

Call for papers

The International Theosophical History Conference 2024, Ascona Switzerland

Nature, Theosophy and related esoteric currents

Nature has always been a point of interest for humanity, but in recent times, it has become even more significant due to environmental issues, most notably climate change. Theosophy places significant emphasis on the importance of nature, viewing it as not only an expression of the one life, but also as containing spiritual and hidden dimensions, encouraging individuals to foster a deep connection with the natural world and to seek out the spiritual truths that can be found within it. In agreement with other esoteric currents such as hermeticism and the occult arts, Theosophical teachings maintain a strong focus on nature as a living entity and the idea that all life is interconnected. Life is embodied in numerous spiritual beings, energies, natural kingdoms and a divine will that pushes towards harmonious order and beauty. Furthermore, as with other esoteric currents, the Theosophical Society emphasizes the importance of the study of the three-way relation between humanity, nature, and the divine as a means for humanity to live in harmony with the greater whole.

Outlines of theosophical cosmology, such as the one given in H. P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), were in fact presented as an ancient key to understand the universe and our place in it. Unlike the cosmology of many religions and of science, every entity is perceived not only as living and conscious but also as descending from the spiritual and evolving through the various planes of existence encompassing matter and spirit.

This conference invites reflection and research on understanding the particular views and practices cultivated by the Theosophical and other esoteric currents in relation to nature. It also welcomes studies that are either in contrast to or in alignment with dominant views and narratives formulated by traditional religions, philosophies, or sciences.

Other issues relating to nature and previously addressed by philosophers are also welcome, including issues that are of special interest today, including the following questions:

- 1) Should nature be left untouched or shaped by human intervention?

- 2) Are humans separate from and superior to nature?
- 3) Is nature conscious and alive?
- 4) What relations exist between humans, animals, plants and nature in general?

Reflections and discussions on the theme of nature are both relevant and urgent today given the current state of the planet. Furthermore, studying nature reveals more clearly those genealogies of knowledge about spiritual understandings of nature that have been cultivated from the birth of the Theosophical Society and certainly throughout history.

Themes include:

-Spiritual cosmology

-Living nature

-Human nature

-Non-human animals and personhood; non-human animals, consciousness and soul; animals rights

-The relations between the kingdoms of nature, including the elemental and deva kingdoms

-Animation, animism

-Sustainability

-Ecology, Deep Ecology, climate change

-Vegetarianism, veganism

-Practices to align with or overcome nature, including teaching and initiation

-Embodiment

-Technology and nature

-Gardens and parks, Theosophical campuses

-Sacred places, sacred geometry

-Artistic expressions related to nature, visual art, music, literature, architecture

All interested parties are welcome to be creative and to submit proposals not listed above, but they must be related to the general theme of the Conference.

Key-Note Speaker:

Professor Kocku von Stuckrad

Paper Proposals

To be considered as a presenter in the Conference, please submit an abstract of between 700-1000 words with a 50-word biography to the secretary of the ITHC, Erica Georgiades, via email (erica.georgiades@gmail.com). All proposals will be evaluated by the conference committee.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY CONFERENCE AND THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY JOURNAL.

The purposes of holding the International Theosophical History Conferences are practical in nature: to maintain interest in the subject, to assess the status of research in the area, and finally to provide material for publication within *The Theosophical History journal*. If the presenter wishes to publish in the journal, we advise that the style of the final text and endnotes conform to Chicago Style and that a digital submission be sent for review to the editor (Tim Rudbøg timrudboeg@hum.ku.dk) in Word format no later than two months following the Conference. To visit the website of the *Theosophical History* journal, please <https://theohistory.org/>

Presentations

Suggested presentation time 20 minutes + 10 minutes for questions & answers.

Important Dates

Deadline for submission of a paper: 1 May 2024
Notification of acceptance: 20 May 2024

Registration & Fees

Registration fee for students, per day 22 Euros.
Registration Fee per day 30 Euros.

Registration to the 2024 ITHC will open after the programme is released.

LOCATION: HOTEL ASCONA AT THE SLOPES OF MONTE VERITAS

Accommodation cost from 16 to 18 November 2024.

To book, please contact directly the hotel booking@hotel-ascona.ch

En Suite Single room (full board) CHF 220.- for the entire stay.
En Suite Double room (full board) CHF 212.- per person for the entire stay.
(The city taxes, CHF 4.50/person/day is not included in the price)

Meals are vegan full board without beverage. All the rooms have a bathroom with shower or bath, minibar, television, safe, telephone, radio and WiFi connection. The rooms south facing have a balcony and lake view.

For information about the hotel, please, visit this link www.hotel-ascona.ch

HOW TO ARRIVE IN ASCONA

To arrive in Ascona, we suggest you to travel to the Zurich Airport. Then take a train to Locarno. The train station is located below Terminal B. A short train ride connects to Zurich Main Station, where you may need to change for a train heading South to Locarno.

Please contact the Reception at Hotel Ascona, in advance, to book a shuttle to pick you up from Locarno station, (between 07:30-16:00), or take a taxi directly from Locarno to Hotel Ascona, (approx. 3 km, cost approx. CHF 30).

Hotel Ascona: Via Signor in Croce 1, Ascona, Switzerland. Tel: +41 9178 51515, e-mail: booking@hotel-ascona.ch

Conference Committee

- Conference Chair: Prof. Tim Rudbøg (Associate professor, Science of Religion, chair and director of the Copenhagen Centre for the Study of Theosophy and Esotericism, University of Copenhagen)
 - Prof. James Santucci (Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at California State University, Fullerton)
 - Dr. Olivia Cejvan (Senior lecturer Linnæus University, Sweden)
 - Bjarke Stanley Nielsen (PhD candidate in Study of Religions, University of Copenhagen, Denmark);
 - Erica Georgiades (MRes Religious Experience, University of Wales Trinity Saint David; PgD Merit Ancient Mediterranean Religions UWTSD).
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