

VU symposium: *Ayahuasca as Liquid Divinity*

June 29, 13-16h. Location: Main building, room 5A-00

Please register via [registration.expertisecentrum.frt@vu.nl](mailto:registration.expertisecentrum.frt@vu.nl)

More info: [vu.nl/en/events/2023/ayahuasca-as-liquid-divinity](https://vu.nl/en/events/2023/ayahuasca-as-liquid-divinity)



This symposium will explore various perspectives on André van der Braak's recently published book *Ayahuasca as Liquid Divinity: An Ontological Approach*.

“In this clear-headed, thoughtful, and groundbreaking text, André van der Braak thinks with philosopher Bruno Latour as a way to grapple with the ‘ontological shock’ that can emerge in those who engage religiously with ayahuasca—a mind-altering brew originally found in indigenous contexts in the Amazonian rainforest, and which is now the sacramental center of a variety of religious traditions found across the globe. This wide-ranging, courageous, and self-reflexive text not only directly addresses the philosophical ramifications of the relatively recent encounter between Amazonian ayahuasca religiosity with the secular assumptions of the modern Western worldview, but also underscores the societal relevance of this newly emerging contemplative tradition for a ‘Gaian’ religiosity in which human beings become interconnected participants with the natural world.” —**G. William Barnard**, Southern Methodist University

“*Ayahuasca as Liquid Divinity: An Ontological Approach* delves into the still underexplored territory of what ayahuasca can mean for human beings and the challenge this beverage poses for interfaith religious studies. Throughout this lucid and thoughtful text, André van der Braak analyses the ontology of ayahuasca as a liquid object/subject relative to social contexts of ayahuasca traditions like Santo Daime, expertly integrating his philosophical observations with references to the anthropological literature. The result is a text that is a pure joy to read while at the same time offering new questions upon which future scholars can build.” —**Marc Blainey**, author of *Christ Returns from the Jungle: Ayahuasca Religion as Mystical Healing*

“This is a book to inspire spiritual seekers and intellectual mavens alike. Van der Braak takes a vital ontological turn that delivers us from disenchanted, impoverished conceptions of ayahuasca, and paves the way toward a multi-dimensional view of the Amazonian brew and its effects. The result is a new and inspiring framework that makes sense of ayahuasca spirituality and rises up to the current challenges of the ecological crisis. This original and daring work gives due to the spectacular plurality of questions and experiential horizons opened by ayahuasca, without attempting to reduce them in any way. A book that can redefine our understanding of ayahuasca culture.” —**Ido Hartogsohn**, Bar Ilan University

**André van der Braak** is professor of comparative philosophy of religion at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.