

“WE” AND “THEY”: CROSS-CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS ON IDENTITY

IRAS, the Institute on Religion in the Age of Science, will have its 67th Conference

June 26 to July 3, 2022, on Star Island and Online

Please join IRAS for a weeklong conference in which intellectual dialogue, the beauty of nature, and new friendships encourage rejuvenation on historic Star Island, off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. This conference includes both adult and youth programming.

For those who cannot travel to Star Island, there is an online conference option.

(Registration information is listed at the bottom of this announcement.)

Theme: “We” and “They”: Cross-Cultural Conversations on Identity

“Who am I? How do I fit into the world around me? How am I different?” Questions like these are central to the elusive notion of identity—to how we establish and maintain perceptions of “self” and “other,” “we” and “they.” Identifying ourselves and others in categories defined by gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, economic status, physical and mental abilities, and other markers stimulate a sense of “we-consciousness.” They influence our choices about who we trust and consider part of our “tribe,” in biological, sociocultural, and “ultimate” terms. How we perceive and enact our identities influences how we love, create, and discover, and whether we construct systems of oppression and war.

Through multireligious and scientific frameworks including biological, psychological, sociological, and anthropological considerations, this conference will explore core concepts of identity. We invite you to engage in cross-cultural conversations and participate in envisioning a global cultural transformation in which the presence of diversity need not provoke disharmony.

Questions include:

- (1) Are there prevailing scientific understandings of self, and if so, what are they?
- (2) How do specific world religious traditions understand individual and social identities and otherness?

- (3) In our dynamically interconnected global society, how can science and religion help us comprehend the limitations and purposes of identity?
- (4) What influences the formation of blind spots and biases? How can we engage in cross-cultural conversations that transcend the “allergy to the other,” increase respect and understanding, and contribute to justice and peacemaking?

Presenters:

Dr. Anindita Balslev; Dr. Dylan S. Belton; Rev. Dr. Dorsey O. Blake; Sally Bowden-Schaible, MS, LCPC; Rev. Dr. Amy Butler; Dr. John Calvin Chatlos; Sturgis Music Fellow Martin Hargrove, Dr. Carolyn J. Love; Dr. Andrew Newberg; filmmaker Donna Carole Roberts; Rabbi David Rosen; Dr. Michael Ruse; Swami Sarvapriyananda; Jennifer E. Whitten, MDiv; additional speakers TBA. (Please see <https://www.iras.org/2022-conference.html> for more information on program, speakers, Archipelagos youth program, and Covid safety policies.)

Registration:

To register for the in-person conference on Star Island, go to: <https://starisland.org/programs/>.

To register for the online conference option, go to: <https://instituteonreligioninananageofscience.wildapricot.org/event-4740203>

Conference Program Chairs: Anindita N. Balslev, C. J. Love, and Jennifer E. Whitten