**Spirituality and nature: Creating harmony for the future**

*Is the image of nature as passive and mud – a place where one leaves a footprint –*

*really the best metaphor to capture the vitality of nature? (Moore, 2015, p. 6).*

For centuries, capitalism has separated nature from the economy, seeing it as reducable, controllable and externalised (Moore, 2015). This binary perspective of the economy over nature has privileged the extractive ‘use’ of resources for wealth creation over life-affirming cosmologies such as planetary flourishing, care and well-being (Beachem, 2018, 2022; Ergene, Banerjee & Hoffman, 2021; Segovia & Peredo, 2023). Rather capitalism should be a way of organising with the harmony of nature as our whole ecosystem of life is dependent on nature. Nature gives us our physical, mental, emotional and even spiritual nourishment (Navarro et al., 2020) and is estimated to contribute the equivalent of $125 trillion per year to the economy (World Economic Forum, 2018). Half of the world’s GDP relates to nature – both directly and indirectly – and the other half of GDP would not be sustainable without nature (Thorn, 2023). Nevertheless, as Moore (2015, p. 1) concerningly observes,

*Today, however, it is increasingly difficult to get nature—including human nature—to yield its “free gifts” on the cheap. This indicates we may be experiencing not merely a transition from one phase of capitalism to another, but something more epochal: the breakdown of the strategies and relations that have sustained capital accumulation over the past five centuries.*

While critiques of capitalism organsing nature have rapidly increased (see Moore, 2015), most environmental and sustainability movements continue to follow a linear logic in that there is a world “out there” to fix (Kumar 2013). These approaches assume rational and technical methods that do not account for the more-than-human that guide our world (Banerjee & Arjaliès, 2021; Beachem 2108, 2022; Pavlovich & Roche, 2023; Taylor, 2010).

This symposium focuses on how different forms of organising from a spiritual perspective may heal ourselves and nature. Humans are embedded in an interconnected dynamic universe where the human and the more-than-human co-exist in an entangled web of relationships. As Berry (1999, p. 4) notes:

*There is a single integral community of the earth that includes all its component members whether human or other than human. In this community every being has its role to fulfil, its own dignity, its inner spontaneity. . . Every being enters into communion with other beings. This capacity for relatedness, for presence to other beings, for spontaneity in action, is a capacity possessed by every mode of being throughout the universe.*

Thus, how may life-sustaining meshed webs of relations include the health and well-being of humans, animals, mountains, rivers, the sky, carbon and indeed the larger cosmological whole? (Ehrnström-Fuentes, 2022). How could engagement with a supreme being – that could be nature itself (Navarro et al., 2020) – unfold and how could this relationship contribute to working in harmony with the earth? We seek contributions that may assist in reconciling the nature-economy dualism through relational ontologies, recognising the earth as a living system in which humans and the economy are but a part. As Banerjee and Arjaliès (2022 p. 16) note, a relational perspective is “fundamentally animated and spiritual, immersed in a life force that transcends time, human and non-humans.” Thus, we call for perspectives that go beyond a western lens and encourage conceptual, empirical and critical approaches that may include:

* indigenous
* dark nature religion
* pagan, animism, nature mystics
* deep ecology
* religious and faith traditions more generally (e.g. St Francis of Assisi).
* other interpretations that may offer different insights and engagements.

In the first instance, please send a half page proposal to Kathryn Pavlovich [kathryn.pavlovich@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:kathryn.pavlovich@waikato.ac.nz) by 10 November. If accepted, a full 3 - 5 page symposium proposal needs to be submitted by 15 December.

Longer term, this symposium could be developed into a journal special issue and/or a book volume.

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