

Australian Association for the Study of Religion Annual Conference, 2023
Hosted by The Institute for Ethics and Society at The University of Notre Dame
Australia, Broadway Campus

Thursday 30th November

Time	Event	Location
12:30 – 12:40	Welcome + Acknowledgement of Country	Moorgate Common Room, Ground Floor, 10 Grafton Street (NDS16)
12:40 – 13:25	Presidential Address: <i>Milad Milani</i>	Moorgate Common Room, Ground Floor, 10 Grafton Street (NDS16)
1:30 – 3:30	General Panel One: Chair, <i>Doug Ezzy</i> <i>Zoe Alderton:</i> “Suffering feels religious if you do it right”: Aiming for Pain in the Pro-Ana Movement. <i>Amy Christina Isham:</i> Spiritual Warfare, physical harm: An ethnographic analysis of the Vollmer exorcism. <i>Bernard Doherty:</i> In Nomine Satanas: Roman Catholicism, Satanic Panic, and the Dark Side of the Religious Imagination. <i>Ray Radford:</i> He’s Not the Messiah, He’s a very Bogan Jesus.	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 410
1:30 – 3:30	General Panel Two: Chair, <i>Anna Halafoff</i> <i>Marley Krok:</i> Religion and Non-Religion in the Stage 6 Syllabus: The Limitations of a Secular Paradigm for Teaching about the Rise of New Religious Expression. <i>Karen Pack:</i> Gendering Kindness: Frances Levvy and the Bands of Mercy NSW. <i>Robert MacPherson:</i> Secular Liturgies in Schools: A Case Study in Religious Pluralism. <i>Alison Short:</i> Contextualising spirituality to support resilience within health education during the pandemic: A research case study.	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 413
3:30 – 3:50	Afternoon Tea	Foyer, Pioneer House Level 4
3:50 – 5:50	General Panel Three: Chair, <i>Karen Pack</i> <i>Syaa Liesch:</i> Queering Practice: Transgender and Nonbinary Experiences of Religion and Spirituality. <i>Elise Christian:</i> Defining Doctrine to Discriminate: School Governance and LGBTQ+ Student Wellbeing in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, 2018-2023. <i>Liam Miller:</i> Like Theology, Like Body: Anxiety Over Reproduction in Conservative Christian Critiques of Feminist and Queer Theology. <i>Christopher Cat:</i> Other Options for People Experiencing Sexual Difference.	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 410
	General Panel Four: Chair, Vicki Lorrimar <i>Mandy Scotney:</i> The Divine Feminine: A tool of female empowerment or entrenchment and exclusion?	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 402 and Zoom: Meeting ID: 893 0786 6535 Passcode: 540095

	<p><i>Farjana Mahbuba</i>: The Colonial Legacy in Muslim Personal Law in Indian Subcontinent: Case Study <i>Nafaqa</i> (Maintenance of Wife)</p> <p><i>Katja Strehle</i>: ‘When you have that many males in the room, they are gonna do most of the talking’ Gender Imbalance in atheist and humanist groups.</p> <p><i>Suvarna Variyar</i>: Not Just Sitting Still, Not Just Looking Pretty: Female Agency and Embedded Narrative Trajectories in the <i>Mahābhārata</i></p> <p><i>Fungai Chiroma</i>: Faith based organizations as key partners in challenging violence against women: A critical study of the positive role of religion in addressing violence against women.</p>	
3:50 – 5:50	<p>General Panel Five: Chair, David Newheiser</p> <p><i>Carole Cusack</i>: Reclaiming ‘Cult’: The Transformative Effect of Ex-Member Memoirs on the Study of New Religions.</p> <p><i>Garry McSweeney</i>: Pagan Art.</p> <p><i>Robin Weston</i>: The Evolution of Alchemical Psychology.</p> <p><i>Geraldine Smith, Enqi Weng, and Rosie Shorter</i>: Unruly, Wild and Unmentionable: Reflections on Creative Methods in the Study of Religion.</p> <p><i>Issah Wumbila</i>: Are the gods guilty? The relationship of local spiritual expertise and the Ghanaian legal system in the management of witchcraft-related violence.</p>	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 413
6:00 – 7:00	<p>Penny Magee Lecture: Chair, <i>Tracy McEwan</i></p> <p><i>Elenie Poulos</i>, Discourses of Religious Freedom in Australia: From diversity to the politics of belief</p>	Moorgate Common Room, Ground Floor, 10 Grafton Street (NDS16)
7:00	<p>Drinks reception Hosted by the Institute for Ethics and Society, The University of Notre Dame Australia</p>	Moorgate Common Room, Ground Floor, 10 Grafton Street (NDS16)

Friday 30th November

Time	Event	Location
7:30 – 8:25	Women’s Caucus Breakfast : Chair, <i>Tracy McEwan</i>	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 411
8:30 – 10:30	<p>Themed Panel: Gender Based Violence in Christian Religious Traditions Chair, <i>Rosie Shorter</i></p> <p><i>Rocío Figueroa Alvear</i>: The Abuse of Nuns in the Catholic Church: Will it ever emerge from the shadows?</p> <p><i>Kathleen McPhillips</i>: Examining child sexual abuse in the Jehovah’s Witness: A comparative analysis of findings from two public inquiries, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (UK) and the Australian Royal Commission.</p> <p><i>Tanya Riches</i>: Complaint as Testimony: Theologically-engaged research into women’s advocacy in and out of Pentecostal institutions.</p> <p><i>Tracy McEwan</i>: The International Survey of Catholic Women (ISCW): Exploring respondents’ accounts of everyday spiritual abuse in Catholic settings.</p>	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 410

8:30 – 10:30	<p>General Panel Six: Chair, <i>Alda Balthrup-Lewis</i></p> <p><i>Rachel Davies:</i> How Christian Mystical Itineraries Can Help Us Think About the Climate Crisis: Catherine of Siena and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio in Dialogue.</p> <p><i>Rosemary Hancock:</i> Climate Fundamentalisms.</p> <p><i>Mary-Ann Casanova:</i> What might a 19th century Australian Nature Mystic contribute to 21st Century religion and spirituality?</p> <p><i>Jo Taylor:</i> First Nations Art, Possum Skin Cloaks, and Spirituality in Australia.</p>	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 413
10:30 – 10:45	Morning tea	Foyer, Pioneer House Level 4
10:45 – 12:45	<p>Themed Panel: Spirituality, Wellbeing, and Relational Naturalism in Australia Chair, <i>Elenie Poulos</i></p> <p><i>Tyson Yunkaporta:</i> Right Story, Wrong Story: Narratives, Land and Creation</p> <p><i>Anna Halafoff, Andrew Singleton and Ruth Fitzpatrick:</i> Spirituality and Planetary Wellbeing</p> <p><i>Timothy Jones:</i> Returning to the Sacred Spring: Spa Cures and Hydrotherapy in Australia</p> <p><i>Samantha Hauw and Anna Halafoff:</i> ‘Alone Australia’: Relational Naturalism and First Nations, Religious and Holistic Spirituality</p> <p><i>Rosie Clare Shorter and Cristina Rocha:</i> Creation, Care and Climate: How <i>Common Grace</i> links Christian Spirituality and Climate Justice</p>	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 3, Room 209 and Zoom: https://notredame-au.zoom.us/j/86715501827 Meeting ID: 867 1550 1827 Passcode: 293276
10:45 – 12:45	<p>General Panel Seven: Chair, <i>Enqi Weng</i></p> <p><i>Adam Possamai:</i> Transnational Muslim Identities in an Era of Hypersecurity in Australia</p> <p><i>Prabuddha Mukherjee:</i> Youth Engagement in Sustaining South Asian Diasporic Identities</p> <p><i>Mehrnosh Lajevardi Fatemi:</i> The Role of Islamic leaders in Muslim Integration to the Australian Society</p> <p><i>Ibrahim Abraham:</i> “Your faith [...] like a relative who is tired of America”: Religion, race and ethnicity in contemporary Lebanese-Australian literature.</p>	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 410
12:45 – 13:15	Lunch	Foyer, Pioneer House Level 4
13:15 – 15:15	<p>Themed Panel: Letter Mysticism Between Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) and the Zohar: Comparative Insights Chair, <i>Milad Milani</i></p> <p>The occult science of the letters plays a major role in global philosophical and mystical heritage. Medieval Muslim and Jewish engagements with this science have been extensive, shaping various strands of philosophy and mysticism, including Sufism and Kabbalah. The great mystic of Andalusia, Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), considered the science of letters the key to grasp the deep mathematical harmony of the cosmological, anthropological, physical, and metaphysical realms. His complex exposition of letters as building blocks of the universe presents a systematic parallel to the Galenic theory of medicine. The Zohar, on the other hand, embodies an enigmatic application of this science that digests a large body of Jewish mystical and occult writings. Do their approaches to letters have anything in</p>	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 410

	<p>common? In this panel, we will offer an interreligious perspective to letter mysticism by thinking Ibn Arabi and the Zohar in a comparative perspective. Ashkan Bahrani will introduce an ongoing collaborative research project that discovers an original work of Ibn Arabi on letter mysticism. Nejra Salihbegovic will present a theoretical and historical framework to study Ibn Arabi and the Zohar in a comparative lens. Aydogan Kars will apply this comparative framework to the study of particular Hebrew and Arabic letters. The panelists will collectively explore the possibilities of, and challenges for, framing letter mysticism as an interreligious phenomenon.</p> <p><i>Ashkan Bahrani</i> <i>Nejra Salihbegovic</i> <i>Aydogan Kars</i></p>	
13:15 - 15:15	<p>General Panel Eight: Chair, <i>Timothy Jones</i></p> <p><i>David Newheiser:</i> Understanding Atheism as a Lived Identity: Why the Study of Religion Still Matters.</p> <p><i>Doug Ezzy:</i> Being Nonreligious</p> <p><i>Albert Haig:</i> Anarcho-primitivism, spirituality, and religion: Beyond a secular critique of civilization.</p> <p><i>Ryan Williams:</i> Enchanted scientists: Cultivating modern selves between science and religion.</p>	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 3, Room 209
3:15 – 3:30	Afternoon tea	
3:30 – 5:30	<p>General Panel Nine: Chair, <i>Bernard Doherty</i></p> <p><i>Ali Hammoud:</i> The Physician and the Imam: The Portrayal of Ḥārith b. Kalde al-Thaqafi in Maḥbūb al-Qulūb.</p> <p><i>Neville Buch:</i> Unitarian-Universalism: a crisis or flourish?</p> <p><i>Vassilios Adrahtas:</i> From Modern Greek Neopaganism to Aboriginal Australian Hierophanics and Back: Comparative Notes on the Experience of Indigeneity</p> <p><i>Leena Taneja:</i> Everyday Remembering Practices: Bhakti Forms of Devotional Recollection</p>	Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 4, Room 410
3:30 – 5:30	<p>General Panel Ten: Chair, <i>Adam Possamai</i></p> <p><i>Nadine Vanniasinkam:</i> Religious identity and imagination of place: Placemaking and its impact on ethno-religious relations in post-war Sri Lanka.</p> <p><i>Michael Edwards:</i> Jesus and the Revolution: Theologies of Solidarity from the Burmese Highlands to the American Heartland.</p> <p><i>Neal Apel:</i> Buddhist Nationalism in Sri Lanka.</p> <p><i>Anand Ranjan:</i> Exploring 'Onlife' Hindutva: Reconstruction of Hindu Identity in India</p>	<p>Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 3, Room 209</p> <p>And Zoom: https://notredame-au.zoom.us/j/82273045745 Meeting ID: 822 7304 5745 Passcode: 063799</p>
5:30 – 6:30	AASR Annual General Meeting	<p>Pioneer House (NDS5) Level 3, Room 209</p> <p>and Zoom: https://notredame-au.zoom.us/j/88585931680 Meeting ID: 885 8593 1680 Passcode: 289662</p>