

Titles and abstracts for “Naturalism – as Religion, within Religions, without Religion”

IRAS conference 2021, June 27 – July 3d

Version Wim B. Drees, June 20, 2021

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CHAPEL SERVICES

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MONDAY - FRIDAY
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JANET NEWTON
CHAPEL SERVICES
In and around the chapel

A few years ago, author Robert Macfarlane, distressed to learn that the words being replaced in children’s dictionaries were most commonly those describing the natural world, paired with artist Jackie Morris and produced *The Lost Words: A Spell Book*.

Subsequently, with that book as inspiration, a group of musicians collaboratively wrote the album *Spell Songs*, to amplify the message. Their song, “The Lost Words Blessing,” uses melody and lyric to bring forth the emotional truths behind what these erasures represent.

Our worship services for the week will pluck further upon these strings of connection. With titles drawn from the song, we’ll explore some of the questions that arise out of both works: what about our world is essential to understand? How does loss, both within our natural world and our knowledge of our natural world, impact our spiritual lives? How can we address the traumas we face when our sources of soul sustenance are threatened? What responsibility do we have to bring moral and ethical questions into pragmatic decision-making?

Chapel Talks:

“Enter the Wild with Care, My Love” (Monday)

Religious Naturalism posits that there are processes and events in the world around us that draw religious responses from us. How is this relationship to our world and its stories built? How might it be cultivated?

“Stumbling through the Sand” (Tuesday)

The ethnobotanist Gary Paul Nabhan has suggested that, if our efforts at restoration are to be successful, we need also to engage in “re-story-ation.” Given that the stories we’ve told for millennia about our relationship to the natural world have primarily come from religious traditions, what might this re-story-ation look like within Religious Naturalism? And how is communal experience essential to locate a way forward through our eroded social and cultural landscapes?

“Sing Your Heart to All Dark Matter” (Wednesday)

I was raised in Los Alamos, New Mexico; for most of my childhood, my scientist parents worked in the defense industry on classified projects. Los Alamos is a strange place to grow up. It’s a place of extraordinary beauty and razor wire, populated by scientists with advanced degrees and a surprisingly high percentage of churches and regular church goers. In chapel this morning, I’ll speak to how my experience of science, the natural world, and weekly religious observance led directly to my religious naturalist theology...and why it’s still a rare outlook among those with whom I was raised.

“Unfurling Our Grieving, Calling Us Home” (Thursday)

Psychotherapist Francis Weller’s book *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* offers new categories for grief work that we’re only just coming to understand. He points out that while experiencing grief at the loss of a loved one is shared throughout human history and thus generally understandable and relatable, the sorts of existential grief many of us find ourselves coping with due to climate crisis is entirely new. Are there religious resources we might look to for help in navigating these new soul aches? What about natural resources? Is Mary Oliver right when she says: “This is the first, wildest and wisest thing I know, that the soul exists, and that it is built entirely out of attentiveness”?

“Let New Names Take & Root & Thrive & Grow” (Friday)

Though Macfarlane and the Lost Words musicians decry the loss of words related to the natural world, there are other lost words that those with a naturalist mindset might find it powerful to notice and reclaim. What are some of the words we’ve thrown out that have more relevance than we’ve allowed? What new words can we claim that will help us to grow toward a more healed, whole and holy world?

The Lost Words Blessing by The Lost Words: Spell Songs

Enter the wild with care, my love
And speak the things you see
Let new names take and root and thrive and grow
And even as you travel far from heather, crag and river
May you like the little fisher, set the stream alight with glitter
May you enter now as otter without falter into water

Look to the sky with care, my love
And speak the things you see

Let new names take and root and thrive and grow
And even as you journey on past dying stars exploding
Like the gilded one in flight, leave your little gifts of light
And in the dead of night my darling,
find the gleaming eye of starling
Like the little aviator, sing your heart to all dark matter

Walk through the world with care, my love
And sing the things you see
Let new names take and root and thrive and grow
And even as you stumble through machair sands eroding
Let the fern unfurl your grieving, let the heron still your breathing
Let the selkie swim you deeper, oh my little silver-seeker
Even as the hour grows bleaker, be the singer and the speaker
And in city and in forest, let the larks become your chorus
And when every hope is gone, let the raven call you home

(Original song by Julie Fowles, Karine Polward, Seckou Keita, Kris Drever, Rachel Newton, Beth Porter, Jim Molyneux and Kerry Andrew. We will be using the song during chapel, but you might enjoy the link to the original found here: <https://thebirdsings.com/lost-words-blessing/>)

Rev. Janet Newton was raised as a 3rd generation Unitarian Universalist in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Though she attended church regularly as a child and young adult, she struggled to find inspiration within the church for questions of spiritual growth and connection.

When she pondered an environmental science degree in college, her science professors suggested that rather than *doing* science, she might be better suited to writing about it — surprising no one who ever sat next to her in a chemistry or physics class. She does have an affinity for rocks, however, for which she credits roadtrip vacations with her geophysicist father as well as family lore about her geologist great-grandfather.

After a career as a high school English and Philosophy teacher, Rev. Janet is now a Unitarian Universalist minister, currently serving a federated UU/UCC church in Berlin, MA. She also left behind one wild geologic cataclysmic event for another, departing the volcanic tuff of an ancient northern New Mexican supervolcano to perch on the outwash plain of glacial till deposited 23,000 years ago off the bottom edge of Massachusetts (aka Martha's Vineyard). Janet and her outwash plain-native wife, Maria, now live in Edgartown with their two daughters, Orion Grace (5½ years old) and Larkin Joy, born this past October.

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PLENARY LECTURES

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SUNDAY EVENING
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WELCOME

Barbara Whittaker-Johns, Abigail Fuller, Wim Drees, conference co-chairs

The first evening of our conference, the conference co-chairs will introduce the speakers and the program of the conference, followed by an introductory lecture:

WIM DREES

NATURALISM AND RELIGION: HUNTING TWO SNARKS?

Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark* has as its subtitle *An Agony in Eight Fits*. Agony: struggle, violent and painful contest, the pangs of death. Many think of confrontations over naturalism and religion, as a struggle, to be or not to be. Others think the situation is not that bad. Perhaps they may co-exist. Some even speak of religious naturalism. What are we talking about? Is it a mere play of words? *The Hunting of the Snark* fails. The hunters do not know where to look, nor what to look for. What is a snark? In our case, how do we understand the two key terms: naturalism and religion?

- In relation to naturalism, how do we think about 'nature'? What is included? What might be excluded? And how do we think of naturalism in relation to science?
- About 'religion' we can pose similar questions. It is about communities, churches, or more importantly, about individual life-orientations? Is it cognitive, certain convictions about the way reality ultimately is? Is it mainly affective, the way we experience the world? How do our ideas of religion relate to theologies and to the study of religions, to insider and outsider perspectives?

The conference title, "Naturalism – *as* Religion, *within* Religions, *without* Religion", asks about the way naturalism might function, as a replacement of religion, as an incentive for reform, or as a reason to reject religion. Is the podium for this conversation science, philosophy, or something else? How might we envisage the dynamic of religion and naturalism? How do we think of our two snarks, 'naturalism' and 'religion'?

Keywords: nature, naturalism, religion, terminology

Willem B. Drees (Wim) is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy of the Humanities at Tilburg University, and of Philosophy of Religion and Ethics, Leiden University, the Netherlands. He served as editor of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* (2009-2018) and as President of ESSSAT, the European Society for the Study of Science and Theology (2002-2008). He has earned doctorates in religious studies and in philosophy. Previously, he completed a post-graduate degree in theoretical physics. He was a Fulbright scholar at the Center of Theology and the Natural Sciences in Berkeley (1987), the Chicago Center for Religion and Science at LSTC (1988), and the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton (1993), where in

2019 he returned as CTI Distinguished Fellow in the Humanities. In 2018 he was elected into membership of the Royal Holland Society of Sciences and Humanities. Among his publications are *Beyond the Big Bang: Quantum Cosmologies and God* (Open Court, 1990), *Religion, Science and Naturalism* (Cambridge UP, 1996), *Creation: From Nothing until Now* (Routledge, 2002), *Religion and Science in Context: A Guide to the Debates* (Routledge, 2010), and *What Are the Humanities For?* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Abby Fuller teaches sociology at the University of Southern Maine. Her main area of interest is nonviolent social movements. She learned about IRAS when she started teaching at Manchester College and met her future spouse, Neil Wollman, a longtime IRAS member. At her first IRAS conference, she fell in love with Star Island and with the experience of spending a week with such insightful and knowledgeable people. Abby has combined her teaching career with participation in many different social movements for peace and justice, focusing most recently on Palestine.

Barbara Whittaker-Johns is a Unitarian Universalist minister who recently completed five years as President of IRAS, following three decades serving in various leadership positions, co-chairing five conferences, and on four occasions offering the morning Chapel Talks. She grew up in the environs of Bangor (Maine) Theological Seminary. At age twenty, having a special interest in the work of Paul Tillich, she began studies at Union Theological Seminary. But it was 1964, and she left that path to support her first husband's graduate work. Simultaneously, she completed an MSc at Yeshiva University and began a sixteen year teaching career, with a focus on the neurodiversity associated with learning disabilities. In 1984 she completed the MDiv program at Harvard, began a long career in UU parish ministry, and in 1999 completed a DMin program focusing on the power of personal narrative to ground faith development in a scientific world view. She is accompanied this week by her adult son Isaac Toppa, who has been an IRAS conferee since birth.

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MONDAY MORNING

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OWEN FLANAGAN

SENSIBLE KNAVES, ARTFUL DODGERS, AND SELFISH CREEPS: ETHICS NATURALIZED?

A common function of religion is to ground or justify an ethical code objectively. If one asks: What is the nature of morality? What specifically does morality demand,? one is pointed to what God or the gods ordained. And if one asks, Why be moral? one is pointed to the rewards (salvation, karmic upgrading) that follow from obeying the moral law. In this way, religions, by way of their associated theologies, warrant 1. moral confidence – the belief that one knows the moral law; and 2. The belief that moral demands override all others (this is called overridingness thesis or the sovereignty of the moral good). Many say that naturalism undermines moral confidence and the motivation to live morally. I discuss this argument and invite the seminar participants to think about whether this is true, whether moral

confidence is a good thing, and whether the natural world can provide sufficient motivation to be morally serious, and not, say, a sensible knave, artful dodger, or selfish creep.

Keywords: Ethics, Morality, Naturalism, Supernaturalism

Owen Flanagan is James B. Duke University Professor of Philosophy at Duke University, Durham NC, USA. He also holds appointments in Psychology and Neuroscience. Flanagan’s interests are on the nature of consciousness, philosophical naturalism, ethics, and cross-cultural ethics. His most recent book, *How to do Things with Emotions: Cross-Cultural Morality of Anger and Shame*, is forthcoming this autumn 2021 with Princeton University Press. He is the author of 10 other books, including *Consciousness Reconsidered* (MIT 1992), *Varieties of Moral Personality* (Harvard 1991), *The Really Hard Problem: Meaning in a Material World* (MIT 2007), *The Bodhisattva’s Brain: Buddhism Naturalized* (MIT 2011), and *The Geography of Morals: Varieties of Moral Possibility* (Oxford 2017). In 2015-16, Flanagan was Rockefeller Fellow at the National Humanities Center, and in 2016-2017, he was Berggruen Fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. His article *Varieties of Naturalism* in the Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science discusses the many meanings of ‘naturalism’ in philosophy and whether and how naturalism can speak sensibly about epistemic or ethical oughts, about good, bad, right, and wrong. Since 2017, Flanagan has been a leader in two ongoing projects with the Vatican, one on “Ethics in Action,” which attempts to achieve consensus among secular and religious ethics on sustainable development; another on the Science and Ethics of Happiness and Well-Being.”

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MONDAY EVENING
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URSULA GOODENOUGH
TAKING NATURE TO MIND AND HEART

A naturalist is a person who takes seriously our current understandings of the natural world as revealed by scientific inquiry, where humans and human culture are considered emergent and integral features of nature. A religious naturalist takes nature to mind and also takes nature to heart — seeking, and finding, deep resources in these understandings for spiritual (inward) and moral (outward) orientation, including an ecomoral orientation. These concepts will be explored during the presentation.

Keywords: emergence, naturalism, religious naturalism

Ursula Goodenough is Professor of Biology Emerita at Washington University, now living on Martha’s Vineyard in Massachusetts. Her research focused on molecular and cellular features of green algae. She taught a course for non-science majors on evolution with a physicist and a geologist. She served in the IRAS leadership, including the presidency, and co-chaired many conferences. She wrote a book, *The Sacred Depths of Nature*, on the religious naturalist orientation, and is president of the Religious Naturalist Association www.religious-naturalist-association.org

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TUESDAY MORNING
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SARAH LANE RITCHIE
NATURALISM(S) AND SPIRITUAL FLOURISHING:
CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE NEW SCIENCE OF PSYCHEDELICS

In a recent work on what the authors term “neuroexistentialism,” Owen Flanagan and Gregg Caruso write that the “really hard problem” facing humans today is this: ‘How—given that we are natural beings living in a material world and given that consciousness is a natural phenomenon —does human life mean anything? What significance, if any, does living our kind of conscious life have’ (Caruso and Flanagan, 2018, p. 10). In response to this existential anxiety, scholars from across disciplines have begun to develop naturalistic frameworks of meaning, of spirituality, that take seriously the reality that humans are wholly natural, embodied beings, and these embodied beings are in principle (if not yet in practice) fully explicable and subject to empirical analysis. Such scholars reject the supernaturalism of traditional theisms, but yet recognize the very real, visceral longings that lead humans to seek out transcendence, enchantment, and connection with Ultimate Reality (however that is defined). In a word, this is the search for *spiritual flourishing*, an aspect of human flourishing that can be properly framed, studied, and pursued within both naturalistic and theological frameworks.

Here, one of the most promising areas of emerging research is the science, philosophy, and theology of psychedelics. The interdisciplinary study of psychedelics lends itself particularly well to discussions of spiritual flourishing, insofar as such research 1) has the means to reliably and safely produce the conditions in which transformative spiritual experiences routinely occur, thereby allowing for more robust neuroscientific and psychological research on such phenomena, and 2) has attracted a growing body of philosophical and theological work on the metaphysical and epistemological possibilities of such experiences. This spiritual flourishing need not be understood in a theological manner, although it is, I suggest, entirely consistent with at least some naturalistic theological frameworks.

In what follows, I begin with a discussion of recent scientific work on psychedelics, with a particular emphasis on psychedelic experiences’ significant impact on human flourishing. I then move to a discussion of the epistemic status of psychedelic experiences, drawing upon recent work on the philosophy of psychedelics, as well as current work within philosophy of mind and theology. At this point, we come to an epistemic crossroads of sorts: If one is persuaded by recent research on the therapeutic and existential value of some psychedelic experiences, it is possible to contextualize such research within either a naturalistic or a theological framework. My intention here is not to argue for either a theological or a naturalistic approach to spiritual flourishing and psychedelic experiences, but rather to map the conceptual terrain in which these conversations take place. What is evident, I suggest, is that the natural (but not necessary) compatibility between both naturalistic and theological frameworks and psychedelics suggests truly exciting possibilities for spiritual flourishing.

Keywords: Psychedelics, spiritual flourishing, theistic naturalism, Ultimate Reality, panentheism, panpsychism, spiritual technologies

Sarah Lane Ritchie is Lecturer in Theology and Science at the University of Edinburgh, where her research focuses on questions at the intersection of constructive theology, philosophy of mind, metaphysics, cognitive science, psychology of religion, and neuroscience. Current research interests involve the intentional curation and use of spiritual technologies, theistic naturalisms, the epistemology and psychology of religious intuition, the neuropsychology of religious experience, and the cognitive science of belief formation.

Originally from the wilderness of rural northern Michigan, Sarah has lived in Scotland since 2013, where she completed an MSc and PhD in Science & Religion at the University of Edinburgh, and a postdoc at the University of St Andrews. Prior academic work includes an MDiv at Princeton Theological Seminary and a BA in Philosophy and Religion from Spring Arbor University. Her recent book is *Divine Action and the Human Mind*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2019. A recent Open Access article in *Modern Theology* can be found here:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/moth.12684?af=R>

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TUESDAY EVENING

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OWEN FLANAGAN

BUDDHISM NATURALIZED? – BUDDHISM WITHOUT HOCUS POCUS

In the West, many spiritual but not religious types are attracted to Buddhism. Some say they are Buddhist. Among the alleged attractions of Buddhism are that it is atheistic, at least it doesn't explain creation in terms of an omnipotent God; that Buddhism is friendly to science in a way the Abrahamic religions are not; and that meditation as a tool for self-cultivation makes sense in a way prayer for divine intercession does not. In fact, the traditional Buddhisms (there are many varieties) are metaphysically extravagant and anti-scientific: there are beliefs about no-self, the workings of karma, non-physical aspects of mind, survival of consciousness after death, and rebirth. Can one deduct these beliefs from Buddhism and still have left something that is Buddhist? What is lost, what is gained? I invite seminar participants to think through this topic with me. Lessons may generalize to all forms of naturalizing or demythologizing what were once conceived as supernaturalistic traditions. Can one really be a Jew, Christian, Muslim or Buddhist after demythologizing or naturalizing the traditional view? What is lost, what is gained?

Keywords: Naturalism, Buddhism

Bio: See Monday morning

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WEDNESDAY MORNING
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CAROL WAYNE WHITE
REVISITING “BLACK ANIMALITY” AND THE DISEASED IMAGINATION, OR
WHY AMERICA NEEDS RELIGIOUS NATURALISM

Embedded in persistent representations of people of African descent as inferior beings or subpar humans are problematic notions of animality, race, and nature in the U.S., or a lethal combination of intimately conjoined white supremacy and species supremacy. With the former, processes of racialization have been influential in an exclusionary category of the human, designating who is properly so and who is not. With the latter, a trajectory of liberal humanism has consistently overestimated the autonomy of human animals, positioning us outside of complex, myriad nature and rendering invisible our inextricable connection to other life forms and material processes. Both of these impulses – white supremacy and species supremacy – evoke a hierarchical model of nature built on the “great chain of being” concept, and they have produced violent and harmful consequences.

In this presentation, I argue that one effective way of challenging them is through the lens of religious naturalism. I introduce religious naturalism as a capacious ecological religious worldview that also serves as a critical intervention in Western humanistic thought. I contend that what is primarily at stake is how we conceive our “humanity,” as well as the social, ethical, and ecological implications of that conception. Toward that goal, I outline a model of religious naturalism that presupposes human animals’ deep, inextricable homology with each other and with other natural processes, drawing our attention to an expansive view of our humanity as an emergent phenomenon, not an achievement. In emphasizing the rich moral imagination of this religious naturalist discourse, I also borrow key insights from an evolving African-American intellectual trajectory exemplified in the writings of Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Anna J. Cooper, and James Baldwin. In the final section, I comment on the social, cultural, and ecological relevance of religious naturalism in the U.S. today, offering some suggestions for understanding our human animality in light of these claims.

Keywords: animality; black animality; ecological; nature; humanity; processes of racialization; religious naturalism; moral imagination; species supremacy; white supremacy.

Carol Wayne White is Presidential Professor of Philosophy of Religion at Bucknell University, specializing in Poststructuralist Philosophies, Process Thought and Theism, Religious Naturalism, Science and Religion, and Critical Theory and Religion. Her books include *Poststructuralism, Feminism, and Religion: Triangulating Positions* (2002); *The Legacy of Anne Conway (1631-70): Reverberations from a Mystical Naturalism* (2009); and *Black Lives and Sacred Humanity: Toward an African American Religious Naturalism* (2016), which won a Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Titles. White has published numerous essays in philosophy of religion and on religious naturalism; her work in philosophy and critical religion has also appeared in *Zygon: The Journal of Religion and Science*, *The American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, *Philosophia Africana*, and *Religion & Public Life*. White has received

international awards and national fellowships, including an Oxford University Fellowship in Religion and Science, a Science and Religion Grant from The John Templeton Foundation, and a NEH Fellowship. She is currently writing a new book that explores the tenets and insights of religious naturalism expressed in contemporary American nature poets and writers.

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WEDNESDAY EVENING

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SARAH LANE RITCHIE

SCIENCE AND RELIGION 'VS' SCIENCE-ENGAGED THEOLOGY? SOME PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS

Abstract: The distinction between the academic discipline of science and religion on one hand, and science and *theology* on the other, has long been acknowledged as conceptually and functionally “fuzzy.” Many scholars within science and religion openly acknowledge the programmatic role played by their pre-existing religious commitments within their respective research projects. Others nominally resist a normative role for theological presumptions or commitments within science and religion, but (perhaps unwittingly) rely on such presumptions nonetheless. Still others insist that progress within science and religion requires a minimization of theological specificity dependent on traditional sources of religious authority.

It is within this context that a somewhat reactionary theological movement termed ‘science-engaged theology’ has gained prominence in recent years, with several large research grants being undertaken under this heading. Those who work in science-engaged theology are marked by several characteristics: 1) they see themselves primarily as theologians who openly acknowledge the specificities of their own faith traditions, commitments, and confessional boundaries 2) they attempt to engage productively and humbly with scientific inquiry by focusing on narrow, concrete ‘theological puzzles’ that bring together specific scientific and theological sub-disciplines, and 3) they rely heavily on the distinction between methodological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism to minimize the perceived ‘threat’ of scientific explanations to traditional theological commitments, while still engaging with scientific inquiry on its own terms.

This talk will offer an analysis and open discussion of the respective strengths and weaknesses of ‘classic’ science and religion and science-engaged theology. The talk will consider not only the conceptual issues arising from such a comparative analysis, but also the functional implications of these two programmes within particular academic contexts.

Keywords: science and religion, science-engaged theology, methodological naturalism, metaphysical naturalism

Bio: See Tuesday morning

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THURSDAY MORNING
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WILLEM B. DREES

WHEN TO BE WHAT: NATURALIST, DUALIST, PLURALIST, WHILE LIVING WITH FAITH

In a brief book, *The Aristos* (1964), the British author John Fowles described the human situation in terms of a group of people on a raft, apparently between a wreck in the past and a shore where they will land. “Seven men inhabit the raft. The pessimist, for whom the good things of life are no more than lures to prolong suffering; the egocentric, whose motto is *Carpe diem* – enjoy today – and who does his best to get the most comfortable part of the raft for himself; the optimist, always scanning the horizon for the promised land; the observer, who finds it enough to write the logbook of the voyage and to note down the behaviour of the sea, the raft, and his fellow-victims; the altruist, who finds his reason for being in the need to deny himself and to help others; the stoic, who believes in nothing but his own refusal to jump overboard and end it all; and finally the child, the one born, as some with perfect pitch, with perfect ignorance – the pitifully ubiquitous child, who believes that all will be explained in the end, the nightmare fade and the green shore rise.”

This conference is about a multitude of perspectives. Some of us identify as religious naturalists, others as naturalists without religion, while others may identify with a historic tradition in combination with modern insights and values. Various perspective may even be present within a single person. In the first part of this lecture, I will consider the intellectual and moral value of naturalism, one might say the truth and reasonability of a monistic understanding of reality. In the second part, I will reflect on a variety of reasons why naturalism may not be all. In the third part, ‘When to be what’, I will argue that it is attractive to be a naturalist on science, a dualist in philosophy, a pluralist in politics, while living with faith.

Keywords: faith, morality, naturalism, philosophy, science

Bio: see Sunday evening

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THURSDAY EVENING
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URSULA GOODENOUGH AND TODD MACALISTER

IS A RELIGIOUS NATURALIST ORIENTATION TRANSFORMABLE INTO A “TRADITIONAL RELIGION”?

Throughout human history, diverse cultures have developed diverse systems of religious belief and practice. These traditional religions are central to billions of persons who consider themselves Catholics, Hindus, Hopi, and so on, where practice is often linked to ethnicity and geography. A religious naturalist orientation (RN) is ethnically and geographically dispersed — e.g. the Religious Naturalist Association

(www.religious-naturalist-association.org) has members from 25 countries — and has historically been adopted by individuals (Spinoza, Thoreau, Einstein, Carson, to give “western” examples) rather than congregations. We will consider whether RN is amenable to becoming a “traditional religion,” and what this might look like, versus remaining as a loose collection of like-minded and like-grounded souls.

Ursula Goodenough is the president of the Religious Naturalist Association; **Todd Macalister** is its Communications Director. For more biographical info, see on Goodenough Monday evening, on Macalister the short papers.

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FRIDAY MORNING
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SPEAKERS AND CONFEREES
NATURALISM – AS RELIGION, WITHIN RELIGIONS, WITHOUT RELIGION

At the end of the plenary program, we will reflect together on the conference theme, in light of the plenary presentations, chapel services, the short papers presented, the book seminars. What might be fruitful perspectives? What may be difficult questions?

Details of this session to be announced during the conference. Some participants may be invited to offer their take on the conference; in small groups we will be able to discuss each developing ideas the topic in some depth; the plenary speakers may be challenged in a concluding panel session.

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SHAPLEY BOOTH FELLOWS

The Shapley-Booth Fellowships are named after two founders of IRAS, the astronomer Harlow Shapley and the theologian William Booth. If you would be willing to support these fellowships for future conferences, speak with our treasurer, Dave Klotz; treasurer@iras.org.

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MONDAY AFTERNOON
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Mark Hoelter
Rudolf Otto’s *Mysterium Tremendum* in a New Key

In the early 1900’s religion still had its cultured despisers, even stronger than before. In 1917 philosopher, Rudolf Otto, concluded his search for a non-rational-but-not-emotional grounding for

religion – not opposed to science but also not reducible to science. Reflecting on his personal intense experiences and on his worldwide engagement with religions seven years earlier, Otto posited: all religions are rooted in a universal, uniquely human experience. He labeled this experience the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* – a universal experience so compellingly fascinating that one cannot not attend to it, and at the same time that is so humbling and inspiring it also has both awe and terror about it.

Otto's *mysterium* profoundly inspired key 20th century philosophers, psychologists, and theologians – Husserl, Heidegger, Jung, Barth, C. S. Lewis, Tillich, Eliade, Huxley. It remains a very alive core idea for many today. But today, a century later, some have striven respectfully to apply scientific methods to that experience.

Iaian McGilchrist's 20-year study (*The Master and His Emissary*), offers a specific neurological, "non-rational" grounding for that *mysterium* – the working patterns and processes of the brain's right hemisphere. This not the old and discredited "left-brain, right-brain" idea. Patrick McNamara (*The Neuroscience of Religious Experience*), Eugene d'Aquili, Andrew Newberg, Davidson and others point us from ever-growing brain scanning to specific brain sites and neuronal transmittal flows that correlate with personal experiences of the *mysterium*, without reducing it to "only chemicals and gray matter;" the *mysterium* remains an emergent "something else from nothing but." Wesley Wildman (*Religious and Spiritual Experiences*) surveys all these studies, then parses and expands the *mysterium* from a singular experience to multiple, dynamic, overlapping experiences. He expands the idea of "religious," not just beyond the Abrahamic religions but beyond any and all specific religions to a common (potential) human experience originating around 50,000 years ago.

All of this together, besides playing Otto's original *mysterium* in a new key, holds implications for pro-social intragroup and inter-group work as well as for individual psychotherapeutic and spiritual growth and transformation.

Keywords: experience, *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, neuroscience, Rudolf Otto

Mark Hoelter is a retired Unitarian Universalist [UU] minister. He continues to serve a small group of clients, both national and international, as a certified leadership coach. He remains an ongoing student of evidence-based psychotherapies (ACT and IFS in particular) and of religious naturalism. He also is dedicated to ongoing social justice and race-equity activism.

His M.Div. thesis at the Lutheran School of Theology was a 175-page analytic study and general application of Wolfhart Pannenberg's futurist theology; it was a search for a new "natural theology." Leaving the religion world for a time, he worked as a supervisor in the University of Chicago Regenstein Library, then briefly in the life insurance world. He has served five UU congregations, and from 2005 through 2010 he directed the interfaith dialogue program of The InterFaith Conference (now Council) of Metropolitan Washington.

A runner still (generally 5k's), he is also an artist (mostly portraits – pastel chalks, acrylics, some water color pencil), and he attempts over and over to learn ballroom dancing. Mark lives in Washington, DC, with his wife, Karen Key, and independent consultant in the nonprofit human services world.

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TUESDAY AFTERNOON
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Curtis M. Craig

The potential contribution of awe and nature appreciation to positive moral values

The MIDUS II original and Refresher projects (Ryff & Davidson, 2010; 2018; Ryff et al., 2011; 2017) were originally conducted to measure factors affecting middle-aged health in the United States. The present analysis utilizes this publicly available survey data from those projects that assess attitudes consistent with the religious naturalist orientation. Specifically, religious naturalism entails a sense of awe and reverence towards the natural world (Goodenough, 1998; Raymo, 2008), and among the many scales administered to participants in the MIDUS projects, the Dispositional Positive Emotion Scale (DPES; Shiota, Keltner, & John, 2006) has subscales assessing awe toward the world including one question regarding opportunities to appreciate nature. The predicted measures of interest include a sense of connectedness toward the world, a deep sense of appreciation and inner peace, caring toward others, and the DPES subscales assessing joy and compassion. Analysis of the original MIDUS II data with 214 participants found an unsurprising relationship between theistic belief and a personal sense of deep appreciation and peace, while self-reported rate of attendance to religious service (e.g., the social functions of religion) corresponded with the likelihood to care about others. However, the reported measures of awe toward the world and secondary analyses looking specifically at nature appreciation found significant relationships between awe, nature, and the same outcome measures, along with an association with joy and compassion. Furthermore, when conducting the same analyses on the MIDUS II Refresher datasets with 93 participants, these findings were replicated. The implications of these results are that awe and reverence toward the natural world are independently associated with attitudes and states of mind commonly thought valuable (e.g., compassion), irrespective of theistic belief and religious service attendance. This exploratory analysis provides empirical evidence that, from a pragmatic and moral perspective, religious naturalism has the potential to either replace or alter traditional theistic orientations, and that the simple rejection of religious discourse should be reconsidered. Further research should attempt to verify these preliminary conclusions.

Keywords: religious naturalism, awe, nature, well-being, exploratory

Curtis Craig is a research associate in the HumanFIRST Laboratory at the University of Minnesota's Department of Mechanical Engineering. Dr. Craig's research training is in Experimental Psychology with a focus in Human Factors. His research record includes topics such as pedestrian safety, mental workload and fatigue in driving performance, the environment's effects on cognition, and decision-making in health care. His primary interests center on cognitive processes and human error, and their application to safety-critical domains such as driving and health care. He is also involved in a line of research on well-being and cognitive benefits of nature environments.

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SHORT PAPERS, in alphabetical order by last name

Paul H. Carr

Overcoming Limitations of “Naturalism without Religion”

Theologians Tillich and Whitehead interpret God and the Bible to overcome the limitations of “naturalism without religion.” It believes in natural laws and causes, but rejects supernatural explanations and beings. Naturalism is not ultimate reality because of such limitations as:

- (1) Naturalism does not have “life after death,” as the world’s religions do.
- (2) Naturalism has no ultimate goal.

For Paul Tillich, God is the Ground of All Being, not a being. Being includes all existence. The first biblical human being was Adam, a name derived from the Hebrew word meaning ground. God created Adam from the dust/elements of the earth, which were recently discovered to have been fused together in stars. We are made of stardust! We can pray to God’s Son, personified in Jesus, the bearer of the New Being, the New State of Things leading to the Kingdom of God as the goal and end of history.

For Tillich, the Eternal is not endless time, but a dimension above space and time that enables us to perceive events happening in temporal sequence. Tillich expresses this as “Our lives are limited in time but fulfilled by Eternity.” For Tillich, “life after death” is “returning to the Eternal from which we came.”

Tillich described religion as our Ultimate Concern, also the Dimension of Depth. In this sense, Tillich resonates with Ursula Goodenough’s *Sacred Depths of Nature*. For theologian Wesley Wildman, ultimate reality is Tillich’s God beyond the God of anthropomorphism and nationalism.

Whitehead-Hartshorne’s process theology has a dipolar God: primordial and consequent. (1) The primordial-transcendent pole is God’s creation of everything, including potential events. (2) God’s consequent-immanent pole comprehends and interacts with the world, including humans, and incorporates them into God’s own process. We have “life after death” by participating in the consequent, immortal Mind of God. God does not control, but grants freedom. God’s creative aim lures the universe towards the ultimate goal of greater beauty. “The thirst for beauty that permeates our lives is an opening to transcendence,” according to Philip Hefner.

Keywords: Naturalism, Process, Theology, Tillich, Whitehead

Paul H. Carr, BS, MS, MIT; Ph.D. Brandeis, IEEE Life Fellow, led a branch of the AF Research Laboratory that developed the low-cost Surface Acoustic Wave (SAW) filters used in cell phones and radar. The Templeton Foundation awarded him grants for the science and religion courses he taught in the philosophy department at U Mass Lowell. This inspired his book *Beauty in Science and Spirit (2006)*. He championed the 2017 IRAS Climate Change conference and received the 2018 IRAS Academic Fellow Award. He has published over 90 papers in scientific journals and in *Zygon*. His web page: www.MirrorOfNature.org

John Calvin Chatlos
A Framework of Spirituality: Toward a Naturalist Awakening for All

Naturalism involves a way of “being” in the natural world often highlighting aesthetics emphasizing cognition and understanding. Religious Naturalism opens us to an added experience of spirituality and the numinous – an expanded awareness beyond the material focus of the world, with reverence and emotional experiences of awe and wonder.

This paper presents an experiential process grounded in Cognitive Behavioral Theory that identifies a “Framework of Spirituality” as part of the “unseen order” referred to by William James. An immanent “spiritual core” opens aesthetic, cognitive and emotional experiences to a deeper, powerful, mystical and seemingly magical experience of spiritual awakening. This Naturalism’s scientific/secular **and** spiritual/religious foundation highlights human “worth” and “dignity” in an operationalized manner to powerfully transform relationships with people of other religious and ethical thought traditions. It presents a model for scientific exploration, a naturalistic source of ethics and morality, with a description of proposed brain processes involved and an entertaining speculation of the evolutionary source of this remarkable process. For this conference, it provides a guide to:

Reform-what is not consistent with reality and knowledge;

Replace-what is not working for human worth and dignity;

Reject-what is harmful for human worth and dignity;

Rejuvenate-life for **all** with a faith firmly grounded in science to heal the suffering of all those with whom we share this earth;

Rejoice-in the history, traditions, beauty, grace and power from all religious traditions.

A preview is available through Zygon: <https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12670>

Key words: spirituality, mystical naturalism, CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Theory), worth and dignity

John “Calvin” Chatlos, MD is Professor of Psychiatry at Rutgers-RWJ Medical School and Medical Director of the Specialized Addiction Treatment Services in New Brunswick, NJ. He received his BS in psychology from Washington U St Louis, returned to his home in Maryland to attend the U of Maryland School of Medicine, then to NYC as a pediatric resident at Montefiore Medical Center, psychiatry resident at NYU-Bellevue, and a child & adolescent psychiatry Fellow at Columbia University. He has come from a Humanist background with Ethical Culture at its founding New York Society, and faculty member and graduate of the first class of the Humanist Institute. He is currently a member of the Monmouth Center for World Religions and Ethical Thought in NJ. His work with addiction programs and Ethical Culture has led to exploring the nature of spiritual experience and has identified key experiences to open to a spiritual core that is within everyone. He lives in NJ with his children ages 21 and 23.

Margery Dixon
An Invitation to Dive Deeply into the Baha'i Vision

'Upon the inmost reality of each and every created thing He hath shed the light of one of His names, and made it the recipient of the glory of one of his attributes. Upon the reality of man, however, He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self'. In this way Baha'u'llah demonstrates the potential to see God in all things and elevates humankind as more complex and spiritual. 'Immerse yourselves in the Ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid within its depths.' This is but one of the many ways by which Baha'u'llah, during the 19th century invited all the peoples and kindreds of the world to transform human civilization based on the attracting force of love. In this presentation I will be covering both basic and more intensive aspects of the emerging world culture that is the community of followers of Baha'u'llah. There will be orientation to and samplings from the primary source documents that are the cornerstone of unity for both believers and the world at large. Placement will be made as to historical, theological and sociological aspects of this faith community where 'religion and science are inter-twined with each other and cannot be separated'. We will look briefly at the eight world leaders who, for the most part, were dismissive of Baha'u'llahs pro-offered guidance and helped to plunge the world into its present state. Unique to this community is first-person historical documentation, authorized written documentation of the three decades of revelation, a unique administration of common affairs while avoiding the pitfalls of traditional hierarchal behaviors, a lack of fracture and division.

Keywords: Fulfillment, Transformation, Justice, Peace, Twin Manifestation.

Margery Dixon first stepped foot on Star Island in 1962 and was immediately fascinated with the natural surroundings. Little could one imagine that within a few years the family would become deeply involved with Star Island and find itself relocating to the Maine-New Hampshire seacoast. Here, in 1969 as part of the High School Sunday class at the Unitarian Church in Portsmouth she first learned about the Baha'i Faith. A few months later her family settled in nearby Eliot Me, where the Sarah Farmer Inn was the scene of early historical development (1893 to present) of the Baha'i Faith in America. Enrolled in the Baha'i community since 1971, she continues to be amazed at how this faith community develops and offers relevant guidance for these troubled times.

The Convergence of Science and Religion

Charles W. Fowler

Science and religion can and must be on the same path; their congruence is imperative. Finding consistency requires seeing reality (all existence, nature) for what it actually is – its veracity. This reality includes all parts and all of their combinations - exemplified by things like the elements, galaxies, species, emotions, paradigms, and ways of thinking. The necessity for concurrence between science and religion includes decision-making that accounts for the complexity of reality. Both policy and action need to account for things like the risk of extinction, including that of humans. It is urgent that we participate in the universe in ways that will actually work, as individuals and as a species.

Anything we observe is the result of everything that contributed to its being. This infinite set of factors excludes nothing; all indirect and direct influence is included regardless of magnitude. All contributions are reflected by, or inherent to, what we observe. This inherent reflection of things is what is known as immanence. A full appreciation of immanence in both science and religion has yet to be fully realized. It is essential to the unity of science and religion.

Normative empirical patterns provide holistic guidance for how to be human. These patterns involve holistic participation in the universe, and are informative to us both as individuals and as a species. Identifying the pertinent patterns involves an evolution of science toward an appreciation of reality in which perspectives provided by the wisdom traditions cannot be ignored. Likewise, the wisdom traditions cannot ignore the realities revealed by science. The convergent evolution of science and religion depends on feedback in which any part of either that is found to be inconsistent with reality is rejected. The truth, or the veracity of reality, will become the foundation for both science and religion. Our appreciation of this common ground will grow through the evolution of our belief-systems.

The convergence of science and religion is not a novel idea. Prominent figures in the history of such thinking include Gregory Bateson and Thomas Berry.

Keywords: Immanence, veracity, paradigms, consonance, evolution, transcendence, integrity, holism

Charles W. Fowler (Chuck) grew up on a farm, living close to nature. Intimate connection with the natural world led to his career as ecologist. Further experiences in Alaska, Costa Rica, the Galapagos Islands, backpacking and wildlife photography contributed to his profound sense of the sacred. The works of people like Gregory Bateson and Thomas Berry helped Chuck realize that prevailing world-views fail to accurately account for reality. Nature is the foundation of Chuck's teaching in several universities, advanced degrees, and numerous publications. Today he works to embrace holism – in part, to avoid self-inflicted human extinction. Mentorship with various interns has resulted in publications that include the first and only global environmental impact statement (published in 2018).

Seth Hart

Biology's Mistress: The Mystifying Relationship between Theology and Biology

J. B. S. Haldane is purported to have said, "Teleology is like a mistress to a biologist: he cannot live without her but he's unwilling to be seen with her in public." While this attribution is likely dubious, it nevertheless exposes an uncomfortable truth. Teleology, thought banished from modern science, still plays a vital role in biology. This paper will, therefore, defend a realist position of biological teleology before exploring this as a rich ground for theological exploration.

To begin, I will defend the claim that teleological language is both explanatory and irreducible for biological research. In the second half of the 20th century, defenses of the use of certain forms of teleological language in biology appeared in the works of prominent intellectuals like Francisco Ayala and Ernst Mayr. Since then, an explosion of literature has appeared around the appropriate usage of teleology and its metaphysical implications. Mark Perlman has even declared it the "hottest topic" in the philosophy of biology. Georg Toepfer has gone further by altering Dobzhansky's famous dictum to

“nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of teleology.” Large numbers of “teleonaturalists” have attempted to demonstrate that such language, while nonetheless vital to biological studies, is simply a shorthand for nonteleological equivalents. However, these attempted reductions have proven unsuccessful. Moreover, teleology is an important element in empirical investigations of biological lifeforms, and its reality is presumed in the research of adaptations (i.e., optimality modeling). Consequently, even a minimal commitment to scientific realism will entail that teleology must be regarded as a real, irreducible aspect of biological organisms.

Theologically, the implications are numerous. From a natural theological perspective, the reality of teleological causes provides a serious challenge to reductive, physicalist approaches. Moreover, it supports a major premise in Thomas Aquinas’s much maligned Fifth Way. As such, if biological teleology is real, it may provide strong evidence in favor of the classical causal framework—one far more compatible with classical theism than either atheism or modern theistic personalism. Thus, I conclude that biological teleology is a rich and largely unexplored avenue for theological research.

Keywords: teleology, Thomas Aquinas, natural theology, philosophy of biology, evolution

Seth Hart is a PhD student in science and theology at Durham University under the Durham Doctoral Studentship. His research focuses on the intersection of Darwinism and theology, specifically on the concepts of fitness, adaptation, and selection. Prior to his work in Durham, he was a Clarendon Scholar at Oxford, receiving an MSt in science and religion. He also has an MA in theological studies from Regent College. He currently lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas with his wife, corgi, and cat.

Mark Iredell with Todd Macalister, JD Stillwater and Antony Van der Mude Religious Naturalist Songbook

One of the questions in this IRAS 2021 conference announcement is how to bring in personal and communal experience, stories, and art. Songs are both stories and art. Music is a powerful element in traditional religious observances, found in every faith tradition, from the songs and dances of indigenous peoples to Sufi and Hindu chants and the hymns of modern Christians. Shared music unites people of faith, engages the voice and the breath, and elegantly expresses deep human truths. In light of this, it is only fitting that religious naturalists have their own "hymnal."

The development of A Religious Naturalist Songbook was started in April 2020 by a group of people in the Religious Naturalist Association (RNA), building on the preexisting Music page on the Religious Naturalist Association website. The songbook is a living community effort and not meant to be established canon, though every month the RNA song committee does select a favorite from the songbook as the song of the month in the newsletter. Any religious naturalist will be able to nominate songs for the songbook via an online form.

In this conference session, a panel of some of the contributors will discuss the songbook and its categories and capabilities and interact with the audience for ideas on its future. There should be an opportunity to share in listening to or singing along with a few songs from the songbook.

Some key links:

A Religious Naturalist Songbook (a living document; open second tab to see the list):

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1lgdEVhSiSH3Dg3v0hxJEQzfCocWd604p0NamGitSNO>

A Religious Naturalist Songbook nomination form (for religious naturalists only):

<https://forms.gle/8JA8wzf9NcWPgmKK6>

Music page on the Religious Naturalist Association website: <http://religious-naturalist-association.org/music/>

Keywords: songbook, songs, stories, music, community

Mark Iredell is a retired atmospheric scientist, an aspiring song lyricist, and a lifelong music enthusiast.

Todd Macalister has worked as a writer, educator, and part-time musician, and is an Officer at the Religious Naturalist Association, with a focus on communications.

JD Stillwater is a Science Educator and founder of the Seven Candles Project, a mission to promote science as an interfaith source of spiritual inspiration.

Tony Van der Mude is a computer programmer and naturalistic pantheist living in the Boston area.

Jason Keune

The Aesthetic as a Root of Spiritual Practice in Religious Naturalism

In both theistic and non-theistic religious practice, aesthetic realization is often a vehicle, subservient to a putatively richer religious worldview. When unbound to a “theology”, however, a raw aesthetic itself can be the root of spiritual practice for Religious Naturalists. Through a dialogue with the work of two contemporary living artists who work with nature as medium, Jason deCaires Taylor and Andy Goldsworthy, a shared aesthetic will be explored as potentially generative of a spiritual practice in Religious Naturalism. Their oeuvres articulate richly with mythologies of limitless progress and our relationship to the natural world, including contemporary conceptualizations of time. Religious naturalist spiritual goals like softening our stark alienation to nature, destabilizing our entrapment to linear time, and helping others to fully realize their beautiful relationship to and as part of a natural reality will be explored. Finally, I will discuss the idea of spiritual practice in Religious Naturalism and ask whether using an aesthetic as a root of spiritual practice is destabilizing and whether it lends insight into the type of thing that Religious Naturalism is.

Keywords: Aesthetic, religious practice, alienation to nature, linear time, religious naturalism

Jason D. Keune, MD, MBA, FACS, is an Associate Professor of Surgery and Health Care Ethics at Saint Louis University, where he directs The Bander Center for Medical Business Ethics. He operates at two urban hospitals where he takes call and performs abdominal wall reconstruction and hiatal hernia repair on patients with all varieties of insurance, including Medicaid. He learned how to meditate as a teenager, first encountered Religious Naturalism on Star Island in his early 20s, considers the quotidian to be profound, and derives great spiritual joy from raising his three children and working in the city of his birth.

Todd Macalister

Religious Practices: What Naturalists Have Been Discussing and Doing

Beyond philosophical perspectives on how naturalism can be considered as a focus of religious orientation, a number of naturalists have been exploring types of things they might do as spiritual/religious practices. This paper gives an overview of types of practices that have been considered – both in published descriptions of what a range of authors have suggested can or should be done, and what a number of naturalists have said they are doing as parts of personal practice. It will discuss themes in types of activities, reasons for engaging in practices, and ways that acts may contribute to well-being. It will identify parameters in options; as practices may be done alone or in groups, infrequently or often, or adapted from traditional religious practices or as modern or original creations. It will also discuss how some of what people are already doing, such as gardening and mindful attention in natural settings, can become recognized as parts of personal practice. The paper will conclude with a discussion of current status and future directions. After reviewing areas of activity and growth in personal, self-directed activities, it will point to questions, challenges, and needs that remain in developing types of practices that may contribute to strengthening and maintaining religious naturalist groups.

Keywords: Naturalism, Religious practices, Community, Rituals, Mindfulness, Ecologic preservation, Eco-kosher

Todd Macalister is Communications Director at the Religious Naturalist Association (RNA). He works as a medical writer, developing professional education programs. He attended the School of Theology at Boston University and is author of *Einstein's God: A Way of Being Spiritual Without the Supernatural* (2008) and *Looking to Nature: Exploring a Modern Way of Being Spiritual Without the Supernatural* (2019).

Matt Mackenzie

Spiritual Animals: Sense-Making, Self-Transcendence, and Liberal Naturalism

Owen Flanagan has advocated for an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural inquiry into the nature and optimal conditions of human flourishing which he aptly terms *eudaimonics*. For Flanagan and others engaged in eudaimonics, it is understood from the start that different historical and contemporary traditions—for instance, Aristotelian, Buddhist, and Confucian—offer distinct visions of and pathways to flourishing. Further, it is understood that flourishing is multi-faceted, involving, for example, biological, psychological, and social dimensions. In this paper I want to explore the spiritual dimension of human flourishing from a liberal naturalist perspective. My first core claim is that, at the root of human experience, there are capacities for sense-making and self-transcendence. These capacities allow us, indeed drive us to create, maintain, and transform what Thomas Alexander calls *spiritual ecologies*. These ecologies allow us to find meaning, value, and purpose in our individual and shared worlds—that is, to be spiritually at home. My second core claim is that this spiritual dimension is a distinct and irreducible dimension of our flourishing. The spiritual dimension centrally involves the *depth* and *integration* of our human orientation to life. On my view, then, we are inescapably *spiritual* animals and

any adequate eudaimonics must take this into account. This paper, then, is a contribution to what Flanagan calls Project Eudaimonia, particularly concerning naturalistic spirituality.

Keywords: enactivism, eudaimonics, Owen Flanagan, naturalism, sense-making; spirituality

Matthew MacKenzie is Professor of Philosophy and department chair at Colorado State University. He earned his Ph.D. in comparative philosophy from the University of Hawai`i in 2004. He specializes in classical Indian philosophy and the philosophy of mind. His primary research is at the intersection of Buddhist philosophy and contemporary philosophy of mind, with a special focus on consciousness, self-consciousness, embodiment, and the self. He has published widely in these areas and is the author of the forthcoming book, *Buddhist Philosophy and the Embodied Mind* (Rowman & Littlefield International).

Stephen W. Ragsdale

Science, Spirituality and Creativity: Replanting the Spiritual Roots of Science

The lecture will describe his recent soon-to-be-published book titled *Science, Spirituality and Creativity*. The author reveals that science and spirituality share the same deep roots and aspire to the same goals of knowledge and wisdom. They involve the same energies – prana or quanta – that enliven all life, all spirit. They both require impeccable method, creative exploration and spontaneous freethinking. While science analyzes the external world, spirituality and religion explore the worlds within. The book seeks to re-unify the happy bedfellows of science and spirituality by reminding us all of the scientist's first love: being in an intimate, magical, revelatory relationship with the natural world.

The author is a Professor of Biological Chemistry at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and has cultivated his spiritual practice for nearly as long as he has been a scientist. In this title he reveals how these extrospective and introspective inquiries lead to convergent knowledge and together yield a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world. The book explores how this convergent viewpoint they also lead to creative insights.

Science, Spirituality and Creativity reveals how important introspection is in science and profiles inspirational scientists who, through contemplative practices, have obtained insights that have significantly changed our world. It explores the karma and dharma of science and describes how a purely materialistic viewpoint has led to many current problems in society. The book examines the resistance that many scientists express towards spirituality, this integration of the intrinsic and extrinsic sciences can help scientists reach their aims to achieve impeccable methodology and creative freethinking, both key to creative science. It also reveals how working at the confluence of these powerful disciplines can unlock our creative potential, enhance our productivity, and align us with our higher purpose.

Keywords: Creativity, Spirituality, Introspective Sciences, Karma and Dharma of Science, Materialism

Stephen W. Ragsdale is a scientist who has authored over 250 publications. Besides teaching within his discipline, he developed a course in "Creativity in the Sciences and Arts". A Professor of Biological Chemistry at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, he received his B.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Biochemistry at The University of Georgia. His scientific research focuses on how microbes produce and

remove greenhouse gases from our atmosphere and the role of metals in biology. He is an Ashtanga Yoga practitioner and jazz guitarist often accompanying his partner, jazz singer Marlena Studer, who is also attending this conference.

Peter Saulson

The nature of time as a puzzle for naturalism

If we take nature to be broad enough to include human beings as part of the natural world, then nature needs to have two faces. Nature needs to be what physics teaches us it must be, but if human beings are included then it must also be more than what physics teaches us it must be. Physics teaches us the laws of nature obeyed by material processes. It also teaches us that there is no such thing as “now,” and thus that time can’t flow but instead that all of time must be given “all at once,” as it were. Human experience teaches us the exact opposite – the flow of the present moment seems as central to our lives as any feature of nature could possibly be.

We need to describe existence as a pair of co-existing “realms”; we can call them the realm of things (in which the laws of nature determine what happens) and the realm of persons (in which human beings interact with one another now and choose the actions that determine the future.) The hope that nature would serve as the unifying concept of existence seems challenged by the lack of unity within nature itself.

Thus, human experience invites into nature’s tent features that appear far removed from what materialism can provide. Some theologians, among them Abraham Joshua Heschel, have proposed that God should not be seen as a supernatural being, just as human beings shouldn’t be seen as anything other than natural. Instead, God’s existence should be taken to be as necessary as is the existence of the physical universe. Thus the “seam” between the realm of things and the realm of persons poses a challenge not only to nature’s unity, but to naturalism’s alliance with atheism.

Keywords: naturalism, time, physics, personhood, God.

Peter R. Saulson is Professor of Physics Emeritus at Syracuse University and a Research Affiliate at the MIT Kavli Institute. Saulson’s research career has been devoted to the development of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO); he served two terms as Spokesperson of the LIGO Scientific Collaboration. In 2015, the LIGO team discovered a gravitational wave signal coming from two black holes that had collided 1 billion light years away. Saulson is a co-recipient of the 2017 National Academy of Sciences Award for Scientific Discovery. Saulson is the author of *Fundamentals of Interferometric Gravitational Wave Detectors* (1994, second edition 2017).

Jim Sharp

Theistic Evolution in Three Traditions

This paper will examine the role of theistic evolution in the work of three scholars: Christian philosopher and theologian Keith Ward, rabbi and philosopher Jonathan Sacks, and Muslim physicist Nidhal Guessoum. It will begin by briefly reviewing the idea of theistic evolution as expounded by Ward and

then consider the role it plays in Ward's comparative theology and other works. It will then look at how Sacks and Guessoum each use theistic evolution in very different philosophical and theological contexts: Sacks to present a reassessment of the roles of science and religion in western cultures and Guessoum to argue for a more sophisticated approach to the relationship between science and religion within Islam. The paper will argue that theistic evolution opens the door for theological and philosophical work concerning science and religion that is aimed at a popular audience and moves beyond the stubborn categories of conflict and independence or isolation.

Keywords: evolution, theistic evolution, Keith Ward, Jonathan Sacks, Nidhal Guessoum

Jim Sharp teaches religious studies and philosophy at Colorado State University – Pueblo. He received a PhD in Philosophy of Religion from Claremont Graduate University in 2018, with a dissertation focused on theistic evolution in the work of Keith Ward and Nidhal Guessoum in historical context. He is currently researching and writing a book on the role of evolutionary theory in religious thought.

JD Stillwater

Transcending Dogma: Nature as Global Scripture

The conference theme asks: "Naturalism—as religion, *within* religions, or *without* religion?" This paper answers: "Yes, yes, yes, and one more: *between* religions." All three options are already happening, and will continue to happen. IRAS's unique position linking science and religion offers a fourth over-arching option. Naturalism, understood broadly, represents a kind of "scripture" that could unite *all* of humanity, with the findings of science as a globally-unifying source of religious inspiration.

A scientific understanding of natural reality is not inherently hostile to religion—it doesn't strip the world of mystery and meaning—rather, it deepens our sense of mystery and informs our meaning-making. Natural reality as described by science offers this to all people of all religions all over the world.

Let us stop thinking of science and religion as enemies; science enhances, enriches, and refines religious thought and experience when allowed to do so. Let us cease thinking of reality as cold, hard, and mechanical; every new discovery of the last 150 years suggests fundamental interconnectedness, and challenges either/or dichotomies. Let us embrace Richard Dawkins' phrase "the poetry of reality" with whole welcoming hearts rather than dismissive arrogance, offering nature's poetry *as scripture* to the religions of the world, inviting them to celebrate nature's wonders together. Having coalesced into a single mosaic, the science disciplines today offer relevant meaning on par with—or exceeding—the parables and koans of ancient scriptures.

Natural reality is the sea of context in which all the world's religions are afloat, and science plumbs its depths. For centuries the world's major religions have incorporated the findings of science into their theologies, albeit very slowly and with transcription errors. There is a role for non-dogmatic Naturalists and organizations like IRAS to speed this integration, to accentuate commonalities, to invite and *encourage* diverse interpretations consistent with natural reality, aside from supernatural beliefs.

What steps might IRAS, RNA, and others take to manifest such an umbrella "faith," a faith with global influence, grounded unwaveringly in established science but also deeply and invitingly "spiritual" as Carl Sagan defined it?

Keywords: Naturalism, spirituality, religion, interfaith scripture, meaning.

JD Stillwater is a science educator, author and musician. His Religious Naturalist work springs from his love of science and his tendency to care more about implications than conventions. What he brings to the global conversation is a gift for making difficult science concepts graspable for non-scientists, but then he takes us further, into the deeper mysteries that those concepts reveal. JD’s passion is sharing the beauty, joy, mystery, and connectedness of natural reality.

Christopher White
Higher Dimensions, Fantastic Science, and the Modern Spiritual Imagination

How can we understand better how people make sense of their lives, answer metaphysical questions, and construct a sense of a sacred cosmos around them? Why do older religious perspectives stop appealing to people and how do these ways of thinking get replaced by others? In this talk I point to the surprising role of secular scientific ideas in stimulating new metaphors and ways of thinking about religious concepts. I examine one scientific idea in particular, an idea that has become crucial in many settings, from modern physics to fantasy literature and science-fiction television and film—namely, the idea that the universe has higher, invisible dimensions. In my recent book *Other Worlds* I analyzed how scientists, mathematicians, writers, artists, screenwriters, theologians, televangelists and others used this idea to make supernatural phenomena such as ghosts and miracles seem more reasonable and make spiritual beliefs possible again for themselves and others. In my talk at Star Island I will examine how several writers, activists and artists have used this idea not just to revive supernatural beliefs but to get leverage against dominant ideologies that they have found vexing. To be sure, fantastic scientific ideas like higher dimensions have done different kinds of imaginative work, including mobilizing people for particular projects of critique, reform or liberation.

Keywords: Fantastic science, popular science, scientific ideas, religious ideas, popular culture.

Christopher White received his PhD from Harvard, where he studied religion, science and culture in modern Europe and America. His first book, *Unsettled Minds: Psychology and the American Search for Spiritual Assurance* (California) examined how sciences of mind and brain changed American thinking about religious development and spiritual seeking. His second book, *Other Worlds: Spirituality and the Search for Invisible Dimensions* (Harvard) investigated how fantastic scientific concepts such as higher dimensions reshaped the American religious imagination. *Other Worlds* was awarded a 2020 book prize from the International Society for Science and Religion. Chris is currently a professor at Vassar College.

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BOOK SEMINARS

KARL E. PETERS

A CHRISTIAN NATURALISM

Elliott, Monday, 4.00-5.30 pm

Karl Peters had planned to be with us at Star Island, but had to decide otherwise. However, he will be with us on Monday for an online conversation on his forthcoming book. The manuscript is available for participants via the IRAS website, on the password protected page www.iras.org/2021-conference-streaming. In the context of a scientifically based naturalism, this book seminar focuses on key questions.

What is God? After contrasting the world view of the Bible with that of contemporary science, I conclude that it is no longer possible to think of God as a personal being creating the universe. However, it is possible to think of God as the creativity of the universe. Furthermore, once something is created it becomes part of continuing creativity.

How did we come to be? Our story, as humans is then told in the first person. I and you are first created as hydrogen atoms 300,000 years after the big bang. Our creation continues to occur for 13.8 billion years to the present. Everything in the universe is “family.” However, our family is broken with the rise of human evil in the forms of racism, sexism, and speciesism (climate change). This is traced in our journey out of Africa to the present.

What did Jesus do? Christianity responds to human evil with what Jesus did and who he was. From the viewpoint of scientific naturalism, it is not possible to think that Jesus died for our sins—the substitutionary theory of atonement (at-one-ment with God). However, it is possible to think of Jesus as an inspirational example of love for humans—the moral exemplar theory of atonement.

Who was Jesus? From the viewpoint of scientific naturalism, it is not possible to think of Mary’s conception as the result of the Holy Spirit or of Mary as a Virgin. However, there is some evidence from the first century C.E. and the reasoning of contemporary scholarship that Mary was raped by a Roman soldier. This establishes the basis for Jesus being a nonviolent revolutionary against the brutal Roman system of domination over Palestine. Jesus is present in our world today wherever people seek justice and engage in “listening” love to help heal the brokenness of racism, sexism, and speciesism.

Invited respondents: Barbara Whittaker-Johns and Edmund Robinson.

Karl E. Peters (Ph.D.) is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Religion, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, where he taught world religions, environmental ethics, and religion and science. He has been editor and co-editor of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, and also co-chair of the journal’s Joint Publication Board. He is a charter member of the International Society for Science and Religion. He also is a Past President and Vice-President for Conferences of IRAS, and has been awarded the lifetime position of Honorary Vice President. Peters is the author of *Dancing with the Sacred: Evolution, Ecology, and God* and *Spiritual Transformations: Science, Religion, and Human Becoming*, as well as many essays in science and religion. His current focus is on developing a Christian Naturalistic Theology. His website is www.karlpeters.net

Edmund Robinson is a Unitarian Universalist minister who has been active with IRAS since the late 1990s. Ordained in 1999, he has served churches in Massachusetts and New York. He is married to Jacqueline Schwab, a pianist whose music can be heard in the soundtrack of many of Ken Burns' documentaries. Prior to entering ministry, Edmund was a trial lawyer in South Carolina and Boston. He has been minister of the week to two Star conferences, 2007 (Emergence) and 2018 (Artificial Intelligence).

Barbara Whittaker-Johns: For bio, see the plenary opening session, Sunday evening.

MICHAEL RUSE

A PHILOSOPHER LOOKS AT HUMAN BEINGS

Elliott, Wednesday, 3:30-5:00 pm

This is the title of a book that has just been published (by Cambridge University Press). It is available on amazon.com priced at \$13, and via other book stores. Don't be put off by the fact that it is a book by a philosopher on philosophy. The copyeditor said he had never laughed out loud quite so much as working on my book. More importantly, it is only 50K words.

The question I ask in this book is why do human beings think they are special? I look at three answers. The first is religious (Christian). We uniquely are made in the image of God. I reject this answer because I am a non-believer. I add that I am a non-believer, not because of natural theological objections – the problem of evil – but because I am a secular Kierkegaardian – faith or nothing and I don't have faith. The second and third are both naturalistic but with very different answers. The second answer is that evolution occurred, that it is progressive – monad to man – and we humans came top. What makes the answer interesting is that this is an answer shared by ardent Darwinians – Richard Dawkins and Edward O. Wilson – and by strong critics of Darwinism – most especially the philosopher Thomas Nagel, author of *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False*. I reject this answer because evolution is not progressive. We may think we are top, but we don't get it from evolution. Today, it is still a tossup as to who is the winner – *Homo sapiens* or the Covid virus. The third answer, the one I embrace, is what I call "Darwinian existentialism." The judgment that we are superior is ours and ours alone. There are no external supports for this position. Our superiority comes from the lives we live – Plato, Shakespeare, Vermeer, Mozart, Tolstoy, Sophie Scholl. That is the only answer I can give and the only answer I want to give.

Invited respondent: Adam Chin.

Michael Ruse, born (in 1940) in England, taught philosophy for 35 years at the University of Guelph, in Ontario, Canada, and then for 20 years at Florida State University. He is an expert on the history and philosophy of evolutionary biology and has written or edited over sixty books. He is particularly interested in the relationship between science and religion, and was a witness for the ACLU in 1981 in its successful attempt to overturn a law mandating the compulsory teaching of Creationism in Arkansas. He has been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship (USA) and a Killam fellowship (Canada). A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, he has been a Gifford Lecturer and is the recipient of four honorary degrees. He is known for his modesty.

Adam J. Chin is a graduate student in the Department of Logic and Philosophy of Science at the University of California, Irvine. His research mainly concerns the relationship between religion and science, especially the "Conflict Thesis" and its historiography. He also has significant interests in the early modern period and general history and/or philosophy of science.

MICHAEL RUSE

WHY DO WE HATE? UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN CONFLICT

Elliott, Thursday, 3:30-5:00 pm

Michael Ruse will discuss *Why Do We Hate? Understanding the Origins of Human Conflict*, a title to be published (by Oxford University Press) in its Spring Collection, for 2022. A pdf of the pre-copy-edited manuscript is available for participants via the IRAS website, on the password protected page www.iras.org/2021-conference-streaming. It is relatively short, less than 70K words.

Here is the paradox. Humans are successful because they are a social species. Compared to other mammals, they are not particularly fast, not particularly strong, not particularly agile. But they do work well together. Yet, they are also a hating species. Non-stop wars – WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam -- and vile prejudice – foreigners, class, race, sexual orientation, religion, Jews, women. How do we move forward? Two clues. One. Until 10K years ago, we were hunter-gatherers. Then came agriculture and a whole new set of problems. We are trapped in Stone Age skulls in a modern world. Two. Religious and secular agree that to do the right thing is to do the natural. Comforting a crying child is natural and is right. Pushing little old ladies under a bus is unnatural and wrong. We now know that there was no war and little prejudice in the Pleistocene (ends around 12K years ago). They were not natural. Why go to war? You might get hurt. Why care if two guys go off, privately, into the undergrowth? It doesn't mean that they won't come to the help of the tribe when needed. With agriculture, you get a population explosion and fixed assets. War. With agriculture you get reasons to distrust outsiders. Prejudice. We have been forced into unnatural practices. Today, we can reverse these. Women in hunter-gatherer societies were equal. The men did the spearing; the women made the traps. Then, with agriculture, came the need for more and more children and women turned into breeding machines, with all that that implies. Men became dominant. Now, with labor-saving devices like washing machines and with effective contraception, women are free from such burdens, and can do what is natural. Over 50% of new medics are women, over 75% of new vets are women. This is a good thing. Doris Day knew the score:

You don't have to go a private school
Not to pick up a penny near a stubborn mule,
You don't have to have a professor's dome
Not to go for the honey when the bee's not home.
That comes naturally (that comes naturally).

Invited response by Seth P. Hart. **Seth Hart** is a PhD student in science and theology at Durham University. His research focuses on the intersection of Darwinism and theology, specifically on the concepts of fitness, adaptation, and selection. For more, see his bio in the short papers section.

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FREE UNIVERSITY AND OTHER MEETINGS

For initiatives during the conference, please consult Abby Fuller on possibilities, including rooms.

Ann Stillwater

Renew yourself with Yoga/Mindfulness sessions.

First meeting Monday after lunch, place to be announced

Science and religion both extol the virtues of mindfulness. Science has found that we can decrease stress and improve health through focus on the breath, awareness of bodily sensations, and visualization. The same results come from religions' teachings to spend time in prayer and meditation, share emotions & thoughts with something bigger than ourselves, and listening. It doesn't matter if you are in the reform, replace, or reject camp, whatever floats your boat is fine for these brief sessions, as you learn to renew and flow through life with greater body awareness and peace.

Join yoga instructor, school nurse, and nurse researcher Ann Stillwater in a variety of very short mindfulness/yoga sessions of 5-30 minutes. All will help you center and ground at this somewhat heady conference. Come to one, all, or any number in between, with a goal of leaving refreshed and renewed.

The first session will meet after lunch on Monday. Participants will help to prioritize choices and timings for sessions over the rest of the week and also participate in a brief guided meditation. The choice selection may be with an on-line form/survey so please bring a device to connect to the internet. Session topics may include: earth connection grounding, rainbow centering, head & neck exercises, cold water meditation, Sufi elemental breathing, neuroscience-based breathing exercises, prolapse prevention/ kegels.

Sally Bowden-Schaible

TRANSFORMING WORDS: Entering Into "The Peace of Wild Things"*

Friday

Caregiving is a universal activity with emotional, physical and spiritual effects experienced by those offering the care and those who are the recipients. Nature is, for many, a place of solace and healing—we are, after all, a part of nature. This workshop addresses these two universals.

*".... I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free."
from **The Peace of Wild Things**, Wendell Berry*

As caregivers, we know how the mind-body-spirit can become deeply weary when tending to the lives of those needing our listening ears, our able mind and body, and our loving heart. For many of us, caring for others often takes precedence over caring for ourselves. And we may push aside the warning signals of wearing out until they can no longer be ignored: we become irritable and resentful, get sick, lose connection with friends and loved ones, and feel so miserable and alone that our ability to do what it is we truly want to do—care for others—is unsustainable, no longer what we can or even want to be doing.

In this workshop, we will explore one way—the reading of poetry—to preempt such “soul-fatigue”. While spending time in nature— walking in the woods, sitting in the sun, swimming in a lake—is a source of nourishment and renewal for many people, it may not always be feasible to go to a beautiful and restful place in nature. At such times, engaging the senses and the imagination through the reading of a poem can provide a meditative respite.

The poems selected for this workshop bring the natural world to us when we are unable to go to it. We will read poems out loud, experiencing the power of words to nourish and replenish. You will leave with a number of sources for poems and with an understanding of the transformative power of poetry. (If you would like, please bring one or two poems that you have used in your counseling/caregiving practice or that you think would be appropriate.)

The focus of the workshop is on reading already written and published poetry, rather than writing poetry as a creative and/or therapeutic expression; and it is not about reading poetry as an evocative therapeutic intervention, but using it as a meditative means for slowing us down, bringing attention into the here and now through engaging our senses, and connecting us with the renewing aspects of nature.

Reading and reciting poetry can be a means for a guided meditation or for self-hypnosis. With practice, this activity can be an accessible element of a sustainable self-care plan for caregivers.

Sally Bowden-Schaible has been a mental health professional (LCPC, CCMHC) for nearly 35 years (www.livingwellcenter.info). She was an adjunct faculty member for over a decade in the Counselor Education program at the University of Southern Maine (*Religion and Spirituality in Counseling; Mind/Body in Counseling*) and developed and taught the semester course *Mindfulness and Meditation in Social Work* at the University of New England. Over the years, Sally developed many continuing education programs including workshops on the use of poetry in counseling practice and in caregiving. She has been involved in human rights activism since 2002, with a particular interest in human rights for the Palestinian people. Sally has studied and practiced Buddhism (Nikaya) since 1996 and integrates these teachings into her counseling approach, courses she teaches, and human rights activism. She is founder and blog coordinator for *Buddhist Alliance for Non-Violence and Human Rights in Israel-Palestine* (www.banvahr.org). She considers Religious Naturalism a complement to Buddhism. Sally lives in Portland, ME with her husband, Bob, near her two adult children and their families (including 3 young grandchildren) and is a caregiver for her two elderly parents. She has been a member of IRAS for many years and currently is a council member.

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LITERATURE

Some literature related to the IRAS 2021 conference Naturalism – as Religion, *within* Religions, *without* Religion

As the topic is vast and open to multiple interpretations and developments, a more or less complete list of literature is not imaginable. The following are just a few suggestions, mostly related to the plenary speakers and the authors involved in the book seminars. On religious naturalism, see also <http://religious-naturalist-association.org/> and the multi-author volume edited by Donald Crosby and Jerome Stone (2018), listed below.

Philip Clayton, Zachary Simpson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* (Oxford UP, 2006), with contributions on naturalism by Willem B. Drees, Owen Flanagan, and Ursula Goodenough with Terrence Deacon)

Donald Crosby, Jerome A. Stone (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Religious Naturalism* (Routledge, 2018); includes contributions by some of our speakers and participants, including Willem B. Drees, Ursula Goodenough with Michael Cavanaugh and Todd Macalister, Karl E. Peters, Dan Solomon, Carol Wayne White)

Mario De Caro and David Macarthur, *Naturalism and Normativity* (Harvard UP, 2010)

Willem B. Drees, *Religion and Science in Context: A Guide to the Debates* (Routledge, 2010)

Willem B. Drees, *What Are the Humanities For?* (Cambridge University Press, 2021)

Willem B. Drees, *Religion, Science, and Naturalism* (Cambridge UP, 1996)

Owen Flanagan, *Consciousness Reconsidered* (MIT Press, 1993)

Owen Flanagan, *The Bodhisattva's Brain: Buddhism Naturalized* (Bradford Books, 2011)

Ursula Goodenough, *The Sacred Depths of Nature* (Oxford University Press, 2000)

Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays* (Polity, 2008)

Charley Hardwick, *Events of Grace: Naturalism, Existentialism and Theology* (Cambridge UP, 1996)

Philip Kitcher, *Life After Faith: The Case for Secular Humanism* Yale University Press, 2014)

Karl Peters, *Dancing with the Sacred: Evolution, Ecology and God* (Trinity Press International)

Sarah Lane Ritchie, *Divine Action and the Human Mind* (Cambridge University Press, 2019)

Sarah Lane Ritchie, "Dancing Around the Causal Joint: Challenges to the Theological Turn in Divine Action Theories", *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* 52 (2, June 2017), 361-379

John Perry and Sarah Lane Ritchie, "Magnets, Magic, and Other Anomalies: In Defense of Methodological Naturalism", *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* 53 (4, December 2018), 1064-1093.

Loyal Rue, *Nature is Enough: Religious Naturalism and the Meaning of Life* (SUNY, 2011)

Michael Ruse, *The Gaia Hypothesis: Science on a Pagan Planet* (University of Chicago Press, 2013)

Michael Ruse, *A Meaning to Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Michael Ruse, *Monotheism and Contemporary Atheism (Cambridge Elements)*. (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Michael Ruse, *The Darwinian Revolution (Cambridge Elements)*. (Cambridge University Press 2019).

Michael Ruse, *A Philosopher Looks at Human Beings* (Cambridge University Press, 2021)

Jerome Stone, *Religious Naturalism Today: The Rebirth of a Forgotten Alternative* (SUNY Press, 2017)

Carol Wayne White, *Black Lives and Sacred Humanity: The Emergence of an African-American Religious Naturalism* (Fordham University Press, 2016)

Carol Wayne White, *The Legacy of Anne Conway (1631-1679): Reverberations from a Mystical Naturalism* (SUNY Press, 2009; pb \$ 31.95)

Carol Wayne White, "Re-Envisioning Hope: Anthropogenic Climate change, Learned Ignorance, and Religious Naturalism." In *Zygon: Journal of Science and Religion*, Vol. 53, no. 2 (June 2018): 570-585.

Carol Wayne White, "Big Miracle and Religious Naturalism: Rescuing Myriad Nature from Popular Fantasies of Nature Rescue." In *Natural Communion, Reflections on Ecospirituality* (Faith in Nature: Religion and Public Life) Volume 40. Edited by Gabriel R. Ricci. NY: Routledge. 2019: 176-192.

Carol Wayne White, "Stubborn Materiality: African-American Religious Naturalism and Becoming Our Humanity." In *Entangled Worlds: Science, Religion, and Materiality*. Catherine Keller and Mary-Jane Rubenstein, eds. Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2017: 249-273.