

... Through a Glass Darkly:

Reflections on the Sacred

Collected Research

With an Introduction by Victoria Barker

Edited by Frances Di Lauro

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Cover image: Angel peeling back the wall in the Giotto fresco in Arena Chapel, Padua. Photo courtesy of Christopher Hartney.

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Acknowledgements

From 30 September to 2 October 2005, The Religion, Literature and the Arts Society, which is based in the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney, held its Ninth Australian and International Religion, Literature and the Arts Conference in conjunction with the Australian Association for the Study of Religions. The conference was held in the John Woolley Building at the University of Sydney and the theme was 'Ways and Means of Reinventing Studies in Religion for the Third Millennium.' A very broad undertaking indeed, but the objective was to inspire the development of new or revised approaches to the study of religion. Thanks are due to Associate Professor Adrian Mitchell, the Head of the School of English, Art History, Film and Media for generously providing start-up funds for the conference.

The conference was a great success with well over 70 papers and a number of keynote presentations. The unenviable task of organising such an event, over three days, was seamlessly performed by Carole Cusack, Katharine Buljan and Christopher Hartney. Also thanked for having volunteered their time to assist in making the conference a success are Annabel Carr, Vanessa Crosby, Julian Droogan, Glenys Eddy, Jay Johnston, Alex Norman, David Pecotic and Dominique Wilson. The conference presenters who are not represented in this book are too numerous to name but they are sincerely thanked for thoughtful contributions.

It is an RLA tradition to collate a selection of papers from such conferences and to produce a volume. Due to the sheer number of papers presented, and the duplication of various themes and topics, submissions were chosen which dealt specifically with unexplored or neglected subjects, themes and approaches. All submissions therefore represent original scholarly research designed to increase the stock of knowledge of human culture and society and offer new methodologies and applications for the study of religion. All submissions in this book were subjected to double-blind peer review by independent, qualified experts in the field of Religious Studies.

The process of harvesting submissions, liaising with peer-reviewers, the publishers and contributors as was facilitated by the generous

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assistance of Carole Cusack and Christopher Hartney. It is with great appreciation that I thank them, Alex Norman and Vanessa Crosby for help with proofreading. I would particularly like to thank Dominique Wilson, Andrew Wearing, Jim Speciale, Philip Quadrio and Carol Bessling for devoting so much of their time in the final week to proofreading, for their attention to detail and good humour. My gratitude is also extended to Victoria Barker who has liaised with me via email over the last six months or so, giving up her valuable time to offer helpful advice and opinions in editorial matters. We are honoured to include her very stimulating introduction to this collection.

Frances Di Lauro

Contributors

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Frances Di Lauro is a doctoral candidate, casual lecturer and tutor with the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. She has researched and published analyses of Daoist philosophical texts; Celtic Otherworld narratives (*immrama* and *echtrae*); classical mythology; and medieval eschatological dream and vision literature. All of these coalesce in her current research, focused on the eschatological idiosyncrasies and iconoclasm in the *Divina Commedia* of Dante.

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Christopher Hartney researches in Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. In 2005 he lectured at the universities of New South Wales and Sydney. His lecture series, *Civilization: The Art of Being Human*, at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, is the Gallery's most successful series to date. He is treasurer of the Australian Association for the Study of Religion and active in the Religion, Literature and the Arts Society, on the editorial board of the *Journal of Religious History* and has been a visiting Professor at the University of Bangladesh.

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Contributors

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Philip Andrew Quadrio majored in both Philosophy and Studies in Religion as an undergraduate. He has recently been awarded a PhD at the University of Sydney for his dissertation on the social and ethical dimensions in G W F Hegel's Early Theological Writings. Over the past three years he has been engaged as a casual lecturer, teaching both Philosophy of Religion and courses on Classical German Philosophy with the department of Studies in Religion and the Philosophy department at the University of Sydney. Philip's research interests include; ethics, social theory, philosophy of culture, political theory, Classical German Philosophy, the Enlightenment, Rousseau and the intersection of ethics, politics and religion. He is also affiliated

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Dharmacari Ratnavyuha first discovered Buddhism while beginning a PhD in Economics. After finishing his dissertation, he moved to Cambridge UK to prepare for ordination within the Western Buddhist Order and work at Windhorse:Evolution, which is a Buddhist right-livelihood business focusing on ethical trade. Ordained in 1999, he began to work as part of the executive management team at Windhorse: Evolution for his last 3 years in Cambridge. He moved to Sydney in 2004 and currently works at the Sydney Buddhist Centre, Newtown, teaching meditation and Buddhism. In addition, he works in the Chaplaincy team of the Prince of Wales Hospital system, visiting patients and their families, teaching meditation to staff, and exploring the connection between spirituality and health.

Professor Jamie S Scott teaches various courses in Religion and Culture, including "Introduction to the Study of Religion," "Religion and Film," "Religion and Television," "Religion and Postcolonial Literatures" and "Christianity and Film" at York University in Canada. He is currently working on a textbook, *The Religions of Canadians* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2007), a collection of essays examining the representation of mountains in literature, and studies of the ways in which Christian missions and missionaries are portrayed in literature and film. Professor Scott serves as Director of the Graduate Programme in Interdisciplinary Studies, and he is a member of the graduate programmes in Geography, English and Humanities as well.

Brendon Stewart is academic coordinator of the Masters of Analytical Psychology, in the School of Psychology, at the University of Western Sydney. He teaches the unit Buddhist Practice and Analytical Psychology which explores the relationship between Buddhism, an ancient religious practice; and analytical psychology, a 20th century psychological theory.

Contributors

His research brings together analytical psychology, cultural studies, ecological theory, creativity and learning. He has done extensive research with people in various local government areas of Western Sydney.

Andrew Wearing is a doctoral candidate, casual lecturer and tutor with the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney, who has presented papers on multiculturalism in Sassanian Iran, the Manichaean Church, and the historiography of The Da Vinci Code. His PhD thesis focuses on Manichaean self-identity.

Shelley Wickham completed a Bachelor of Science (Honours)/Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Sydney in July 2006, with majors in Physics and Russian Language, and covering a diverse range of subjects including Religious Studies and Comparative Literature. She also completed an MSc in Physics at the University of Sydney in September 2006, and is currently undertaking research towards an interdisciplinary PhD at Oxford University as a member of New College.

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