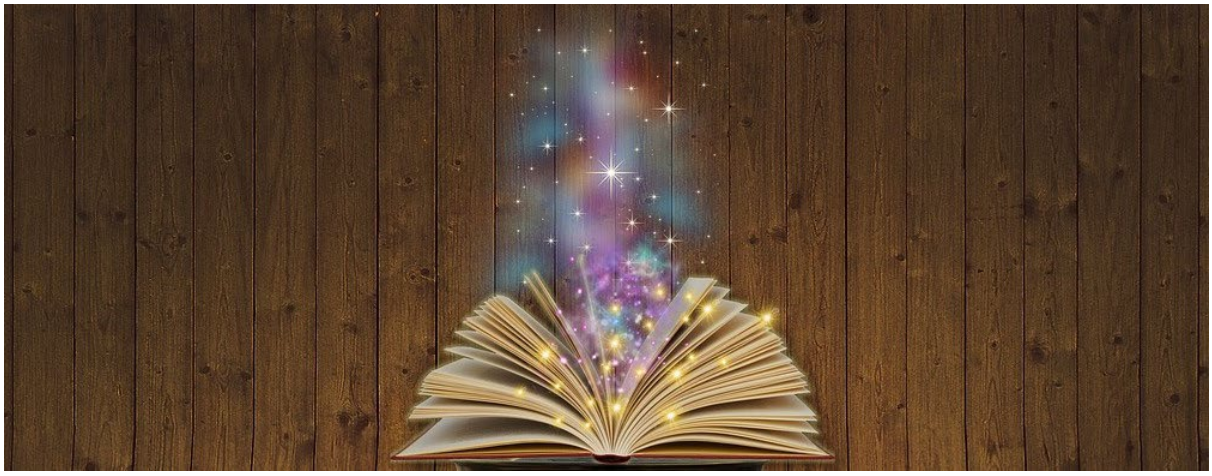
Foundations in Science and Religion: 50th Anniversary ECR Conference



Conference Programme & Abstracts

20th – 21st November 2025

DRAFT PROGRAMME TIMINGS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Link for Presentations

Please note each day is set up as a separate MS Teams meeting. There are not separate links for each session

TEAMS Link DAY 1 – Metaphysics	TO BE ADDED TO DELEGATE PROGRAMME
TEAMS Link DAY 2 - Interfaith	TO BE ADDED TO DELEGATE PROGRAMME

Peacocke Prize: Student Essay Competition

In memory of its founding President and former Chairman, the Revd Dr Arthur Peacocke, the Science and Religion Forum offers an annual essay prize. The student essay can address any issue at the intersection of science and religion and does not need to relate to the conference theme, although students are welcome to address the conference them should they wish. In 2024 the conference theme is Key topics from Arthur Peacocke's work. Full details: https://www.srforum.org/peacocke-prize

The 2024 Peacocke Prize is open until 1st March 2026. Entrants must be registered as students (in school or university) at the time of submission OR have been registered in the previous 9 months.

- *i.e. have been in education in July 2025 - this includes those who sat examinations in summer 2024/25 even if they were not receiving teaching in July*

The Peacocke Prize

The Peacocke Prize is usually run annually with the prize judged by a review panel. The Prize includes:

- A cash award of £250
- Free membership of the Forum for one year.
- UK travel and accommodation costs to the Forum's annual conference to present their winning essay in full (subject to panel decision)
- Publication of the essay as part of the conference "Special Section" in Zygon (subject to essay quality and continuing collaboration with Zygon or another journal or appropriate standing).

Stay in touch after the conference:

LinkedIn: https://lnkd.in/euznvmE9
X/Twitter: https://twitter.com/SciRelForum_SRF
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/411289328147318

Schedule Day 1 Thursday 20th November

All times GMT	
09:50 – 10:00	**Opening Remarks**
10:00 – 10:40 *(UK 10:00-10:40)*	PAPER 1: Convergent Evolution, the constraints of nature, and how it informs science and religion
10:50 – 11:30 *(SERBIA 11:50-12:30)*	PAPER 2: Charles Lyell's Theological Preformationism: The Role of the Intelligent Designer in the Uniformitarian Balance of Nature and the Evolution of Natural Species
Break	
11:50 – 12:30 *(UK 11:50-12:30)*	PAPER 3: Resurrection, Personhood and Continuity of Consciousness
12:40 – 13:20 *(6.US,WI 06:40-07:20)*	PAPER 4: On the Process Turn in Science and its Implications for a Natural Theology
LUNCH	
14:20 – 15:20 *(5.UK 14:20-14:40)* *(6.US,CA 06:40-07:00)*	LIGHTNING PAPERS IN DIALOGUE (20min each followed by Q&A) PAPER 5: Being in particular: the nature of reality according to Maximus the Confessor PAPER 6: Powers, Dispositions, and Energies
15:30 – 16:45 *(UK 15:30-16:45)*	KEYNOTE 1: Buddhist Interdependence, Metaphysical Coherentism, and Relational Quantum Mechanics
16:45 – 16:55	**Closing Remarks**

Schedule Day 2 Friday 21st November

All times GMT	
09:50 – 10:00	**Opening Remarks**
10:00 – 10:40 *(AUS 23:00-23:40)*	PAPER 7: Embodied and Evolved Cognition: Towards an account of Personhood through a Science-engaged Theology
10:50 – 11:30 *(INDIA 16:20-17:00)*	PAPER 8: Minimal Self Vs. Narrative Self: Investigating the Sāṁkhya School's Notion of Consciousness
Break	
11:50 – 12:30 *(UK 11:50-12:30)*	PAPER 9: Does neuroscience rule out an immaterial soul?
12:40 – 13:20 *(ITALY 13:40-14:20)*	PAPER 10: Integral Ecology and Ecosophy: Interfaith Responses to Environmental Crisis
LUNCH	
14:00 – 15:15 *(CANADA 09:00-10:15)*	KEYNOTE 2: Pluralizing Foundations: Scientific Pluralism, Religious Education, and Democratic Flourishing
15:25 – 16:05 *(US,TX 09:25-10:05)*	PAPER 11: The Analogy of Being in Islamic Science
16:05 – 16:15	**Closing Remarks**

Keynote Lectures

KEYNOTE 1: Buddhist Interdependence, Metaphysical Coherentism, and Relational Quantum Mechanics

Dr Emma Jaura

ABSTRACT: Metaphysical coherentism is an underexplored alternative to traditional foundationalism which (a) rejects any commitment to ontologically independent, fundamental foundations, and (b) embraces the possibility of symmetrical ontological dependence. Coherentism has received relatively little attention from analytic metaphysicians, with notable recent exceptions including Thompson (2016, 2018), Bliss and Priest (2018), Morganti (2018), Morganti and Calosi (2021) and Swiderski (2024).

I argue that it is more often considered as a serious metaphysical thesis across various Indian and Chinese Buddhist schools. Beginning with the dawn of Mahayana and the work of Nāgārjuna, the concept of emptiness (sunyata) has played a vital role in the development of Buddhist metaphysics. Authors such as Kang (2025) and Priest (2018), provide an insightful interpretation of the illusive Buddhist concept of emptiness, in terms of interdependence. With this precedence for understanding interdependence as the cornerstone of both the Buddhist concept of emptiness, and the analytic thesis of coherentism, this sets the scene for my analysis and comparison of emptiness and coherentism side by side.

My first aim is to show how recent work on coherentism and its variations (drawing predominantly from Swiderski (2024)) can be used to reconstruct and develop variations of emptiness and pictures of interdependence found in different schools of Mahayana Buddhism. Following a similar sentiment to Kang (2025), I hope to show that tools from contemporary analytic metaphysics and ideas from classical Buddhist philosophy can complement each other, illuminating murky details around universal questions to do with dependence and fundamentality. The goal is to illustrate how Buddhist pictures of emptiness and analytic pictures of coherentism can be mutually informing.

Once this had been established, I move on to sketching a picture of metaphysical coherentism as an ontology for Rovelli's (1996) relational quantum mechanics. RQM departs from textbook quantum mechanics by suggesting that all properties of physical systems are determined upon interactions with other systems, and there are no absolute values of variables that are independent from interactions. I have argued previously (Jaura, 2024) that the most appropriate metaphysical framework for capturing RQM is one that lacks fundamentalia, and accepts symmetrical dependence, making coherentism a good contender.

Given this, I can reach my ultimate aim of supporting comparisons between the metaphysics of Mahayana Buddhist schools, and the ontology of relational quantum mechanics, using the framework of metaphysical coherentism. Such a picture that can capture the major commitments of each, involves a vast network of interdependence, within which all entities rely on (some or all) others for their existence of nature. By demonstrating that this kind of metaphysical picture can receive support from both Buddhist metaphysics as well as contemporary physics, I conclude that metaphysical coherentism is worthy of further investigation.

BIO COMING SOON

KEYNOTE 2: Pluralizing Foundations: Scientific Pluralism, Religious Education, and Democratic Flourishing

Professor Yiftach Fehige

ABSTRACT: I argue that the interaction between science and religion in democratic societies must be reimagined through the lens of pluralism—both scientific and religious. While scientific pluralism has emerged as a significant metaphysical topic in recent philosophy of science, its implications for education and public discourse remain underexplored. I will argue that scientific and religious pluralism are not epistemic threats to democracy but foundational resources for renewing democratic life and civic education. Scientific pluralism challenges the dominant monist narrative in which science is seen as aiming for a unified, authoritative body of knowledge that marginalizes alternative ways of knowing. This monism has been used to justify the exclusion of religious perspectives from public education on the grounds that they are inherently sectarian or irrational. However, the assumption that science is a neutral arbiter of truth fails to recognize the diverse methodological, theoretical, and cultural foundations of scientific practice itself, some of which resist unification.

Pluralism in science acknowledges that multiple, sometimes incommensurable approaches can coexist, especially in complex domains such as climate modeling, evolutionary theory, or the human sciences. Recognizing this plurality opens conceptual space for engaging religious worldviews as rational, interpretive frameworks alongside scientific perspectives. Using the case study of recent reforms in religious education in Hamburg's public schools—which have embraced a multifaith, dialogical model—I show how a pluralist curriculum can both respect worldview diversity and foster democratic citizenship. Contrary to fears that religion fragments the social fabric, pluralist religious education can cultivate the civic virtues of mutual recognition, critical engagement, and public reason. At the same time, exposing students to the plural foundations of science can disrupt technocratic assumptions and invite reflection on the metaphysical, ethical, and existential questions that science alone cannot resolve. The paper further explores how this approach resists the secularization thesis that has long shaped Western models of science-religion relations. Rather than viewing religion as a fading remnant of pre-modern life, I treat it as a living, interpretive tradition capable of engaging scientific authority critically and constructively. This reframing allows for a richer public understanding of contested issues in education—especially in societies where interfaith and multifaith communities play an active role in shaping public discourse. By pluralizing both the epistemic foundations of science and the normative roles of religion in public life, we can begin to move beyond binary frameworks that oppose faith to reason, or revelation to evidence. This paper contributes to an emerging conversation that treats pluralism not merely as a challenge to coherence, but as a foundational condition for shared inquiry and democratic life. As emerging technologies and global crises demand new forms of ethical reasoning, the ability to navigate multiple epistemologies—and to do so in a spirit of civic generosity—may prove one of the most important educational goals of our time.

BIO COMING SOON

Short & Lightning Papers

PAPER 1: Convergent Evolution, the constraints of nature, and how it informs science and religion

Samuel McKee; Manchester Metropolitan University

ABSTRACT: Convergent Evolution is a grand unifying theory in the biological sciences. It applies evenly across life from genetics through to medicine and everything in between. Rather than the evolution of life being a free, open space where any shape, form or possibility takes place, life in the universe is highly constrained and follows regular successful avenues. The constraints on nature placed by evolution suggest life itself has a blueprint. There is growing reflection on the implications of convergence for our understanding of both the emergence and intrinsic nature of life itself, but what are the theological implications? Professor Simon Conway-Morris among others have suggested that biology contains a deep structure and chance itself may play only a passing role. The natural world, like the cosmos, appears to be somewhat "fine-tuned". Parameters guiding convergent evolution include developmental, environmental, molecular and cellular constraints. Here I will explore the details of this "deep structure" and whether it is a gift or stumbling block to suggestions of design in the natural world.

PAPER 2: Charles Lyell's Theological Preformationism: The Role of the Intelligent Designer in the Uniformitarian Balance of Nature and the Evolution of Natural Species

Bogdana Stamenkovic Jajcevic; University of Belgrade

ABSTRACT: This paper explores the role of the intelligent creator in Charles Lyell's uniformitarianism. I start with a brief explanation of the term "uniformitarianism" and the identification of the fundamental hypotheses of Lyell's theory. Moving forward, I explore his idea of the balance of nature and show that Lyell believes that natural equilibrium represents a state of stability in inorganic and organic nature. As I show, the stability of inorganic nature is achieved through the alternate activity of mutually opposing forces, whilst the balance of organic nature is established via two processes: migrations of species and struggle for survival. However, the inorganic and organic natures are connected by a unilateral causal relation which enables the first to cause changes within the second. That being the case, the activity of inorganic forces can disturb the balance of organic nature and trigger modifications in the structure of organisms, leading to their evolution. Yet equilibrium can be restored through the interventions of the intelligent designer, who, as the instrument of evolution, equips every organism with useful variations necessary for their survival. Since organic nature represents an essential part of the nature system, the intelligent creator, through his actions, creates and preserves the balance of the whole nature. Thus, it appears that Lyell opts for a specific version of preformationism and that his uniformitarianistic worldview presupposes a significant regulative role for the omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient intelligent being. I finish off by explaining how Lyell's understanding of the role of the intelligent designer can be interpreted in context of the contemporary computational evolutionary theories that presuppose that the evolutionary process consists of the transfer and processing of various information, whose interpretation causes modifications in the organic structure, i.e., the evolution of organisms.

PAPER 3: Resurrection, Personhood and Continuity of Consciousness

Andrew Proudfoot; University of Nottingham

ABSTRACT: The great hope of Christianity is that all who trust in Christ will one day be resurrected with new bodies which are immune to death and disease, able to live forever with our Lord. This hope is arguably the most difficult concept to square with scientific enquiry in general and any form of physicalism in particular, since it requires a mechanism to provide continuity between the original person with her original mortal body and the resurrected person with her resurrected body fit for eternity with her Lord.

To address this, the relationship between personhood and consciousness first needs to be clarified. Analysis of the Incarnation shows that there is more to personhood than a human mind and body; this extra factor or factors is required in order to anchor the identity of the subject of consciousness and to provide continuity through time, particularly so if there are spatial or temporal gaps in her existence. Just as the person of the Word is preserved through pre-incarnate, incarnate, and resurrection life, so the human person must be preserved through this life and into the next.
I will then show that schemes which attempt to explicate resurrection without this extra category fail. The outré work of Peter van Inwagen, Dean Zimmerman and Kevin Corcoran shows that relying on some form of material continuity ends up giving largely implausible accounts of survival rather than resurrection. Providing continuity via psychological patterns opens the prospect of multiple copies of a person with the resultant loss of the continuity of identity which is the goal of the exercise, as John Locke, Anthony Flew and David Lewis will show. After showing that the traditional approach of relying on a substantial soul to provide continuity and identity struggles to maintain the divine identity of Christ, I turn to Duns Scotus who provides the basics of a scheme which allows the dissociation of personhood from body and soul and thus the possibility of an extrinsic basis for our identity. The work of John Zizioulas supplies this extrinsic basis in the form of God's relationship to us, which provides secure continuity of identity through time—at the acceptable price of complete dependence on God for our eternal life. This approach also allows for the transformation of body and soul which is required for resurrection to eternal life but remains a challenge for schemes which myopically focus on continuity with our mortal existence.

PAPER 4: On the Process Turn in Science and its Implications for a Natural Theology

Braden Cooper; University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

ABSTRACT: Recently, arguments for the "process turn" -- i.e., the rejection of static substances as a primary ontological category in favor of dynamic processes – have emerged in the philosophy of science. The implications of this shift (especially the rejection of substance) offer serious challenges for theology, at least in how it is traditionally conceived. I argue these challenges must be met if we want to mount a strong theology that is compatible with our scientific epistemology. If the "process turn" in science is convincing, then we have grounds to look towards establishing a theology that considers a similar ontological move towards process. I will briefly elucidate the contemporary arguments for the "process turn" in the philosophy of science and draw out the important historical shifts and contemporary empirical results that support such an interpretation as given in the literature. Focus will be given to relevant examples in biology and physics, which offer particularly convincing results supporting the transition towards process, and greatly impact theology in its attempt to ensure compatibility with scientific interpretation. I will then examine how this proposed "process turn" supports and strengthens conceptions of process ontology; particularly why the implications of the interpretation might propel us to consider a transition away from traditional Whiteheadian process metaphysics. Specifically, I will consider the assumptions of Seibt's General Process Theory (GPT) and show why it likewise strengthens the explanatory power of the "process turn" interpretation. Finally, I will turn to what these results might mean for a proposed natural theology. I argue that if we want to conceive of a natural theology and ensure the belief structures emergent through it are consistent and compatible with our scientific epistemology (and by extension the "process turn" in science and ontology), then we are compelled to look towards what a similar "process turn" might look like for our theology. It is out of the scope of this paper for me to flesh out this theology fully, but I will offer preliminary considerations that point towards its future development. Among these I will consider the primary focus of the theology: its conception of the divine. Doing this, I will chiefly consider on what grounds the theology might postulate the existence of God; and in conceiving God, I will largely focus on the examination of divine activity, as opposed to divine nature. This marks a move away from what I see as a traditional,

substantivalist concern of conceiving of God's explicit static nature. Said move is strengthened through consideration of prominent historical examples that point to uncovering divine activity (not nature) as a primary concern of theology (and by extension religion). I will then look towards the future, offering suggestions for how this theology might develop, if it takes the challenges presented by general process ontology and the "process turn" in science seriously.

PAPER 5: Being in particular: the nature of reality according to Maximus the Confessor

Andrew Jackson; University of Cambridge

ABSTRACT: Maximus the Confessor (580-662) represents a high point in Greek Patristic thinking, incorporating and modifying the views of many of his predecessors such as Plato, Origen, Nemesius, Dionysius, and the Cappadocian Church Fathers. As such, his views of nature and the nature of reality offer a convenient synthesis with which to compare alternatives, such as medieval western scholasticism and modern-day global naturalism. In this paper I focus on one distinctive feature of Maximus' cosmology—particularity— that at once separates him from the participatory metaphysics of Plato and Aquinas and the nominalist metaphysics of scientific naturalism, but that also reconciles them both. Maximus' vision of the Logos refracting into the logoi of creation, vesting all things with immanent goodness, beauty and truth, extends not just to universals but to individuals and particulars. God is not just in beautiful flowers as a vestige or after-glow pointing to their ultimate source in God himself, but is fully present in this particular beautiful flower with all its idiosyncrasies, blemishes and mutations. The sensible world is just as sacred as the intelligible world since Christ is incarnate in all things, thereby dignifying the ephemeral, transitional, peculiar, or as Gerard Manley Hopkins would have said: 'all things counter, original, spare, strange.' This is not a crude pantheism, for the divine essence is beyond being and the finite mode of existence of creatures is likewise ineffable and unintelligible. It is however a form of panentheistic or incarnational naturalism, in which the world is as much creatio ex deo as it is ex nihilo. Unlike participatory accounts where creation bears an analogical relationship with divine attributes and unlike voluntaristic accounts where created and divine similarities are equivocal and arbitrary, Maximus' vision is one in which the logoi (as divine ideas, wills, or energies) are univocally co-inherent in God and the world, exhaustively and insuperably. There is no competition or conflict between this vision and that of the modern-day scientific naturalist and no need to look for causal joints between God and the world. It is a vision, I claim, that can re-enchant the world even in the face of the most egregious scientistic reductionism, for no matter how much the world is dissected, the Logos is fully present in each particular individual, part, fragment, corpuscle, atom, field, or interaction. Spiritually, it is a vision that can help us contemplate and dwell on the praiseworthiness of all uniquely particular creatures without having to find for them a home in some essential kind. Scientifically, it is a vision that can help us do good natural history—careful observation and appreciation of this particular flower—before seeking to frame generalisations that might apply to all. In this way, Maximus' philosophy of nature offers communion with much modern secular philosophy which prizes population thinking over typological thinking, or reductive explanation over holistic explanation. Whether 'at her joints' or not, whichever way nature is cut, she is always Logos-endowed.

PAPER 6: Powers, Dispositions, and Energies

Hayden Macklin; University of California, Davis

ABSTRACT: In opposition to classical Humean accounts which take physical (spatiotemporal) properties to be essentially categorical or qualitative, in recent decades there has been a rise in those committed to powers theories of (or, dispositionalism about) physical properties in the philosophy of science. The core claim of the powers theorist is that property essences are either exhaustively constituted by, or necessarily connected to, dispositional relations to other properties in a structure. But why prefer powers theories over Humean theories of properties? A primary reason is because the

powers theorist finds Humeanism to be inadequate for accounting for the seemingly-modal character of physical reality. Generally speaking, where the Humean seeks to reduce less fundamental modal phenomena (e.g. those involved in the laws of nature) to the more fundamental and non-modal, the powers theorist instead seeks to give a non-reductive account of modal phenomena (e.g. how the laws of nature and their modal characteristics arise from other modal phenomena like dispositional essences). They therefore view the world in very different ways; the latter views the world and its laws as fundamentally modal, the former does not.
My goal is to show why powers theories could be particularly appealing options for those working within the broader framework of Eastern Orthodox theology. Those who hold these two frameworks together can have a unique, attractively-unified view concerning the dispositional nature of reality; physical reality is plausibly irreducibly dispositional because God, as the most fundamental reality upon which the physical world depends, (i) is irreducibly dispositional in certain aspects, and (ii) is united to physical reality in such a way that bestows it with its dispositional properties. First, I will argue for (i) by drawing on the essence-energies (ousia-energeia) distinction; that is, very roughly, the distinction between the divine nature itself and the divine activities, actualities, or, simply, energies which surround the divine nature, which is central to the Eastern Orthodox understanding of God. The divine energies are themselves aspects of God's being and, importantly, can be understood dispositionally since they can refer to a particular divine power, the manifestation of that divine power, or the entire dispositional relation between the power, manifestation, and (if applicable) stimulus conditions for manifestation. I will then argue for (ii) by drawing on the incarnational cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor and his and St. Gregory Palamas's theology of the logoi. The Divine Logos permeates the entire cosmos and is the immediate source of the logoi, the teleological principles of each created thing that also sustain it in being, which are themselves energies and thus divine dispositions. So, as I hope to show, adopting both a powers-theoretic and Orthodox view of the world allows one to hold a unique and interesting view concerning its fundamental dispositionality.

PAPER 7: Embodied and Evolved Cognition: Towards an account of Personhood through a Science-engaged Theology

Mathews George; University of Aukland

ABSTRACT: This paper seeks to develop a conception of personhood that attends to the embodied, enactive, embedded, evolved and ecologically enmeshed aspects of cognition. Through the lens of a science-engaged theology, my project explores the possibility of developing a nuanced and dynamic theological portrait of the human person as biocultural being with an embodied cognition, drawing insights from the extended evolutionary synthesis (EES). Insights will be drawn from liturgical practice and conceptions of personhood from Indian and indigenous contexts enrich this account of personhood. The scholarship on the subject will be interdisciplinary, involving theologians who work at the intersections of science.

PAPER 8: Minimal Self Vs. Narrative Self: Investigating the Sāṁkhya School's Notion of Consciousness

Rajat Pal; Indian Institute of Technology Madras

ABSTRACT: The Sāṁkhya School is one of the oldest schools of Indian Philosophy. In this school, the concept of Puruṣa is regarded as 'a pure conscious being.' It associates with Prakṛti for an evolution. During evolution, if a living creature is created, an element of Puruṣa is believed to be embedded in it, i.e., life/consciousness. Since many living creatures exist on the earth, a plurality of selves exists for the Samkhya School. In this paper, we argue that a life/living creature (i.e., a person) is a 'narrative self,' and Puruṣa is the 'minimal self.' To establish our arguments, the paper examines the minimal self's origin, nature, and functions. It elucidates the differences between 'minimal self' and 'narrative self.' It analyzes Sāṁkhya School arguments about minimal self and narrative self by relating them to Dan Zahavi's and Shaun Gallagher's interpretations of the minimal and narrative self. Further, the paper illustrates transcendental and empirical consciousness by considering minimal and narrative selves. In the end, the paper submits that minimal self is a prerequisite for the existence of a narrative self (i.e., a living being), and they have an inherent relation to their subsistence.

PAPER 9: Does neuroscience rule out an immaterial soul?

Jonathan Emery; King's College London

ABSTRACT: Many religious traditions posit that human beings have a non-physical component that causally interacts with the physical body. The connection between that non-physical part and various mental capacities, such as thought, consciousness, volition and conscience, strongly suggests a locus of causal interaction in the brain. Is it possible to reconcile such a view with the findings of neuroscience, or does neuroscience provide evidence that rules out such a view? Drawing on research into the measurement of intra-cellular forces, brain mapping, and advances in cell-signalling research, I investigate whether either of the following claims can be established by current neuroscience: 1) if there non-physical causes in the brain neuroscientists would have found them by now 2) brain activity is just an unbroken chain of causes of known physical types. I will argue that, surprisingly, both of these claims are extremely unlikely. Finally, I place my discussion in a Bayesian framework, which promises to be useful for showing how scientific evidence gathered in a naturalistic paradigm can be applied to questions concerning non-naturalistic entities.

PAPER 10: Integral Ecology and Ecosophy: Interfaith Responses to Environmental Crisis

Simon Di Rupo; University Of Perugia

ABSTRACT: Although, at first glance, Climate Change imposes a principal consideration of the natural and technological sciences to curb and dominate its risks, philosophy also holds, on this issue, a space of reflexivity of no minor importance. In the specifics of our contribution, we focus on the solicitations that religions receive and return concerning a theme that calls into question ethics, the meaning of life, sensitivity to the creaturely world and the vision of history. A contemporary key lies in Pope Francis' 2015 Laudato Sì, calling for a standard, transversal dialogue in the name of a concept of "integral ecology." The interfaith response in the face of the challenges of creation has the opportunity to recompose secular fragmentations since, in its way, secularization is also a "climate" change of knowledge and traditions. To this end, we will place in dialogue with Pope Francis the concept of "ecosophy" according to the ethical and spiritual proposal of Raimon Panikkar, precisely to have an interreligious gaze that is as open and fruitful as possible. An exciting approach provided by Panikkar concerns the importance of "intra-religious" dialogue as an ethical priority to formulate the basis for outward openness. Only a faith aware of the limits and preciousness of its distinctiveness can contribute to a debate aiming at global improvement. Therefore, in the face of an urgent and long-

standing issue, our eye wants to give voice to religions to broaden consciousness on the "meaning" of our living since our inhabiting the world is not a mere vacation. Still, we are projecting ourselves towards the understanding of our dignity.

PAPER 11: The Analogy of Being in Islamic Science

Ryan Miller; University of St Thomas (Houston)

ABSTRACT: Aquinas's claim that God does not exist in the same way as other substances has importance in philosophy of religion not only for the result that divine attributes must be predicated analogically [1], but also because this distinction is assumed by his five famous arguments for God's existence [2]. This 'analogy of being' relating God and created substances [3] has now been traced to Ibn Sina [4] rather than being original to Aquinas [5]. While philosophers have focused on the analogy of being's roots in neo-Platonic and Kalām theological discourse [6], Aquinas actually presents it as a four-part analogy: God as pure actuality on one end, followed by angelic composites of essence and existence, then hylomorphic substances which also have matter, and finally prime matter as pure potentiality on the other [7]. This multi-part setup is crucial for control of meaning since a system of equations can only be solved when there are as many equations as variables, whereas the two-part analogy of creatures and God has two unknowns (the divine existence and the divine attribute). I suggest that this multi-layered analogy of potentiality and actuality has its roots in Aristotle, and that Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd's appreciation of it stems from their work on chemical mixture, which involved relating prime matter, elemental matter, and homogeneous compounds [8]. Aquinas's chemical views were formulated as an express development of Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd [9] during the same period when he was formulating his mature treatment of the analogy of being [10]. The analogy of being owes its origins to medieval Islamic science.

About SRF

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

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

History of the Forum

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

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

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

Membership

Science and Religion Forum a UK charity and membership organisation that is dedicated to promoting the discussion between scientific understanding and religious thought on issues at the interface of science, religion, and society. We are open to members of all faiths and none, and our conferences and student essay prize are open to all.

We have been working hard to diversify and broaden our membership, so that it is more reflective of those engaging with questions of science (including social sciences) and all religions. We have competitive membership rates. If you are interested in becoming a member of the follow the link below. Or to be added to our mailing list email srforum.membership@gmail.com.

Membership benefits include (for full details see the website):

- The receipt of two editions of Reviews per year
- Member-only early access to recordings of talks at SRF conferences.
- Reduced rates for all SRF events, and opportunities for Early Bird discounts on the biennial hybrid conference.
- Student members receive free access to online events.
- Access to versions of conference papers published in external journals such as *Zygon*.
- Notification of the Forum's activities, details of relevant third party events and advance information concerning SRF conferences.

JOIN/ RENEW NOW

Membership Costs for 2024 (membership runs for 365 days from purchase)
Student Membership 1 year £15
Full Membership 1 year £30
Joint Full Membership (2 people same address) 1 year £45
Supporter Membership 1 year £100