

## ESFRE VI SHORT PAPERS VERSION 5 (10 May 2021)

<p><b>Jessica Brown</b></p> <p>University of Limerick  <a href="mailto:jessica.brown@ul.ie">jessica.brown@ul.ie</a></p>	<p><b>Title: Fiction’s Double-Helix of Materialism and Incorporeality: Biologics, Atmospheric, and Spiritual Transformation in A Christmas Carol</b></p> <p>Abstract: In her book <i>The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism</i>, Elizabeth Grosz offers a rejoinder to new materialism with a vision of materialism that includes the incorporeal, submitting that a robust materialism does not counter nor deny incorporeality but in fact is all the more nuanced and accountable for such inclusion. Using Grosz’s argument as a springboard, this paper seeks to articulate how fiction offers a materialism that is intricately bound with spiritual dynamics. A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens renders a fictive world replete with materials, especially bodily and atmospheric materials. Yet because of the way this novel works, this materialism enacts an arc of spiritual growth, which in turn only finds sufficient expression via tactile and connective materials. After presenting the biologic and atmospheric materials in Scrooge’s fictive world and exploring the double-helix they form with Scrooge’s spiritual transformation, this paper will then consider how an encounter with this radical connectivity between materialism and the incorporeal pushes us into a potentially responsive (perhaps even responsible) relationship with the ecology that sustains this connectivity.</p>
<p><b>Levi Checketts</b></p> <p>Santa Clara University</p>	<p><b>Title: St Francis Preaching to the Mussels: On the place of religious beliefs in Actor-Network Theory</b></p> <p>Abstract: In <i>Reassembling the Social</i>, Bruno Latour claims that “social explanations” for a given state of things are lazy—ANT prefers “descriptions” over “explanations.” Thus, explanations of a society’s ethos, hegemonic ideologies, or other “social forces” are shortcuts to the difficult work of describing how particular actants enrol or resist each other within broader actor-networks. This seems to foreclose the possibility of talking about any religion in relation to the environment: one cannot talk about Christianity or Buddhism as social forces but rather about how particular Christians or Buddhists have interacted with other actors, including other adherents and the non-human environment. However, in Latour’s earlier <i>Science in Action</i>, he articulates the establishing of scientific facts by strength of references. By extension, we might say a piece of religious doctrine on the environment, such as Jain panpsychism or Christian dominionism, becomes enshrined as fact by virtue of its acceptance and propagation among religious adherents and leaders, and by the way they interact with other actants. Championing religious responsibility in the Anthropocene then requires enrolling sufficient actors to make religious moral attitudes a central part of religious teaching, a challenge that amounts to changing religious teaching into established doctrine, if not outright dogma.</p>
<p><b>Roberto Chiotti</b></p> <p>Principal, Larkin Architect Limited</p>	<p><b>Title: Re-establishing Right Relationship with Creation: Three Contributing Voices to the Discourse on New-Materialism</b></p>

	<p>The paper will draw from three significant voices for re-imagining and achieving a viable future. The first voice of wisdom is the Holy Father Francis, from his encyclical, “Laudato Si’, On Care for Our Common Home”. He challenges the dominant world view that we can privilege our needs over those of the planet that sustains us, and proposes the means to achieve an “integral ecology” that recognizes the interconnectedness of everything and our responsibility as humans to bring about a fair and just relationship with each other and creation. The second is cultural historian, Thomas Berry, who entreats that creation must now be experienced as the emergence of the universe as a psychic-spiritual as well as a material-physical reality from the outset. It’s fourteen billion years of cosmogenesis that propel it towards greater diversity or differentiation, greater subjectivity or interiority, and greater communion or interrelatedness becomes the epic narrative that describes the basis for a new cosmology, one that has the power to inspire and educate us towards establishing a mutually-enhancing, human-earth relationship. The third is Jungian Psychologist, James Hillman who believes that the solutions to solving the ecological imperative will not emerge from fear, guilt, or even religious devotion to the earth as “Mother”, but rather from something as fundamental as love. In <i>City and Soul</i>, he draws upon the inextricable human desire to care for what we find beautiful and love, as the means by which we will protect the environment.</p> <p>References: Encyclical Letter <i>Laudato Si’</i> of the Holy Father Francis, <i>On Care for Our Common Home</i>, 2015 Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City. Berry, T., 1988, <i>The Dream of the Earth</i>, Sierra Club, San Francisco, California Hillman, J., 2006, <i>City and Soul</i>, Spring Publications, Inc., Putnam, Connecticut</p>
<p><b>Matthew Eaton</b> King’s College, PA</p>	<p><b>Title: “Incarnation and Infinity: Giordano Bruno and a New Path for Christology”</b></p> <p>Abstract: Giordano Bruno’s understanding of the world as necessarily divine and material challenges Christian notions of incarnation as a unique event particular to Jesus. Building on Bruno’s pantheist naturalism, which sees the world as divine because of the infinite nature of the maximum totality of the creation as well as the minimum individuality of the creature, I explore the possibility of pan-incarnation as a framework for Christian ethics. Building on Bruno, I construct pan-incarnate theology that strives to make sense of a radical embrace of divine infinity while accepting the particularity of Christ as the revelation of justice and love. I suggest that on a certain level Brunian religious naturalism is good and useful in viewing creation as an infinite, pantheist ecology in which we live and move and exist. Yet, I question how appropriate such a notion is in considering the object and ideals of Christian devotion. Insofar as the Christian tradition follows the God of justice and love, it would seem problematic to devote one’s self to the totality of a divinized world that is at best morally ambiguous. Rather than reject pantheist naturalism, however, I suggest Christianity begin to play with the</p>

	<p>idea that within the divine totality, a plurality of incarnate gods have begun to emerge and differentiate themselves. Within such a religious myth, we may look for Christ among the gods.</p>
<p><b>Ivo Frankenreiter</b></p> <p>Author bio Ivo Frankenreiter, Dipl. theol. B.A., studied Catholic Theology and Philosophy in Tübingen, Paris and Munich from 2010 to 2017. Academic interests lie in systematic theology, philosophy of religion, process philosophy, philosophy and sociology of time as well as climate and sustainability ethics. Currently, he is working on a PhD project on “Process Theological Transformation Ethics. Searching for an epistemology of environmental and societal change“ at LMU Munich (supervisor: Prof. Dr. Markus Vogt; Chair for Christian Social Ethics).</p> <p>Contact information: Ivo Frankenreiter Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät Lehrstuhl für Christliche Sozialethik Geschwister-Scholl- Platz 1D - 80539 München Germany E-Mail: <a href="mailto:ivo.frankenreiter@campus.lmu.de">ivo.frankenreiter@campus.lmu.de</a></p>	<p><b>Title: “Process Materialism”? Understanding some Aspects of “Matter” within a Whiteheadian Cosmology</b></p> <p>The idea of matter as passive objects, determined by the laws of nature, lies at the heart of modern worldviews. Inspiring sources for this conception can be found in Newton’s classical mechanics combined with a strong search for a new grounding of certainty in knowledge beginning in the 17th century. Bruno Latour, however, criticizes this notion of dead matter as a mere cliché compared to materiality recognizing the richness of agency on all levels of networks we as humans live in. In search for an ontological groundwork for such a re-conception of the material world, Alfred N. Whitehead’s “Essay in Cosmology” seems to provide a promising approach. To explore how this perspective might be of help within the ongoing discussions about climate change and the underlying human-nature-relationship, I want to highlight three aspects of his philosophy of organism: a) atomism and relationality in fundamental entities; b) how things appear as “dead objects” ;c) the hierarchy of organisms. A concluding look at Pope Francis and his encyclical Laudato si’ will shed light on how this conjunction of ecology and theology might profit from such a systematic framework for a Christian understanding of “creation”.</p> <p>Literature: Cobb, John B. Jr./Griffin, David R. (1976): Process Theology. An Introductory Exposition, Westminster Press. Latour, Bruno (2017): Facing Gaia. Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime, Polity. Toulmin, Stephen (1992): Cosmopolis. The Hidden Agenda of Modernity, Chicago Univ. Press. Whitehead, Alfred N. (1948): Science and the Modern World, Pelican Mentor Books. Whitehead, Alfred N. (1978): Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology, corr. ed. by David R. Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, The Free Press.</p>
<p><b>Ralf Gisinger</b></p> <p>University of Vienna</p>	<p><b>Title: Mattering Ecologies. Towards a political philosophy in-between materialism and ecology</b></p> <p><b>Short Abstract:</b> My thesis is, that despite great inner differences, two contiguous and yet strongly diverging strands have emerged around the topoi of environment, ecology and relationality: 1. a way of thinking that is based on the manifold relationships, connections, or the interconnectedness of modes of existence (e.g. Latour, Haraway, Nancy, Debaise, Massumi) and 2. "new" materialisms, which for example question the subject-object distinction or re-signify categories such as "life" or "matter" (Barad, Bennett, Morton, Harman, Bryant). But what is specifically materialistic about the proliferation of discourses on ecology and nature? Based on the question of how relational ontologies are related to (political-philosophical) ecologies, I will bundle the similarities and differences primarily built on Deleuze’s and Guattari’s materialist vitalism. On these terms, I try to develop an ecological philosophy</p>

	<p>that must also assert itself as a political-economic philosophy [<i>oikos</i>], in order not to stabilize or reproduce the existing power relations in their economic and eco-logical form in the rhetoric of the ecological "big picture" (Luisetti 2018).</p> <p>Hence, <i>Mattering Ecologies</i> tries to account for the constitutive differences, but also the indispensable entanglement of ecology and materialism and why this interconnectedness is necessary political.</p>
<p><b>Caleb Gordon</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:caleb.gordon@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk">caleb.gordon@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk</a></p> <p>University of Manchester</p>	<p><b>You Are What You See: environmental ethics as a critique of the conditions for self</b></p> <p>Abstract: My paper analyzes David Bentley Hart’s treatment of Gilles Deleuze’s notion of ‘folds’ and its implications for environmental ethics. I build on their shared position that the experience of self is generated by the world reflecting back to itself: this convergence provokes a question about whether environments can or should be critiqued in terms of the conditions which generate and sustain selves. Using their discourse, I argue that the material conditions for well-being must include aesthetic experience, and environmental ethics must be expanded accordingly.</p> <p>While Hart and Deleuze both provide support for this expansion, Hart argues that Deleuze’s framework of ‘folds’ excludes the possibility of divine relationship prematurely, and thus excludes an ‘axis of intelligibility’ for creaturely interpretation of sensory experience. If the material conditions of the world do not merely reflect each other but mediate a ‘shining-through’ of the divine, then self-making is not simply about the material arrangements or conditions of environments, but also the way those environments facilitate relationship to God.</p>
<p><b>Tim Howles</b></p> <p>Biography Tim Howles is an ordained minister in the Church of England and a Research Fellow for the William Temple Foundation. His doctoral research focused on contemporary political theology, with reference to the work of such diverse writers as Carl Schmitt, Eric Voegelin, Michel Serres and Bruno Latour. He is particularly interested in the application of these ideas to environmental theology. To that end, he teaches on an Oxford-based training course entitled “Christian Rural and Environmental Studies” and participates in a task-group established by the Bishop of Oxford aiming to co-ordinate a response to the crisis from national church.</p>	<p><b>Title: What is the ecological thinking that is needed at a time like this?</b></p> <p>Abstract In a number of works, Frédérique Neyrat has offered a critique of the “saturated immanence” of much recent ecological thinking. Neyrat agrees that the concept of “nature” needs to be freed from the reductive binaries in which it has been locked by modernity, in such a way that the material realm can be appreciated as animated and enchanted. But he does not agree with the way this has so far been attempted. One of his primary targets in this regard is Bruno Latour. For Neyrat, the way in which Latour attempts to deconstruct the “human/ nature” dichotomy causes a relation of hierarchy to be re-inscribed. We are left with a paltry form of “eco-constructivism”, where solutions to the contemporary environmental crisis can only be conceived in terms of technology, pragmatism and resilience. In this paper, however, I will seek to turn the tables on Neyrat. Contrary to his critique, I will propose that Latour offers important resources for the ecological discourse that is needed at this time. In particular, I will argue for a reading of Latour’s work in terms of a “political theology”, where prescriptions for human activity are framed by ideas of humility and care for a material realm that is “gifted” and that therefore always escapes the ability of human beings to master and</p>

	<p>dominate it. In this way, I will propose that Latour’s work invites theology to make a contribution to ecological discourse, thereby answering some of the challenges that Neyrat has identified.</p>
<p><b>David Johnson</b> University of Manchester / PhD Researcher</p>	<p><b>Title: Encounters of entanglement and care with our personal possessions</b></p> <p>Abstract: My research considers our entanglements with everyday objects and the aesthetic modes of reception that emerge from these relationships. Originating from a photo archive of my possessions following a move from London to Manchester, these objects serve as an initial site for a pragmatist inquiry (James, Dewey, Whitehead) that conceives our sense of self as inseparably intertwined and unknowable without the outside world and the objects within that world or as Bruno Latour would describe ‘we are what we are attached to’. Extending the concept of <i>care</i> as developed by Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, this investigation focuses on those moments in which our everyday objects come into view, to be displaced from the sweep of typical usage or brought forward from the recesses of storage or neglect, and where we ask: <i>what is this object and what does it mean to me?</i> These are routine activities of arranging one’s desk, cleaning the kitchen, repairing a bike, or generally sorting our things from which a moment of reflection and engagement is engendered and thus to acknowledge, to manifest emotions towards, to express gratitude for or disdain. How might we better understand and cultivate this recognising moment of interdependency in order to locate ourselves more fully in the many worlds of more than human agents and actors, local and global, that we share with?</p>
<p><b>Seoyoung Kim</b> PhD student, University of Manchester</p>	<p><b>Title: A Theology of Water</b></p> <p>The aim of this paper is to examine a range of meanings of water in Christian theology. As the water crisis has become a global reality, Christian theologians are seeking ways of interpreting the use of water in biblical texts and of proposing ethical practices leading to water justice. However, most theologians have been more concerned with symbolic meanings of water rather than realistic meanings of water. This paper contributes to the recognition of both symbolic and realistic meanings of water in Christian theology. Specifically, it approaches the investigation using an ecofeminist theological perspective. I will reinterpret John 4 - the story of the Samaritan woman and Jesus - in order to help us to understand a variety of spiritual and physical meanings of water. In addition, I will connect the life of the Samaritan woman with the current oppression of women in countries experiencing water shortages such as India and Africa. Furthermore, the relationship between God, creation (water), and humanity will be also addressed. The theological revisiting will emphasise the intrinsic value, interconnectedness and interdependence of all living beings in our contemporary context.</p>
<p><b>Simone Kotva</b> Short author bio</p>	<p><b>Title: “Witchbodies: Magic and the Matter of Critical Religion”</b></p> <p>In this paper, I will examine the significance of witchcraft in the new materialism, and magical thinking, in the work of Jane Bennett,</p>

<p>Simone Kotva is Research Fellow in theology at the University of Oslo, Faculty of Theology, and Affiliated Lecturer at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge. Simone is the author of <i>Effort and Grace: On the Spiritual Exercise of Philosophy</i> (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), a ground-breaking study of French spiritualism. With Alice Tarbuck she is currently working on a volume addressing attention as a spiritual technology for the transformation of earth: <i>Spellwork for a damaged plant: Magic and Ecology</i>.</p> <p><b>Contact information</b> Dr S Kotva University of Oslo <a href="mailto:simone.kotva@teologi.uio.no">simone.kotva@teologi.uio.no</a></p>	<p>Timothy Morton and Isabelle Stengers, for an understanding of religion’s anticipation of ecological thinking and its ontological implications. Scholars have often seen religion as symbolically marking the beginning of dualism and the rise of the cult of spirit-over-matter. The emergence, in the latter half of the twentieth-century, of “Wicca,” a new religion devoted wholly to “the earth,” came with a sense of relief but also anxiety, for while it challenged the secular normativity of environmentalism, witchcraft also questioned the religious presumptions of ecological theology. How has this tension both intensified and resolved in the recent engagement of witchcraft by “secular” thinkers? What are the implications for this new “religio-magical turn” in the work of such avowedly atheological thinkers as Morton? And what has this to do with the question of materialism? In this paper, I will explore the ontological implications of the religious treatment of witchcraft in this context, and what it might mean to think our relationship to the more-than-human world through a magical structure.</p>
<p><b>David Krantz</b></p> <p>School of Sustainability, College of Global Futures, Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory, Arizona State University2 Aytzim: Ecological Judaism* <a href="mailto:krantz@asu.edu">krantz@asu.edu</a></p> <p>Bio David Krantz is a National Science Foundation IGERT fellow at the School of Sustainability at Arizona State University. He also is the president and cofounder of Aytzim: Ecological Judaism, a cofounder of Interfaith Oceans, and a member of the board of directors of Interfaith Moral Action on Climate.</p>	<p><b>Title: Sova: The Embrace of Satiety and Release of Materialism in Judaism’s Sabbatical Year</b></p> <p><b>Abstract</b> Most religions are replete with physical-material trappings; Judaism has many, including tzitzit (fringes at the ends of rectangular garments), tefillin (phylacteries), the menorah, and of course the scroll of the Torah, the five books of Moses. But Judaism also includes the concept of sova—satiety, fullness, enoughness—that is embedded as integral to shmita (alternatively spelled shemittah, shemitta, or shmitah), Judaism’s sabbatical year. Rather than promoting the acquisition and use of physical materials, sova encourages the relinquishment of their attainment. And just as shmita serves as a counter balance to never-ending production and growth (Krantz 2016), sova serves as a counter balance to never-ending consumption and materialism. Indeed, as production and consumption themselves are linked inextricably, so too are shmita and sova: one cannot be practiced without the other. In this paper, I intend to explore sova as Jewish concept; to trace its history in Jewish thought; to attempt to uncover how sova has influenced practices of other religions and in secular society; and to document how modern Jewish environmentalists are reimagining sova for degrowth and as a release of materialism’s hold on society.</p> <p><b>Works Cited</b> Krantz, D. 2016. Shmita Revolution: The Reclamation and Reinvention of the Sabbatical Year. <i>Religions</i>, 7(8), 1-31</p>
<p><b>Michael Lucas</b></p> <p>Emeritus Professor, Architecture California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California, <a href="mailto:USAmLucas@calpoly.edu">USAmLucas@calpoly.edu</a> <a href="tel:1.805.215.3750">1.805.215.3750</a></p>	<p><b>Title: Beyond Facelift: Poiesis, Cosmic Ecology, and Material Continuity at Ohkay Owingeh and Zuni</b></p> <p><b>Abstract:</b> Facelift defines Western desire for fixed form appearance, denying time. Travelling the American southwest one is struck by the endemic Pueblo Style, simulacra, and debates over authenticity. It is instructive to experience what the originating peoples have done in parallel time in the same geographic space within evolving spiritual and aesthetic realms, where complex</p>

	<p>cultural constructs of poiesis and spatial praxis are engaged and evolved without nostalgia. The presentation contrasts ongoing initiatives of two Pueblo peoples: the renovation/restoration of Halona:waat Zuni and the Owe'neh Bupingehat Ohkay Owingeh. In Chaco Canyon in the 12th century, Puebloan ancestral masonry structured dense multi-story room blocks, and formed significant larger exterior plazas. Ritual expanded beyond the subterranean kiva into a larger community event for hundreds in the plazas. Great Houses recognized solar and lunar cycles in their layout, revealing time, and uniting stones, spaces, spirit, and stars. Across migrations, and dominant Spanish, American, and globalist eras, this transcendental architectural tradition has evolved, along with social fabric that united the peoples in their congregated identities, communities, and landscapes. Today the challenge is the recognition of traditional villages as places of ceremony, or may they also retain the vitality of day-to-day continuing occupation? At Zuni and Ohkay Owingeh, tribal leaders have chosen differing architectural paths to holistically embody the latter.</p>
<p><b>Victoria Machado</b></p> <p>PhD Candidate, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA</p>	<p><b>Title: Water as Lifeblood: Expanding Materialist Ethics in Florida's Environmental Movement</b></p> <p>This essay contributes to the development of 'new' materialism by exploring what happens when activists recognize water's agency, not as 'object' but still as 'material.' I investigate how 'new' materialism— most notably characterized through its rejection of anthropocentrism, focus on movement, and inclusion of immanence—relates to a religious water ethic in Florida through three ways. First, religiously motivated environmental efforts engage in material actions to clean up water. Second, activists lead religious rituals such as sacred water ceremonies and prayer walks that involve material actions in an effort to 'heal' the water. Last, the "material" of water itself overtly becomes an agent as expressed in campaigns to grant water legal rights. These instances show how new materialist perspectives can illuminate the ways environmental advocates attempt to shed their anthropocentric views in favor of post-humanist understandings. Grounding ethics in the physical world allows for a concrete moral responsibility toward creation thereby centralizing interconnected actions of humans and nature in the quest for environmental change. Drawing from material actions and water as 'material,' environmentalists profess an ethic that is religious while also deeply connected to the material world, thereby posing a new way of framing Florida's water crisis.</p>
<p><b>Anders Melin</b></p> <p>Anders Melin Associate Professor in Ethics Dep. of Global Political Studies Malmö University anders.melin@mau.se.</p>	<p><b>Title: AN ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON ENERGY ETHICS</b></p> <p>Energy production and consumption is a precondition for human life. Especially in industrialized countries, people are accustomed to easy access to energy. At the same time, energy production has negative environmental impacts, which may last for thousands of years. The choice of energy systems gives rise to potential ethical conflicts regarding well-being within present generations, i.e. between different social groups or groups living in different</p>

	<p>countries, between current and future individuals and between humans and other life forms. This paper discusses how the ethical dilemmas connected with energy production and consumption can be analysed and understood with the help of insights from ecofeminist theories, which are closely related to posthumanism and new materialism. An ecofeminist perspective questions the dichotomies between natural/artificial, human/non-human and material/spiritual, which often underpin the political and scientific discourses on energy production and consumption.</p>
<p><b>Tim Middleton</b></p> <p><b>Biography</b> Tim Middleton is currently a doctoral student in the <a href="#">Faculty of Theology and Religion</a> at the University of Oxford—supervised by Celia Deane-Drummond and Graham Ward—and a member of the <a href="#">Laudato Si’ Research Institute</a>. His work focusses on intersections between ecotheology, trauma studies, and strands of contemporary philosophy. Tim holds degrees in both theology and science, including an MPhil in Modern Theology and a DPhil in Earth Sciences, both from the University of Oxford. He is the Editor of the <a href="#">Journal of the Oxford Graduate Theological Society</a> and the Communications Officer for the <a href="#">William Temple Foundation</a>, a think tank working on the role of religion and belief in public life.</p> <p><b>Contact details</b> Email: <a href="mailto:tim.middleton@theology.ox.ac.uk">tim.middleton@theology.ox.ac.uk</a> Phone: 07786 874300</p>	<p><b>Title: <i>Witnessing our Wounded World: A Theology of Ecological Trauma</i></b></p> <p><b>Abstract</b> The renewed interest in materiality within contemporary philosophy prompts us to consider the damage wrought by our current ecological crisis in bodily, or even fleshly, terms. A conception of the planet’s woundedness reminds us that the earth is not simply composed of ‘dead matter’ but is rather part of an interconnected whole. This study seeks to develop the notion of <i>ecological trauma</i> to describe planetary suffering in terms of three ruptures: to flesh, to time, and to communication. Such an approach extends trauma studies beyond its typically anthropocentric confines and encourages ecotheology to recognise the unprecedented and traumatic character of our present crisis. The paper then focusses on the third of these ruptures—the rupture of communication—and offers a theological response in a Christological key. The ‘rupture of communication’ refers primarily to a breakdown in communication between other elements of the ecosphere and ourselves; there has been, to use the language of trauma theory, a ‘collapse of witnessing’. Hence, building on the work of trauma theologian Shelly Rambo, the notion of <i>bearing witness</i> is an important starting point for a theology of ecological trauma. This witnessing is not mere proclamation or imitation, but a <i>remaining</i> with the reality of suffering. Perhaps counterintuitively, Christ is one such witness to the pain of ecological trauma: in both his incarnate life and his crucifying death, Christ highlighted, emphasised, and bore witness, to the sufferings of the earth. As scholars, scientists, and activists, we are then called, not to imitate Christ’s sacrifice, but to imitate Christ’s witness to our wounded world.</p>
<p><b>Aloisia Moser</b></p> <p>Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Philosophy, Catholic Private University Linz</p>	<p><b>Title: “Guessing” as retracing the connection of mind and matter</b></p> <p>Charles Sanders Peirce writes in a small essay entitled <i>Guessing</i> (Charles Sanders Peirce 1929): “the whole noble organism of science has been built up out of propositions which were originally simple guesses. Peirce also thinks that we are generally good at guessing at what is passing in the minds of our fellows. The success of this guessing is not due to thinking about our thinking - we actually need to stop ourselves from thinking about our effort and cut out self-consciousness to guess spontaneously. He thinks that “man divines something of the secret principles of the universe because his mind has developed as a part of the universe...”</p>



	<p>(Guessing, p. 281-2) In my paper I employ neo-materialist theory to fill in this remark of Peirce's: that we are part of what we inquire in.</p> <p>My examples will be on the one hand Karen Barad's theory of Agential Realism which she develops in <i>Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning</i> (Barad 2007) and Jane Bennett's approach in <i>Vibrant Matter A Political Ecology of Things</i>. (Bennett 2010) Barad works against representationalism - the idea that we make mental or symbolic representations to have access to the world of matter or of objects which are different from us. She does away with a distinction between subject and object. Bennett on the other hand argues in her vital materialist view that the distinction between thing and person is relative, not ontological. It also allows for an anthropomorphic claim, not one that ascribes human characteristics to non-human beings and things, but rather the opposite: since we are not radically unlike non-human actants, our point of view can be anthropomorphic. There is a sense of the Absolute in Bennett, that she admits sounds like God. Her own anthropomorphism gives us a view of nature, presented alongside Spinoza as a form of monism, that can lend itself to a sort of body of God as swarming with forces that are "active, forceful, and quasi-independent." (Bennett, p. 17).</p> <p>To return to Peirce and Guessing. Apart from our minds efforts to think logically we also have another way to "know" about the world, which has to do with being part of matter and of nature and sharing one body with it.</p> <p>Barad, Karen. 2007. <i>Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning</i>. Durham: Combined Academic Publ.</p> <p>Bennett, Jane. 2010. <i>Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things</i>. Durham: Duke University Press.</p> <p>Charles Sanders Peirce. 1929. "Guessing." <i>The Hound and Horn</i> 2 (3): 267-82.</p>
<p><b>Daniel Munteanu</b></p> <p>Professor of Systematic Theology and Ethics at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Sciences of Education of the Valahia University, Targoviste, Romania</p>	<p><b>Title: The creative field of the Holy Spirit and the theology of matter. Some aspects of Eastern Orthodox Ecotheology</b></p> <p><i>Keywords</i> Orthodox Ecotheology, theology of matter, field of the Spirit, reality, pneumatology, culture</p> <p><i>Abstract</i> In this article I will analyze the concept of "field of the Holy Spirit" developed by contemporary theology. This key pneumatological concept can be found for instance in Wolfhart Pannenberg's, Jürgen Moltmann's and Michael Welker's theologies. It can serve as a bridge both for the dialogue with <i>natural sciences</i> and with the <i>eastern orthodox pneumatology</i> that teaches about the creative, uncreated, divine energies of the Holy Spirit. In this paper I will present some aspects of the eastern orthodox understanding of matter as intrinsically marked by God's grace and God's rationality. Reality as such is a matter of rationality, energy and intersubjectivity. At the same time it is a sign or icon of the coming world and an invitation to</p>

	<p>more consciousness and intersubjectivity, i.e. to a <i>Eucharistic ethos</i> or <i>Eucharistic culture</i>. The matter of the universe is sustained in its spatial-temporality by a creative field that allows human freedom and promotes human consciousness. Some considerations of the concepts “mystical materialism” and “plastified rationality” of Dumitru Staniloae will enlarge the view of eastern orthodox ecotheology.</p>
<p><b>Maria Nita</b></p> <p>Lecturer in Religious Studies , The Open University <a href="mailto:maria.nita@open.ac.uk">maria.nita@open.ac.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Title: New Materialisms and the Performance of the Climate Crisis: The Semiotics of Protest in a post Christian society</b></p> <p>Looking at new materialisms through the prism of climate activism, my paper will offer a semiotic analysis of embodied and emotional content from performances during protest activities. I argue that a relational analysis of these events can reveal new fabrics at the interface between the nature-culture fractures – which become visible through performance. I am particularly concerned with the Extinction Rebellion movement, but I will also offer a comparison with the earlier climate movement in the UK, between 2007-2012. I will look at the modalities used by activists to make climate change central, visible – indeed ‘material’ – in both urban and rural settings – using street theatre and performance. I will provide a backdrop for XR’s ideological and historical roots in the 60s communes and early festival movement, which had a similar mix of civil disobedience, activism, cooperative ethos, communalism, whilst anticipating the world in deep crisis future. I will discuss new countercultural strategies used by XR rebels, showing why these are translatable, familiar and understandable in a post Christian society.</p>
<p><b>Anica Roßmöller &amp; Doris Fuchs &amp; Hannah Klinkenberg</b></p> <p>Contact details: Prof. Doris Fuchs, Ph.D.University of Muenster, Institute of Political Science   Scharnhorststraße 100, 48151 Muenster   <a href="mailto:Doris.fuchs@uni-muenster.de">Doris.fuchs@uni-muenster.de</a>.</p> <p>Hannah Klinkenberg, M.A.University of Muenster, Institute of Political Science   Scharnhorststraße 100, 48151 Muenster   <a href="mailto:Hannah.klinkenberg@uni-muenster.de">Hannah.klinkenberg@uni-muenster.de</a></p> <p>Anica Rossmoeller, M.A.University of Muenster, Institute of Political Science   Scharnhorststraße 100, 48151 Muenster   <a href="mailto:anica.rossmoeller@uni-muenster.de">anica.rossmoeller@uni-muenster.de</a></p>	<p><b>Title: Connecting sufficiency, materialism and the good life? Christian, Muslim and Hindu viewpoints</b></p> <p>Abstract: This paper analyses Christian, Muslim and Hindu discourses with respect to their representation of ideas and explanations regarding the good life, sufficiency and materialism and the relationships between them. In the current political and scholarly debate, the need for a sustainability transformation and, more concretely, for reductions in resource use by the “global consumer class” present such pertinent aspects, and ideas and interpretations of ecology and materialism and the link between them have moved to the centre of attention. Questions of the meaning of a “good life” (as opposed to consumption) or of the need to focus on sufficiency (as opposed to efficiency) are being (re-)considered. Given that religions and along with them faith-based actors (FBAs) play an important role as interpreters of norms and values in societies, including especially pertinent challenges faced by societies, it is highly interesting to see how they communicate about these aspects. What do FBAs say about sustainability in lifestyles, about sufficiency and about the role of materialism vis-à-vis those two ideas and how do they relate it all to questions of faith? To answer these questions, this</p>

	<p>paper conducts a content analysis of relevant text documents and identifies as well as compares and contrasts arguments and claims. With its findings, the paper is able to describe and situate the role of different FBAs in manoeuvring one of the most substantial societal challenges of our times.</p>
<p><b>Terra Rowe</b></p> <p>University of North Texas, Philosophy and Religion Department</p>	<p>Title: The Matter with Oil: Christianity and the Conundrum of Dead Nature and Lively Oil</p> <p><b>Abstract:</b> In efforts to address key gender and environmental concerns with the modern Western conception of matter as mechanized, dead, or inert, many have emphasized the importance of reanimating or re-enchanting the material world. What such proponents do not adequately address, though, are the problematic ways petroleum has been animated and enchanted in religious sources. Early reports of oil discovery in late 19th century US demonstrate that the mysterious, recalcitrant and active qualities of oil were already disrupting Cartesian-Newtonian concepts of matter as inert. Informed by Christian spiritualities, many Americans imbued oil with redemptive agency and even explicitly Christ-like figuration. Such reports suggest that between oil, Christianity, and modernity enchantment is indeed <i>precisely</i> the issue, though at times as much curse as cure. The conundrum of Christianity, dead matter, and lively oil therefore compels scholars to shift away from attempts to resurrect dead matter while paying closer critical and constructive attention to animacies that emerge when bodies meet.</p>
<p><b>Ieva Skurdauskaitė</b></p> <p><b>Bio</b> Ieva Skurdauskaitė is a Ph.D. candidate at Vilnius University (Institute of International Relations and Political Science) in Lithuania. She is currently writing a dissertation on 'Innovations in Security Studies: New Materialism and Its Implementation'. Her primary area of interest includes human-technology assemblage, artificial intelligence and questions of human agency facing the Fourth Industrial Revolution.</p> <p><b>Contact information</b> Ieva Skurdauskaite Tel. +370 621 85887 E-mail: <a href="mailto:ieva.skurdauskaite@tspmi.vu.lt">ieva.skurdauskaite@tspmi.vu.lt</a> or <a href="mailto:ievaskurdauskaite@gmail.com">ievaskurdauskaite@gmail.com</a> (personal)</p>	<p><b>Title: Algorithmic Blessing: Robot Priests and Their Impact on Human-Technology Relationship</b></p> <p>Recent scholarship about the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings questions about the future of employment, the ethics of human enhancement, and the possible international AI race. It is claimed that our future will be built on a human-technology collaboration. However, the lack of technological trust remains one of the most significant challenges. It leaves society divided into two groups of technological utopists and those who fear the impact of the technological revolution on human society. It creates inequality as refusing technological innovations leaves techno-skeptics at a disadvantage. Drawing on a new materialist agential realist approach of material-discursive intra-action, this paper seeks to further the debate about trust in technology. I argue that distrust is majorly impacted by preferring human agency to artificial one giving the former unique inherent moral properties. It then connects the theme of distrust to a particular controversy of a robot priest BlessU-2 investigating it as an algorithmic spiritual experience that can significantly impact people's attitudes towards technology. Enmeshing technology in religion allows for a reconceptualization of human agency, trust, and broader human-technology relationships.</p>
<p><b>Bronislaw Szerszynski</b></p> <p>Lancaster University <a href="mailto:bron@lancaster.ac.uk">bron@lancaster.ac.uk</a></p>	<p>Title: <b>Earthly multitudes, planetary spirit</b></p> <p>In <i>Planetary Social Thought</i> (2021), Nigel Clark and I develop the concept of the 'earthly multitude', a group of people and social</p>

<p><b>Bronislaw Szerszynski</b> is Professor of Sociology at Lancaster University. His research seeks to situate the changing relationship between humans, environment and technology in the longer perspective of human and planetary history, drawing on the social and natural sciences, arts and humanities. He is co-author with Nigel Clark of <i>Planetary Social Thought</i> (2020), author of <i>Nature, Technology and the Sacred</i> (2005), and co-editor of <i>Risk, Environment and Modernity</i> (1996), <i>Re-Ordering Nature: Theology, Society and the New Genetics</i> (2003), <i>Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance</i> (2003) and <i>Technofutures: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Nature and the Sacred</i> (2015). He was co-organiser of the public art–science events <i>Between Nature: Explorations in Ecology and Performance</i> (Lancaster, 2000), <i>Experimentality</i> (Lancaster/Manchester/London, 2009-10), and <i>Anthropocene Monument</i>, with Bruno Latour and Olivier Michelon (Toulouse, 2014-2015).</p>	<p>practices united by a shared, skilled way of responding to the challenges, resources and opportunities presented by ‘planetary multiplicity’ – the self-ordering and self-differentiating tendencies of a far-from-equilibrium planet. In the book we use various examples of craft and artisanship from human history, including mining, weaving, metallurgy, ceramics and pastoralism, to explore how humans have mixed their agency with that of planetary matter, and to argue that human collective agency and human difference are bound up with the differential becoming of the Earth itself. Elsewhere (Szerszynski 2017) I use the concept of ‘geo-spiritual formations’ to describe different historically contingent ‘suturings’ of the Earth that achieve some level of coherence between material and energetic flows, the organization of society, and the world of non-human spiritual agencies (understood as pragmatically significant agential entities in social life). In this paper I bring the two concepts together, exploring the spiritual life of earthly multitudes. Drawing on the history of crafts and their associated spiritual practices, I examine various ways in which the material practices of earthly multitudes bring them into engagement with gods and spirits, and reflect on what this might mean for our planetary future.</p>
<p><b>Sibylle Trawöger</b> University of Würzburg, Germany</p> <p>Short Author Biography: I studied Bio-and Environmental Engineering (in Upper Austria and Munich/Germany) and Catholic Theology(in Linz and Graz/Austria). In 2016, I completed my PhD ("Aesthetics of Performativity and Contemplation")in Fundamental theology. In my current research I bring Catholic theology into conversation with natural sciences. I work as an Assistant Professor for "Systematic Theology and its Didactics" at the University of Würzburg (Germany). Because of my scientific studies and my interest in interdisciplinary discourses in general, my lectures are also appropriate for scientists from other fields</p>	<p><b>Title: Microbiome and Microperformativity–Stimulations for Theological Anthropology and Theology of Creation</b></p> <p>In my current research, I combine concepts of science and technology studies with the theology of creation and theological anthropology. I would be pleased to present and discuss an excerpt of my actual research at the interdisciplinary conference "Religion, Materialism and Ecology". Some approaches of fundamental theology do not focus on a so-called "substance ontology", but on a "relational ontology" (cf. Peter Knauer, Hans-Joachim Höhn et al.), which means that relationality is central in their theological approach. Such approaches usually focus on the God-human or human-human relation only. The relation between human and (micro)creatures or other matter is not dealt with. The close relation between humans and microorganisms can be highlighted by correlating scientific findings on the microbiome of humans with both the concept of "intraaction" by Karen Barad and the approach of "microperformativity" by Jens Hauser. On the one hand, this calls for a creation-sensitive approach to our environment and, on the other hand, expands the notion of relationship of common relational ontologies, which in turn influences the thinking of the God-human relationship. For an interdisciplinary audience these questions will be illustrated by means of selected Bioart projects.</p>
<p><b>Mark Wallace</b> Swarthmore College</p>	<p><b>Title: <i>The Stones Will Cry Out: Christian Animism, New Materialism, and the Reenchantment of the World</i></b></p> <p><i>Paper Abstract</i> If Christianity’s core teaching is that “the Word became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:14) – if divinity has enfleshed itself in all things – then the whole world is a living</p>

sacrament of God's presence, and thereby worthy of humans' affectionate concern. In this vein, I want to propose the idea of "Christian animism" in order to return *ad fontes* to the Johannine vision of a divinized material world. Though a contested term with roots in Euroamerican white supremacy, a nuanced recovery of the concept of animism has the potential to signal the continuity of biblical religion with the beliefs of Indigenous and non-Western communities that God or Spirit embodies itself within all forms of life.

To some degree, Christian animism follows the "material turn" within contemporary continental philosophy, queer theory, critical animal studies and quantum physics. I find especially helpful the new materialist analysis of the agential capacities of nonhuman beings, and the posthumanist disavowal of human chauvinism, as critical insights into the formation of generative subjectivity across the divides that separate humankind and otherkind. Nevertheless, some new materialists, such as Jane Bennett, seek to ward off becoming "infected by superstition, animism, vitalism, and other premodern attitudes." By invoking the canard of "superstition" as a put-down of first people's worldviews, sadly, the stench of Occidentalism wafts throughout Bennett's polemic against traditional ways of knowing.

*Pace* Bennett, I will lift up animist notions of kinfolk that include "bear persons" and "rock persons" along with "tree persons" and "human persons." Glossing Jesus' Lukan comment that if his disciples were quiet then the stones would cry out, Native theologian George "Tink" Tinker argues that even "rocks talk and have what we must call consciousness." In this paper, then, I will seek to flatten commonplace ontological distinctions in the registry of Christian animism in order to liberate an ethic of care for all members of the lifeweb.