

Contributor Notes

Zoe Alderton is a PhD candidate in the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. Her current doctoral research involves the use of Christian symbolism by New Zealand artist Colin McCahon. Her main academic interests include modern art, spirituality on the internet, and the music of Nick Cave.

Lauren Bernauer is a PhD candidate in the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. She completed her MPhil in 2007, writing on the computer game *Age of Mythology* and its portrayal of pre-Christian religion and deities. Her PhD is continuing this topic, focussed on the television series *Stargate*, the young teen novel series, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, the computer game *World of Warcraft* and revisiting *Age of Mythology*.

Apart from voyages by ship and riding his bicycle as long and as far as he can, **Roland Boer** is a research professor at the University of Newcastle. His research interests include popular culture, Marxism and the Bible, and he has recently published *Criticism of Religion* (2009), *Political Myth* (2009) and *Criticism of Heaven* (2007).

Annabel Carr is a PhD candidate and tutor in the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. Her research interests include Australian mythologies, notions of “Otherness”, and resonances of religion in literature and film. Her doctoral thesis examines the recurring trope of the Lost Child in Australian folklore, assessing its significance in spiritual, psychological, and sociological contexts.

Carole M. Cusack is Associate Professor in Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. Her research interests include theories of religious conversion, northern European mythology and religion, medieval Christianity, secularisation and contemporary religious trends. She is the author of *Conversion Among the Germanic Peoples* (Cassell, 1998), *The Essence of Buddhism* (Lansdowne, 2001), and with Christopher Hartney (eds), *Religion and Retributive Logic: Essays in Honour of professor Garry W. Trompf* (Brill, 2010). With Christopher Hartney she is Editor of the *Journal of Religious History* (Wiley) and with Liselotte Frisk (Dalarna University, Sweden) she is Editor of the *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* (Equinox).

Lisa Dethridge researches and writes for film, television, theatre, radio, print, and telecoms in Australia and the United States. She is currently researching and exhibiting in the virtual world of Second Life and lectures in the School of Media and Communication, RMIT University, Melbourne. She is

the author of *Writing Your Screenplay*, and has taught at New York University, the American Film Institute, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); the Australian Film, TV and Radio School (AFTRS) and University of Melbourne. She has a PhD, in Media Ecology from New York University, an M.A. in Political Science and a B.A. (Hons.) in Fine Arts and Literature from Melbourne University.

Julian Droogan is a lecturer and researcher at the Centre for Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism, Macquarie University, where he focuses on religious extremism and radicalization. As well as religious studies, Julian's research specialties include material culture studies, archaeology and South Asian history and culture. His current research looks at the materiality of religious landscapes in South Asia, as well as emerging eschatological narratives in response to climate change induced flooding in Bangladesh.

Jessica Garrahy is a PhD candidate and tutor in Studies in Religion at the University of Queensland. Her research interests revolve around the intersection of religion, media, culture and identity. Her current doctoral thesis examines the interplay of fan identified religious narratives within *Doctor Who* (2005) and their place within the framework of personal religious narrative identity.

Christopher Hartney is a lecturer in the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. His primary expertise is in new religious movements in Vietnam, but he has also published on film, literature, culture and religion. He is Editor of the *Journal for Journal of Religious History*, (with Carole M. Cusack) and recently co-edited a *Festschrift* for Garry W. Trompf, *Religion and Retributive Logic* (Brill, 2010).

Alice Mills is Adjunct Professor of literature and children's literature at the University of Ballarat. She has published widely as a scholar of fantasy and children's literature. She has edited collections of essays on the grotesque and the unspeakable. Her most recent book is a study of the fiction of Mervyn Peake. She also has a scholarly interest in film adaptations of children's books and was consultant editor for Hodder's *Mythology: Myths, Legends and Fantasies*.

Alex Norman is a PhD candidate, tutor, and research assistant in the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. His research interests include tourism and religion, new religious movements, and the practice of secular spirituality in the everyday. His doctoral thesis research examined the intersection of travel and secular spiritual practice in the contemporary Western world. He hopes to make tourism a more thoroughly examined subject in the study of religion.

Johanna Petsche is a PhD candidate at the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. She completed her Music/Arts double degree in 2007 and in 2008 she achieved First Class Honours in Studies in Religion, focusing on pianist Keith Jarrett's spiritual beliefs and his claims of channelling inspiration from a creative source. Her doctoral thesis is on Greek-Armenian mystic G. I. Gurdjieff's little-known piano and orchestral music, and his esoteric theories on music, vibration and the Law of Seven.

Eric Repphun is Associate Lecturer in Religion at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. His recently completed doctoral thesis, *Haunted: Religious Modernity and Reenchantment*, explores the intersections of contemporary Western religiosity and Jean Baudrillard's concept of symbolic exchange. Eric's primary interest is in the relationship of religion and narrative popular culture and he has recently published work on the novels of Douglas Coupland, on the television series *Battlestar Galactica*, and on the films of Terrence Malick.

Venetia Robertson is an Honours student in the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. After completing a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Studies in Religion and a minor in History, Venetia has gone on to do her Honours thesis on alternative spirituality on the internet. She is interested in learning about cyber ethnography and the ways in which religions intersect with the online environment. Her thesis will contain a micro-study of an online spiritual movement called Therianthropy, highlighting the role of popular culture, secularism and re-enchantment in the development of this group.

Norman Simms is Associate Professor of English in the Department of Humanities at Waikato University. He has also taught in Canada, France and Israel. He is the founding editor of *Mentalities/Mentalites*, an interdisciplinary journal, and author of many books and articles, most recently *Marranos on the Moradas: Secret Jews and Penitentes in the Southwestern United States from 1590 to 1890* (Academic Studies Press, 2009).

Simon Theobald is an Honours student at the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. He is writing his honours thesis on internet communities among heterodox religious groups. More broadly he is interested in religion and the internet, food taboos, fundamentalism, and religion and language. He hopes to be instrumental in the revival of Yiddish in secular Jewish society.

Omid Tofighian completed his PhD in Philosophy at Leiden University, titled *Myth and Philosophy on Stage in Platonic Dialogues*, and graduated with a combined Honours degree in philosophy and Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. Over the past six years he has lived

variously in the UAE where he worked at Abu Dhabi University; Belgium where he was a visiting scholar at K.U. Leuven; the Netherlands for his PhD; and short periods in Iran and Australia. During this time he has organized numerous art and cultural events which focus on cultural awareness and social justice. These include painting exhibitions, cultural festivals, film screenings and music concerts (www.artculturetoday.com).

Andrew Wearing completed his PhD on the Manichaeian Church, in the Department of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney. His research interests include ancient religion, Gnosticism and popular culture. He maintains a blog – www.religital.com – on the interaction of religion and digital media.

Dominique Beth Wilson is a PhD candidate at the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. Her research interests include pre-Christian mythology, esoteric and new age beliefs, and the integration of these beliefs into new religions movements. Her doctoral thesis research explores the archetype of the wise-man figure within comparative religion.

Ray Younis was educated at the University of Sydney (BA Hons and MA Hons) and the University of Oxford (DPhil). His book, *On the Ethical Life* (Cambridge Scholars, 2009). He has co-edited three volumes on religion, literature and the arts. He has also contributed to nine books and numerous academic journals including. His research interests include the contemporary relation between science and religion, the philosophy of religion and critical theory.

About the Journal

The publication of *Literature and Aesthetics* has been made possible by the generosity of the Chancellor's Committee of the University of Sydney. Established in 1977 on the initiative of the late Sir Hermann Black, the Chancellor's Committee comprises a group of volunteer workers raising money for projects of university-wide significance. Grants totalling \$1m have been made for a variety of projects including Library art collections and rare book conservations, scholarships, furniture and furnishings for various buildings, equipment, and other minor projects. As far as we know, *Literature and Aesthetics* is the first University-based journal to receive the support of the Chancellor's Committee. The Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics wishes to express its sincere gratitude for such unique and encouraging support. Visit the Chancellor's Committee website at: www.usyd.edu.au/ccs/

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Contributions must be submitted in both electronic form, and in hard copy. All submissions should be double-spaced and should adopt the format of the current issue. In general, endnotes are used for reference only. Articles shall be under 8000 words (including quotations and references).

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