress in rural Italian communities will be discussed here. This field work forms the basis for Francesca Howell's Ph.D thesis.

**Ivakhiv, Adrian**, University of Vermont, USA (Session 5)

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“Technology, Enchantment, and the Politics of Becoming: Spiritualities of Immanence in the 21st Century”

Technology, while for many a source of wonders and gifts, is for others a source of horrors. According to a well established narrative, technological modernity has “disenchanted” the world and created rifts between humans and nature, spirit and matter, body and soul, sacred and secular. Continental philosophers have grappled in influential ways with such questions of technology, enchantment/disenchantment, and nature. Martin Heidegger, Max Horkheimer, and Theodore Adorno have variously critiqued modernity/technology/capitalism as systems that give us a world that is denatured, disenchanted, and turned into a “standing reserve” for instrumental uses. More recent thinkers including Gilles Deleuze and Bruno Latour have attempted a conceptual unraveling of the binaries of nature/culture and being/becoming: for both (and their growing ranks of followers), life is the ceaseless production of relational networks, hybrids, and “rhizomes,” a process of ongoing inter-engagement among humans, organisms, and machines.

In recent debates over secularization and disenchantment, Canadian social philosopher Charles Taylor's 2007 book “A Secular Age” has become an important landmark, critically lauded in reviews and featured as a focus of conferences and blogs. Taylor's critique of “the malaise of modernity” and his analysis of religion and subjectivity in a secular age draw on a Heideggerian analysis of technological modernity, yet are arguably underpinned by Taylor's own Roman Catholicism. Among Taylor's sympathetic critics, political philosopher William Connolly has articulated a sustained defense of “immanent naturalism,” a political and spiritual perspective rooted in the thinking of philosophers from Lucretius and Spinoza to Nietzsche and Deleuze and characterized by a “reverence for the protean diversity of being.” This paper will stage a philosophical debate between Taylor's “critical Catholicism” and Connolly's Spinozian-Nietzschean-Deleuzian “paganism.” While both Taylor and Connolly (like their precursors) make suggestive comments on religious or spiritual action, they have rarely been examined in relation to spiritual movements of the present. To facilitate such an examination, I will focus on the thread of the imagination or the “imaginal” (as defined by Henry Corbin and Edward Casey, among others) in order to tease out the ways a



transcendentalist and immanentist imagination of technology would respectively engage individuals and society in the collective quest for a spirituality for the twenty-first century.

**Jamison, Ian**, Open University, UK (Session 17)  
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“How Green is my Paganism? Some Reflections on Ethical Implications of Competing Discourses of Nature in Contemporary Western Paganisms”

This paper is based upon on-going research towards a PhD in Religious Studies at the Open University, UK. In attempting to examining Pagan ethical stances towards Nature, I believe that I have identified two competing constructions of the concept within contemporary Paganisms. These two constructions are firmly rooted in the historical forces that allowed the emergence of contemporary Paganisms, but are now raising questions about the theorising of Paganism as “Nature Religion”, and the way in which environmental ethics might emerge from such a theory. I will also attempt to identify some implications of this for the ways in which Pagans theorise and transmit their ethical positions.

**Johnston, Luke**, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA (Session 2; Session 14)  
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“Resuscitating Relics and Taboos: Imagined Pasts and Sustainable Futures”

Sustainability and its cognate sustainable development are tied to the Western preoccupation with progress, focused on “advancing” cultural systems to a point where they can subsist within their ecological carrying capacity. This analysis notes the emergence, within sustainability discourse, of a strong alternative to the traditional notion of progress that has been central to economics, development, the natural and social sciences, and religious discourses. The increasingly frequent tendency to look toward the past as the most important source for the values and practices necessary for a viable future represents the growth of a discourse of stability and resilience that challenges the Western preoccupation with progress.

**Kapfhammer, Wolfgang**, Philipps University Marburg, Germany (Session 10)  
wolfgang\_kapfhammer@web.de

“Fast Religion, Slow Food: The Paradox of Progress in an Indigenous Society in the Brazilian Amazon”

Contrary to popular belief the notion of progress in indigenous societies is not necessarily a Western import but indispensable part of native cosmogonies. Paradoxically the way of life of these indigenous societies has long since become iconic for those parts of Western society that entertain a critical stance towards notions of progress. Based on fieldwork among the Sateré-Mawé Indians of Brazil, this paper tackles notions of progress among this indigenous group. Although expressed within the parameters of traditional cosmology an ongoing conversion movement to evangelical denominations is clearly seen as such a progressive move by the Sateré-Mawé. Incidentally this ideological break with the past produced new social capital that seems to optimize sustainable collaboration with ecologically inclined Western NGOs.

We are faced with a double paradox: While indigenous discourse highlights progress, although in terms of traditional cosmology, the Western parties involved offer connection to the globalized world while invoking the edenic tropes of ecological salvation.

**Katz, Eric**, New Jersey Institute of Technology, USA (Plenary Session 6)  
eric.m.katz@njit.edu

“The Paradox of Progress: Domination and Autonomy”

Progress is a problematic idea in a critical understanding of human history (especially in the West), for at its core is a fundamental paradox. Progress for humanity seems to depend on the domination and control of natural processes. Humans achieve the positive benefit of autonomy through the domination of non-human nature. Progress cannot be understood outside this paradox of the co-existence of domination and autonomy. Yet it would be a mistake to assume that this domination involves only the non-human natural world, and thus that this is the fundamental philosophical cause of the environmental crisis. The domination inherent in the notion of progress also involves the domination of humans by humans through the increasingly powerful machinery of technology. The threat to human autonomy in the idea of progress may thus provide a method to avoid the worst evils of the paradox: just as we would wish to preserve human autonomy in the face of progress, we must also seek to preserve the autonomy of nature.

**Khanna, Chander**, Himalayan Meditation Society of Ontario, Canada (Session 4)  
ckhanna@msn.com

“Responding to Climate Change II: Hindu Traditions and ‘Light’ Development”

An analysis of Hindu visions and resources for low-material development, including spiritual growth, moral development and low-material cultural practices.

**Kimura, Takeshi**, University of Tsukuba, Japan (Session 8)  
takekimu@logos.tsukuba.ac.jp

“Historical Formation of Sacred Shinto Space: Modern Knowledge and the Allocation of Secular Space for Developing Progress in Modern Japan”

These days, Shinto has emerged as a sort of eco-friendly religion. There is some historical reason for it. In the social process of modernization in Japan, a complex myriad of various transformations and changes had been done, allocating and distributing religious and secular importance to different arenas. In this new historical configuration, some natural areas are designated as more utilitarian purpose (territorial areas of temples and shrines were given up for the purpose of secular usage) and as a source of natural energy to promote industrial development, while certain new religious areas are endowed with more sacred meanings, provided by modern academic knowledge of natural sciences.

When the global society faces a task of sustainability, both the pre-modern and feudal Japanese society, which was a closed recycled system, and Shinto sacred places become a sort of inspiration. I will examine the historical background of these intellectual resources and their possible directions.

**Kirschenmann-Raby, Peter and Joanne**, Free University Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Session 2)  
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“What is to Replace the Belief in Progress, and on What Grounds?”

The idea of progress, wrongly regarded as only Western and modern, has faded away for many reasons. Some of it, or some myth of progress, still is alive (in particular, regarding science). Economically, progress is measured by GNP, with its familiar shortcomings. The

‘Genuine Progress Indicator’ is an appropriate alternative, aiming also at a sustainable and equitable world. Can such an aim be ethically supported? I briefly discuss Jonas’ proposal, inspired as it is by Judeo-Christian traditions. I agree with him that ethics might not be enough. Yet, religiously motivated programs, like WCC’s “Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation”, seemed to have had little specific, concrete influence on the situation in the world.

This also goes for Jonas’ views. I conclude that, inasmuch as the belief in progress has to be replaced, it should be replaced by the hard work of finding generally – economically, ethically, culturally, religiously – acceptable sustainable solutions to our specific problems.

**Kouri, Jaana**, University of Turku, Finland (Session 16)  
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Presentation of ongoing PhD research: “Narrative Environment as Moral Witness”

My oral history study area, the village of Lypyrti, is located in the Turku archipelago, in the south-western coast of Finland. I focus on the villagers’ cultural-geographical relation to the environment. I am interested in *place* as a cultural construction from the perspectives of memory and meaning. The history of Lypyrti is not an example of progress in cultural development but on the contrary a story of depopulation of a vital community during the last fifty years. Water is the centre, the fairway and the all around essence of the village. The pollution of water is a phenomenon of both local water ecosystems and the whole Baltic Sea. In my presentation I bring out some examples how environment and the notions of history, time and space are conceived in villagers’ reminiscences about their own village.

**Krasniqi, Shemsi**, University of Pristina, Kosovo (Session 16)  
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Presentation of ongoing PhD research: “Beliefs and Ritual Practices among Kosovo Albanians: Reflections on Eco-Culture”

**Kureethadam, Joshtrom Isaac**, Salesian Pontifical University, Rome, Italy (Session 6)  
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“The Modern Metaphysical *Weltbild* as the Humus for the Conceptual Roots of the Ecological Crisis and as ‘Under-Lying’ the Notion of Progress”

The claim advanced in this paper is that the modern metaphysical *Weltbild* (or worldview)—with its conception of nature in mechanistic terms reduced to a storehouse of resources for human consumption, of the human being through the lens of an exaggerated anthropocentrism, and of the relation between man and the physical world in terms of an ontological dualism of total separation—is the *humus* from where originate some of the principal conceptual roots of the ecological crisis. The birth of the modern worldview is to be sought, following the original intuition of Heidegger, in the metaphysics of René Descartes in particular. The notion of ‘progress’ in modern science, the contemporary technological discourse about ‘managing planet earth’, the modern capitalistic economy’s ideal of infinite growth, and even the religious attitudes towards nature in the wake of modernity, have all in common the bedrock of the modern *Weltbild*.

**McGraw, Barbara**, Saint Mary's College of California, USA (Session 5)  
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Response to Session "Culture, Civilization, and Progress: The Technological Vortex versus Spiritual Achievement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"

**Narayanan, Yamini**, La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia (Session 12; Session 18)  
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"Inspiring Sustainability beyond Sustainability: Religion As Both Value and Strategy"

Practitioners and planners of development, including sustainable development, are increasingly looking to religion and spirituality as a means of addressing the environmental and ecological crisis. Such approaches largely tend to view religion and spirituality, however, in an instrumentalist manner, more often than not, as *tools* to assisting sustainability. A secularly-framed and scientifically-oriented development thus continues to largely inform the notion of 'progress' for architects of development, with religion, when considered, being used mostly in a supportive capacity to assist such progress. Spirituality (considered here as a lived expression of religion) is thus a resource for sustainability to occur. In this paper, I reverse this position and suggest that *sustainability* is a means for *spirituality* to occur. Development must empathise with notions of progress beyond material considerations, and for this transcendence to occur, ecological, social and economic sustainability is important. As one illustrative example, I take the Hindu notion of the *Purusarthas* or the four-fold path to self-actualisation, and consider its meaning and application in the context of both the current sustainability crisis, as well as beyond, to human self-actualisation.

I also consider that applying principles of Hinduism to sustainable development is both an opportunity and a challenge to Hinduism itself to examine and address some of its internal contradictions. It may also be a relevant way for the wisdom of Hinduism to be practised in the streets, public space, and in interpersonal relations, instead of being restricted to the temples and the private realm. Arguably, it is then that the religion may be considered truly practised, when it begins to positively inform and impact the progress the whole of human life.

**Newman, William R.**, Indiana University, USA (Plenary Session 1)  
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"Isaac Newton and the Perfecting of Nature"

Isaac Newton revolutionized science by quantifying gravitational attraction, by showing that white light is actually a mixture of unaltered spectral colors, and by co-creating the mathematical discipline of the calculus. During the very years when Newton was making these discoveries, he was also using alchemy to help frame a "theory of everything" that would use ethereal media to explain processes ranging from respiration and combustion to gravity itself. In the process, Newton relied on a traditional scholastic and alchemical distinction between art and nature that allowed him to conceive of a realm of matter much deeper and more profound than any accounted for by the mechanical philosophy. It was at this profound level of change that the father of classical physics hoped to perfect nature itself. In a very real sense, Newtonian science embodied the alchemical dream of understanding nature as a unitary organism and of working transmutations at its deepest level.

**Northcott, Michael**, University of Edinburgh, UK (Session 4)  
m.northcott@ed.ac.uk

“Responding to Climate Change III: Christian Traditions and ‘Light’ Development”

An analysis of Christian visions and resources for low-material development, including spiritual growth, moral development and low-material cultural practices.

**Nugteren, Albertina**, Tilburg University, The Netherlands (Plenary Session 4)  
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**Opschoor, Hans**, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands (Session 4)  
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**Pardo, Eldad J.**, The Hebrew University Jerusalem, Israel (Session 9)  
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“Progress, the Environment and Religious Politics in Modern Iran: A Historical Assessment and Outlook”

Iran’s Western-oriented modernizers saw progress as a tool to strengthen the country and protect it from foreign encroachments. The Islamic Revolution countered by stressing spirituality and martyrdom over technology, but later transformed itself into a technology-obsessed regime eager for a conflict with the ‘powers of evil.’ Promising post-Islamist ideas for an environmentally and aesthetically sensible religious polity that is free and vibrant also exist, even as they have so far been stifled by religious militarism. The argument of my paper, however, is that if Iran’s post-Islamist ideas were somehow given a fair chance, they may develop into a refreshing new possibility for human progress. Indeed, we have seen recently a dramatic outburst of urban protest in Iran displaying the magnitude of the post-Islamist sentiment. Yet Iran’s *Holy Regime*, fearing the implosion of its religious-Jacobin republic, is determined to nip the new *Green Revolution* in the bud.

**Persoon, Gerard**, University of Leiden, The Netherlands (Session 14)  
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**Pete, Shauneen**, educational consultant, former vice president academic of First Nations University, Canada (Session 15)  
drshauneenpete@hotmail.com

See panel description under Priscilla Stuckey.

**Pike, Sarah**, California State University, Chico, USA (Plenary Session 5; Session 16)  
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**Saarinen, Sanni**, University of Helsinki, Finland (Session 10)  
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“The Idea of Sustainable Development from the Local Point of View in Peruvian Amazon”

During the last decade multiple sustainable development projects have been realised in Peruvian Amazon. These days most of these projects aim to relate the needs of local livelihoods with the conservation goals, and therefore the importance of co-operation between people working in these projects and local people is highly emphasized. However, it is not acknowledged that the basic ideas such as nature, human-nature relations and progress are culturally constructed, and different actors may understand them in highly controversial terms.

In this paper my aim is to study, how local rural people in Peruvian Amazon understand nature and their own relation with it, and furthermore to show, how the notion of progress is closely linked to the ideas of nature and human-nature relations. Rural people in Peruvian Amazon conceptualise nature and culture as parts of the same continuum and their relation with natural world is fundamentally social and moral in character. Furthermore, the notion of progress is closely linked to the wider worldview of social nature.

**Schösler, Hanna**, Free University Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Session 16)  
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Presentation of ongoing PhD research: “Clarifying the Influence of Worldviews on Food Consumption”

It is generally acknowledged that current food consumption patterns, especially with regard to animal protein, cannot be continued into the future and that consumers need to change their habits. However, especially in the case of food, changing behavior is difficult as food habits are firmly embedded in a social and cultural context and are often a result of people’s individual and collective value orientations. Our whole food system—institutions, companies and consumers—is strongly influenced by underlying worldview assumptions that need to be clarified and addressed to pave the way for change towards a more sustainable human diet. This paper aims to clarify further the link between worldview assumptions and food consumption patterns as well as their merits in terms of sustainability.

**Seamone, Donna**, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada (Session 12)  
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“Farm Religion: Rethinking Religion, Progress and ‘More than Human Nature’ in/through Ritual Performance”

While economic realities are causing the disappearance of family farms and threaten the sustainability of traditions of rural life, farmers continue to gather at summer festivals in which they display the food they devote themselves to producing; compete in tests of prowess, and set the fruits of their labor before judges competing with their neighbors. Meanwhile, the daily struggle is for maintenance of small scale intimate relations with land, food and locales. In this paper I develop and define the concept of farm religion as a tool for research on rural religion through an ethnographic investigation of farm life and agricultural festivals that celebrate fecundity, labour and locality. Approaching the festivals and farm practices as ritual performance, this paper will explore the complex relations with “more than human nature” and complicate notions of progress by focus on a tradition which seeks to maintain continuity and intimate relations with land.

**Shaw, Sylvie**, The University of Queensland, Australia (Session 5; Session 8; Session 13)  
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Paper 1: “Water-Ways: The Serpentine Soul of Brisbane”

Brisbane and its river environment are undergoing rapid change. This paper reviews these changes through an examination of the values and attitudes of residents, especially ‘river carers’, about these changes and their effect on the natural amenity of Brisbane River’s urban waterway. River carers are defined as residents involved with the river via river protection and water resource issues. The urban riverway is experiencing increasing pressure through rapid development, a growing demand for water, a decline in river quality, and a decrease in urban and riverbank habitat including old growth trees, myriad animal species and long established gardens. The paper examines the values held about the riverway and the role the river plays in the lives of those who connect to the river. It aims to build an understanding about the possible relationship between urban river engagement (e.g. walking river trails, biking, rowing, bush care involvement) as a significant indicator for the public’s continuing support for sustainability and environmental responsibility. Using Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and social capital, and Stephen Kellert’s ecological values, the paper challenges the disjuncture between progress and the river lovers (or progressives), for whom the river can be a place of restoration and communion as they restore and commune with the urban river’s wild places.

Paper 2: “The Spirit of Resilience: Fishers in the Deep Blue”

Wild fisheries globally are under threat. Many species are likely to disappear in the next 50 years. Along with it, a valuable coastal heritage will be lost. This paper examines the psychocultural impacts of fisheries decline in Australia including the emotional distress and financial hardship suffered by fishers and families. It argues that recreational angling is sacrosanct to fishers who may not see the collective damage done to species and habitat as theirs is often an individual quest for relaxation, re-creation and spiritual enchantment in nature. Likewise, commercial fishers share a deep passion for their profession and the aquatic environment but these sentiments are rarely canvassed in fisheries policies or social impacts of fisheries change, particularly those directed to fisheries closures. How both sectors fare and how they respond to fisheries change are the twin themes of this discussion which uses Lyotard’s ‘differend’ and Ricoueur’s ‘proclamation/manifestation’ framework to underline the issues.

**Skrimshire, Stefan**, The University of Manchester, UK (Session 1)  
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“Apocalypse and the Philosophy of Progress: The Roots of Crisis Thinking”

The starting premise for this paper is that there is, today, a crisis in thinking about crisis. In relation to climatic tipping points, for instance (and the spectre of a ‘point of no return’ for global warming), the simultaneity of both imminent and immanent catastrophe can be seen to generate a sort of inertia in the imagination of the future. Is the current ecological predicament ‘revealed’ as a crisis already upon us? Or are people awaiting – (or precipitating?) a singular event of crisis in the future? Or as the unfolding of some wider cosmic narrative?

To understand this very contemporary dilemma, I shall argue, means understanding a much older conceptual journey. Namely, how religious narratives have shaped the development of western philosophies of history, ever since the emergence of Apocalypse as a distinct literary genre. More specifically, I want to look at how, from the European Enlightenment onwards, a secularised apocalypse tradition played out in two ways. On the one hand, as the linear, unfolding narrative of history. And on the other, as the rupture of the present, anticipating catastrophe, the apocalyptic event. I will take the philosophies of Hegel and Kant, and their legacies, as examples of this contradictory apocalyptic framing of world history and progress. And I will show how it has influenced the ways we are able (or unable) to approach global crisis to the present day.

**Stuckey, Priscilla**, Prescott College in Prescott, Arizona, USA (Session 15)  
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Interactive session: “Animism as a Path to Decolonizing the Academy”

Animism, the practice of relating to other-than-human beings as persons or communicating subjects, provides an alternative to Western anthropocentrism and the treatment of nature as object. Based in a relational ontology, animism suggests knowledge making is a collaborative process, with plant, animal, earth, sky, or spirit persons experienced as sources of insight. As a subjugated knowledge, animism offers potential to destabilize Western ways of knowing and disrupt ongoing marginalization of Indigenous knowledge. This panel of Indigenous and non-Indigenous animist scholars will address the use of animist ways of knowing to decolonize Western thinking and will explore possibilities for working in solidarity across cultural and epistemic borders toward this goal. Panelists will share individual stories of coming to animist practices and worldviews, including addressing the power of narrative to trouble Western epistemic waters. The contradictions of positionality, audience, voice, and identity in the academy will also be addressed.

**Szerszynski, Bronislaw**, ESRC Centre for the Economic and Social Aspects of Genomics, Lancaster University, UK (Session 6)  
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“The Technological Mastery of Nature: Religious Roots or Virgin Birth?”

In *Meaning and History* (1949), Karl Löwith advanced the idea that the modern idea of progress is simply a secularised version of the Christian salvation narrative. For Löwith, this analysis constituted a radical challenge to the legitimacy of modernity: rather than modernity transcending tradition and thus enjoying a ‘virgin birth,’ it still operates within the horizon of Christian thought. This kind of analysis informed my own *Nature, Technology and the Sacred* (2005), in which I argued that the modern project of the collective mastery of nature remains profoundly shaped by its religious roots. In this paper I explore connections between this analysis and that of Herman Dooyeweerd. I explore the relationship between Dooyeweerd’s analysis of Western culture in terms of a sequence of religious ‘ground motives’ and my own in terms of ‘orderings of the sacred,’ and between our respective critiques of the project of the technological domination of nature.

**Taylor, Bron**, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA (Presidential Address; Members’ Meeting; Plenary Session 6; Concluding Discussion)  
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“Terrapolitanism or Totalitarianism: Considering the Progress and Peril of Dark Green Religion”

In *A Passion for Nature* (2008), the historian Donald Worster noted that in *Democracy in America* (1835), Alex de Toqueville “noted that the liberal democratic revolution seemed to encourage a strong feeling for nature.” Worster commented, “As Tocqueville perceived, democracy was in love with nature, and nature was the natural and logical religion of democracy.” But Worster also noted that Toqueville derided such religion as “pantheism” and thought it improperly eroded the barrier between human and non-human organisms, and thus also, a proper appreciation for humanity’s greatness. In the following generations, many have shared Toqueville’s view that nature religion, by whatever name, is spiritually dangerous. Others have argued that such religion is actually anti-democratic if not totalitarian (e.g. Anna Bramwell in *Ecology in the 20th Century*, 1989). Such views have been contested in a series of articles by the political theorist Daniel Deudney, who argues that such religion could become a kind of civic earth religion, promoting Terrapolitanism, or loyalty to the earth in



all of its diversity, providing an affective and moral ground for new forms of political organization and institutions that would encourage international cooperation and environmental beneficence. In this presentation I explore the dramatic progress and growing international influence of what in a new book I call *Dark Green Religion*, namely, religious and religion-resembling beliefs and practices that consider the earth sacred, and all organisms as kin and intrinsically valuable. Based on this expose I consider whether these forms of religious expression, which for the most part and increasingly cohere with an evolutionary/ecological worldview, offer pathways toward a humane and environmentally beneficent future, as suggested by Deudney, or rather, are dangerous, threatening rather than promoting biocultural diversity, as they claim.

**Terhaar, Terry**, University of California at Santa Cruz, USA (Session 12)  
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“Foresters and Their Eternal Forests”

Data drawn from interviews in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States show that both foresters and environmentalists view forests as deeply spiritual locations capable of generating or facilitating mystical experience. But the mystical events generate different interpretations. Foresters view themselves as participants in a cycle of growth: they nurture and protect forests from a multitude of threats including fire, snow, ice, frost, wind, avalanche, landslide, insects, animals, disease, high temperature, and drought. Foresters also improve forests by thinning or cutting younger trees, leaving the remaining trees for later harvest. Foresters tend to view their management and harvest activities as facilitating a never-ending cycle of life. But environmentalists see these activities differently: they tend to view the management and harvest activities as facilitating the end of life. The contrasting spiritual views about the eternal characteristics of nature reveal profoundly different attitudes towards improving and managing the natural world.

**Tiedje, Kristina**, University of Lyon, France (Plenary Session 5)  
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“Nahua Science/Western Science: Climate Change and Agency in the Huasteca”

Mexico recently emerged as a leader on climate change among other developing nations. Climate change brings additional vulnerabilities to its indigenous peoples who are more dependent on climate-sensitive resources. Policy responses thus need to be informed by a greater understanding of how potential impacts of climate change are distributed across different regions and populations. In light of this context, this paper examines local views of climate change. Drawing on ethnography, I explore how Nahua people perceive, understand, and cope with environmental changes. I argue that local knowledge about wind, rain, and drought patterns encoded in myth and ritual intersects with scientific ways of knowing about anthropogenic influences on the atmosphere. Overall, this paper problematizes western notions of scientific progress while seeking to bring together local and western knowledges on environmental change precipitated by climate change.

**van Beek, Walter E.A.**, Tilburg University, The Netherlands (Session 9)  
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“Religion, Time and the End of Nature”

End of time expectations, as they occur in various religions, have a dialectic relationship with nature and are usually antithetical to progress. Especially eschatologies of the more

apocalyptic kind not only foresee a sudden end of time, but also of nature, in whatever definition. After all, the new world which should be rising out of the old one, bears completely different characteristics from the old one. So ruptures in expected time make for a detached and ambivalent view on nature. Apocalyptic expectations, though, are not common in religions, in fact most religions hardly bother about endings at all, much more about beginnings. In this paper I explore this relationship between apocalyptic discourses and their view on nature in three culture—and time—areas, and compare the dynamics between religion, time and nature in order to assess the cultural nature of religious time.

**van Gulik, Leon A.**, Radboud University Nijmegen (Session 17)  
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“On the Pagan Parallax: A Preliminary Account of the Inventions of Tradition in Contemporary Nature Religions”

Post-modern nature religions face the challenge of justifying their practices and theology since there is no unbroken line between the classic and contemporary paganisms of the Western world. Against the background of progressing historical knowledge these religions will constantly have to reinvent or reconstruct their traditions. At the same time, the present context is entirely different to that of the time in which the classic paganisms emerged. The relevancy of the revived nature religions in the present day is not merely secured by their sensibilities regarding environmentalism, but also by attempts to make sense of the beliefs, rituals, and morality in the face of contemporary culture and individuality. These issues will be illustrated by drawing on initial results of content analyses of on-line discussions between pagans and interviews, yielding imaginative narratives of self-justification and self-identification amidst a continuous tension between traditionalism and adaptationalism fed from both the outside and inside.

**van Wensveen, Louke**, OIKOS Knowledge Centre Religion and Development, Utrecht, The Netherlands (Session 4)  
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“Responding to Climate Change I: Faith-Based Development Practice and ‘Light’ Development”

In this paper, low-material elements of ‘the good life’ are highlighted on the basis of input from faith-based development practice (including an analysis of insights gathered at a 2007 KCRD partner conference). Examples include low-material cultural practices (e.g., sharing tea) and possibilities for virtue cultivation (e.g., hospitality). As a creative contribution, the paper includes a tongue-in-cheek calculation of the carbon footprint of one articulated vision of such a ‘good life’. From this exercise follows a serious policy suggestion for assigning carbon credits to development initiatives that preserve or restore low-impact elements of the good life (analogous to the existing system of carbon credits for clean energy development projects).

**von Stuckrad, Kocku**, University of Amsterdam / University of Groningen, The Netherlands (Opening of the Conference; Presidential Address; Plenary Session 2; Members’ Meeting; Session 11; Concluding Discussion)  
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**Waldstein, Anna**, University of Kent, UK (Session 3)  
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Prearranged session: “From the Shaman’s Circle to the Ivory Tower: Progress, Spirituality and Psychedelic Thinking”

The aim of this session is to explore ways of making spiritually inspired psychedelic thinking more mainstream so that it may help us survive and transcend the age of progress, with minimal loss of life. In lieu of a traditional academic conference panel, this session will take the form of a large, semi-structured discussion with three main types of participants; co-convenors, invited discussants and drop-in participants. Co-convenors will each prepare a five-minute presentation, develop discussion topics and lead the discussion. Co-convenors will also invite a number of discussants with expertise in psychedelic experiences, shamanism, meditation, religious philosophies, ethnobiology, etc. to be present at the session. Invited discussants will help keep the discussion rolling and contribute to it by informally presenting bits of their work to the session. They will receive a list of discussion topics from the co-convenors before the conference. Drop-in participants are people who will read about the session in the conference programme and decide to join us. They are encouraged to participate fully in the discussion, share their questions, comments and constructive criticisms about the session theme. We have observed that the most vibrant and engaging part of a presentation is, typically, the discussion that follows. Thus, we feel that this structure will allow everyone present to walk away with seeds that will bear fruit in their further endeavors.

**Weiss, Jane**, Kingsborough Community College of CUNY, USA (Session 12)  
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“Manufacturing Eden: Horticulture and Spirituality in Industrial America”

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, urbanization and mechanized industry transformed the landscape of the northeastern United States, wreaking havoc with natural ecosystems, social conventions, and physical health. The explosive expansion of manufacturing towns confronted residents with unprecedented noise, danger, and pollution. In 1840, Lydia Sigourney proposed a counterweight to the material and spiritual violence of industrial America: horticulture. “The toil, the hurry, the speculation, the restlessness and din of the railroad principle, the spirit of accumulation which threatens to corrode every generous sensibility,” she wrote, “are modified by the sweet friendship of quiet plants.” The gardens, parks, and potted plants of Lowell and other new industrial cities resembled Ward Cases for human bodies and souls: products of industrialization that attempted to shelter their inhabitants from the ravages of “dull routine and murky atmosphere.” In the landscape of early industrialization, was the garden a mirage or did it afford genuine spiritual solace? It would take more than mere pastoral gestures to counterbalance an exploitive and hazardous factory system, yet writings by factory operatives demonstrate that the green spaces and gardens created room for negotiation between the “clatter of machinery” and the need for connections to ecosystems and cycles that transcend commerce.

**Welch, Christina**, University of Winchester, Southampton, UK (Session 14)  
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“Civilizing the Redman: Locke, Smith, Land and Social Darwinism”

Based around an undated postcard entitled “Civilizing the Redman – Soboba Reservation, San Jacinto, CA” featuring young American Indian boys tilling enclosed land and planting seeds at a mission-school, this inter-disciplinary paper explores the relationship between John Locke’s seventeenth century Christian-based understandings of land use and produc-

tivity, Adam Smith's eighteenth century developmental stages of society (categorised as hunting, pasturage, farming, and commerce), and nineteenth century Social Darwinist perceptions of human evolution. With Locke and Smith understood as valuable sources to explore the processes that attempted to 'civilize the Redman' through land use, the paper connects Locke, Smith, land, mission Christianity and Social Darwinism to make sense of the links between nature, religion and progress in the context of the Soboba boys.

**Wilkinson, Katharine**, Trinity College Oxford, UK (Session 16)  
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Presentation of ongoing PhD research: "The Climate of Creation Care: American Evangelical Discourses on Global Climate Change"

**Witoszek, Nina**, University of Oslo, Norway (Plenary Session 2)  
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"Leonardo da Vinci Our Contemporary? The 'Other' Renaissance and Its Views on Religion and Progress"

In Dan Brown's—much chastised—version of Gnostic cosmology in *The Da Vinci Code*, there are ample references to a "rebellious", feminist aspect of Leonardo's work. Though the theory of a feminist Christianity has largely been debunked, the latest studies of the legacy of the Renaissance giants—Copernicus, Leonardo, Shakespeare, Pico, or Montaigne—offer exciting perspectives on the largely suppressed, "heretical" strains in Renaissance thought. This presentation will attempt to cast a new light on the connection between Leonardo da Vinci's work, his unconventional religiosity, and his ecological wisdom. Can his perception of the "divine nature"—intimately linked to his cultural innovation—serve as a starting point for rethinking our idea of progress and reanimating the humanist agenda of sustainability?

**Worster, Donald**, University of Kansas, USA (Plenary Session 6)  
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"John Muir and the Religion of Nature"

John Muir (1838–1914) was the founder of nature conservation in his adopted home the United States and the prophet of a new religion. As a young man he turned away from his family Scottish Protestant tradition and embraced science and the divinity of the natural world. Although he was not alone in that move, he became a Moses-like figure for the new religion, which found its institutional home in groups like the Sierra Club of California. What is not well understood or appreciated is the deep connection between that nature religion and the rise of modern liberalism and democracy. Later critics would charge that nature preservation has been elitist, not democratic, but Muir's life can help us see how closely intertwined the new religion was with revolutionary social and political ideals.

**York, Michael**, Bath Spa University, UK (Session 5; Session 17)  
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"Full of Sound and Fury; Signifying Nothing: Earth Religion and the Experiential"

Macbeth bemoans the turbulence of life with its plethora of hopes and promises as well as fears and despair. And yet, when all is said and done, he assesses that it all comes to nothing;

at the end of the day, the entire venture is meaningless. It is against the emptiness of a purely secular evaluation of life, culture and civilization that religion often takes its affirmative stand – or at least what at first glance appears to be the counter position of affirmation. The measure of advance, however, is subjective. It refers to forward movement and, figuratively, to progress or improvement for some specified situation. From the perspective of the cyclical rounds of nature, advance (ab- ‘away from’ + ante ‘before’) could simply be a moving away from that which was before. This need not imply that forward movement is progressive. It could be simply repetitive if not also regressive. In contrast to both secularism and the Abrahamic religions, Christianity in particular, with their linear emphasis on time’s arrow, earthen, pagan and/or green religions entertain a prevailing stress on the returning rounds as exemplified by the diurnal, lunar, solar and seasonal cycles: birth, growth, apex, decline, death, decay, rebirth. But in the march of technological achievement – as in the advance of an army, improvement in terrestrial lifestyles does not automatically translate into spiritual development. Are the two automatically in conflict, or are they compatible for those sensitivities that revere the planet and fear for her ecological well-being? Does advance have meaning, or, as Macbeth sees it, does it, at the end of the day, signify nothing? This paper explores the notions of meaning and progress from earth spirituality perspectives.

**Zaleha, Bernie**, University of California at Santa Cruz, USA (Session 17)  
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“Pantheism, Panentheism, Paganism, Atheism, Theism: Sorting out Conflicting and Inconsistent Terminology”

I explore conflicting definitions and uses of several terms that are widely used when discussing the reality or non-reality of the sacred, namely, pantheism, panentheism, paganism, theism, and atheism. Examples are given of conflicting and inconsistent use of all these terms. Even in scholarly discourse, I will demonstrate that the terms are not consistently used and that at times it is unclear which of various possible definitions the given scholar intends, further adding to the confusion around these terms.

I will suggest clarifying definitions of each of the above terms and then shift to a specific exploration of the presence of pantheism in the work of several seminal thinkers, namely, eco-philosopher Edward Abbey, Catholic priest Thomas Berry, Albert Einstein, the defrocked former Dominican Matthew Fox, and atheism proponents Dawkins, Dennett, and Harris. Finally, I will provide suggestive examples of pantheism, in cyberspace, movies, television, and popular music.

## Conference Organization

The Scientific Committee consists of Kocku von Stuckrad, Jan Boersema, Albertina Nugteren, Sarah Pike, Bron Taylor, and Kristina Tiedje.

The Local Committee, cooperating with the Conference Office of the UvA, consists of Kocku von Stuckrad, Jan Boersema, Albertina Nugteren, and Cathrien de Pater.

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