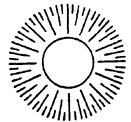


Sydney Studies in Religion 2

THIS IMMENSE PANORAMA

Studies in Honour of Eric J. Sharpe

Edited by Carole M. Cusack *and* Peter Oldmeadow



School of Studies in Religion
The University of Sydney

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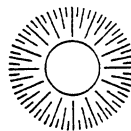
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**School of Studies in Religion
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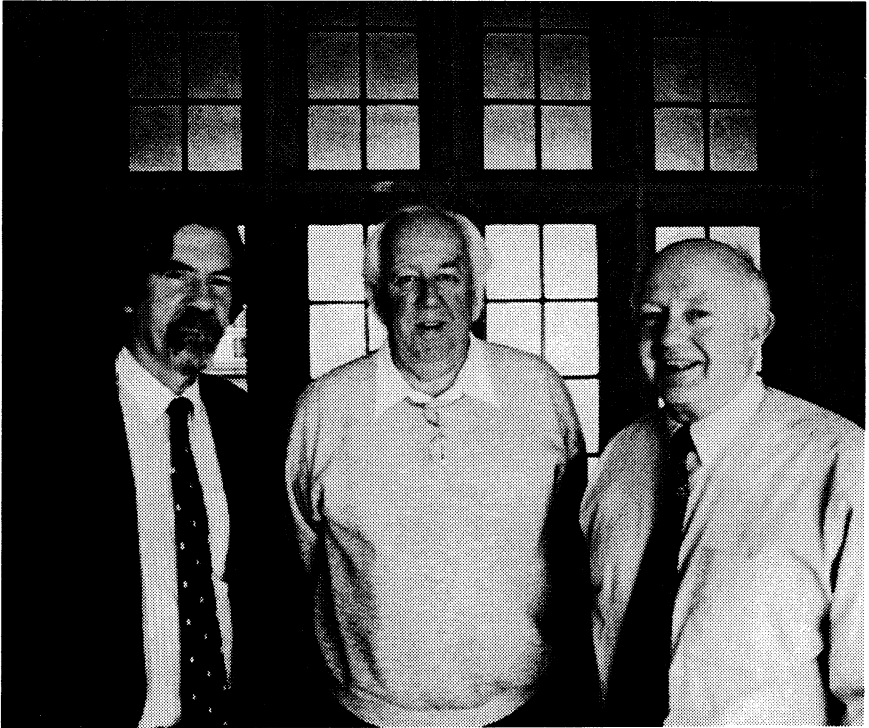
Acknowledgments

The symposium that provided the inspiration for this volume was organised by Carole Cusack to celebrate the retirement of Eric J. Sharpe and was held on November 1, 1996. Thanks are due to Jim Tulip, the Head of Studies in Religion at the time, for his support and enthusiasm for the project and to Birgitta Sharpe for assisting with the guest list for the symposium and the dinner which was held on the same night. *This Immense Panorama* brings together the writings of many people; their valuable contributions are acknowledged as are those of a number of others: Philip Almond, Rachael Kohn, Ruth Lewin, David Rumsey and Geoff Oddie, who participated in panels at the symposium but who are not represented herein.

The production of the book would not have been possible without the assistance of grants. The Faculty of Arts through the Dean, Professor Bettina Cass, made two thousand dollars available to Studies in Religion, and the remainder of the production cost was supplied by the Scottow Bequest, a trust fund to support publications within the field.

The curriculum vitae of Eric J. Sharpe appended to this volume was originally published in Arvind Sharma, ed., *The Sum of Our Choices: Essays in Honour of Eric J. Sharpe*, McGill Studies in Religion, Atlanta, Georgia, Scholars Press, 1996. It has been updated for inclusion here. The still from Christine Edzard's film *Little Dorrit* is reproduced by permission of the British Film Institute.

Special thanks to Don Barrett and Wendy Oldmeadow for proof-reading.



*Professor Garry Trompf, Professor Eric J. Sharpe,
and Associate Professor Jim Tulip at the Symposium*

Preface

In *Understanding Religion* (Duckworth 1983) Eric J. Sharpe refers to 'this immense panorama' when delimiting the range of phenomena which might be classified as religious and therefore available for study by students of religion. He envisages a vast canvas on which to work, where 'Thor and Odin, Osiris and Horus, Varuna and Mitra share the scene with Yahweh, Allah and the ineffable Brahman' (p. x). Professor Sharpe's own career has traversed most of the abovementioned divine beings, as a dazzling array of contributions to landmark religious conferences and publications bears witness.

Studies in Religion has often been considered problematic as an academic discipline. This is partly because its practitioners employ a plethora of methodological perspectives (for example, archaeological, psychological, hermeneutic, philosophical and historical), and partly because of its awkward relationship with theology (in which the truth claims of particular traditions are asserted). Eric J. Sharpe staunchly maintained that it was possible to examine aspects of the immense panorama without inevitably being drawn toward making decisions about which aspects were 'true' or 'false'.

This commitment to freedom from bias, whether theological or cultural, is one of the great contributions made to the study of religion by Eric J. Sharpe. It is evident in his studies of mission and missionaries in India and China, including *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil* (1965) and *Karl Ludvig Reichelt* (1984). It is especially evident in *Understanding Religion*, and in *Comparative Religion* (second edition 1986), a fascinating intellectual history of the discipline from its origins to the mid-twentieth century. To know the roots of one's traditions is to be well-equipped against contemporary pitfalls. In a recent article Sharpe reminded the Studies in Religion community that

(r)eligion is dangerous. It is also difficult. One has to work for a lifetime to find out how little there is that can be known, and the forces that it can release upon the unsuspecting.¹

¹ Eric J. Sharpe, 'Twenty Years On: Some Reflections on the Study of Religion Then and Now', *ASR Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Spring 1998, p. 133.

Preface

This volume grew out of the farewell Symposium for Professor Sharpe, who retired as Professor of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney on 30 June 1996. The Symposium took place on 1 November of the same year, and featured three sessions. These were Methodology, featuring the contributions to this volume of Ian Weeks and Tony Swain, with a panel discussion by Rachael Kohn (ABC Religious Radio) and Philip Almond (University of Queensland); Missiology, featuring the contributions to this volume of Lyn Olson and Cyril Hally, with a panel discussion by Carole Cusack, Peter Oldmeadow and Geoff Oddie (History, University of Sydney); and Issues in the Study of Religion, featuring the contributions to this volume of Garry Trompf, Robert Crotty and William Emilsen, with a panel discussion by David Dockrill and Ruth Lewin (University of Sydney). Eric J. Sharpe then gave a Reply, and David Rumsey of the Conservatorium of Music gave the final presentation on Bach and the Holy Trinity in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney. This included a performance of the Prelude and Fugue in E Flat Major, from the *Clavierübung Pt III*, and was followed by dinner in the University Club.

The other papers in this volume were commissioned or offered by a variety of Eric J. Sharpe's colleagues and students, many of whom were present at the Symposium or sent their regards. The papers are arranged thematically in sections. The range of material in this volume is wide, an immense panorama indeed. It is important to recognise that Eric J. Sharpe contributed to the intellectual life of the University of Sydney and that of Australia in general not only as the first Professor of Studies in Religion, significant though that was. He contributed to academic programmes in Asian Studies, teaching Hinduism and Buddhism; and in Medieval Studies and Celtic Studies, by pioneering senior undergraduate options in Celtic and Germanic mythology. He encouraged students and colleagues alike to pursue excellence in all areas of their activity, and it is with many thanks that we celebrate his contribution and offer him this modest tribute.

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Purushottama Bilimoria was educated in New Zealand, Australia, India, and has held fellowships at Oxford, Stony Brook, Harvard and California (Berkeley, Santa Barbara). He lectures at Deakin University and part-term at Melbourne University. He has published numerous books and articles in the areas of Indian philosophy and ethics, Hinduism, Buddhism, and either cross-cultural or postcolonial critiques of comparative religion, ecology, Indian law and bioethics, and cultural theory. He edits, aided by Ian Weeks and Patrick Hutchings, *Sophia, Inc.*, a journal for philosophy of religion and philosophical theology.

Daniel Bray is a graduate student in the School of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney.

Mark Levon Byrne completed his Master of Arts (Honours) and PhD degrees in Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. He teaches the University Preparation Course in Studies in Religion for the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Sydney.

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Robert Crotty studied Theology and Biblical Studies in Australia and afterwards took Masters degrees in both areas in Rome and then moved on to postgraduate studies in Jerusalem at the Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française. Having returned to Australia, he did a Masters degree by research in Ancient History and a doctorate in Education at Adelaide. Since 1975 he has taught in the University of South Australia and its predecessors in the fields of Religion Studies and History. At present he is the Professor of Religion Education and the Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Education. Robert has written a number of books, the most recent

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of which is *The Jesus Question: The Historical Search* published by HarperCollins.

Carole M. Cusack is a Lecturer in Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. Her undergraduate Honours thesis and her doctorate were both supervised by Eric J. Sharpe. Her doctorate has been published as *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples* (Cassell, 1998).

David Dockrill is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the the University of Newcastle, NSW.

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Fr Cyril Hally specialises in mission history and cultural anthropology and has lectured at various Columban seminaries in New Zealand, Australia and Ireland. For seven years he was head of the Asian Desk at Pro Mundi Vita, an information/research institute in Brussels. He established the mission-orientated Pacific Mission Institute. He was inaugural secretary of the Catholic National Missionary Council and President of the South Pacific Association of Mission Studies.

Victor C. Hayes has taught in Philosophy and Religion Departments in the USA and Australia for more than thirty years. He has degrees from The University of Sydney (BA), Union Theological Seminary, New York (BD and STM) and Columbia University (PhD). Dr Hayes has been a Visiting Scholar at Harvard's Centre for the Study of World Religions, at the University of California (Berkeley) and at Cambridge University in the U.K. He is a Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia and has spent ten years in Parish ministry. At his retirement he was a Senior Lecturer (Religious Studies) at Flinders University in South Australia.

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Peter Oldmeadow is a Lecturer in Sanskrit and Classical Indian and Buddhist Thought in the Schools of Studies in Religion and Asian Studies at the University of Sydney. His undergraduate studies were done in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Sydney in the years directly after its formation.

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Tony Swain is a Senior Lecturer in Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney and was one of the first graduates of the Department of Religious Studies. He is the author of *A Place for Strangers* (1993).

Garry W. Trompf is Professor in the History of Ideas at the University of Sydney. He was formerly Professor of History at the University of Papua New Guinea, and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Sydney. His various books include *The Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought* (vol. 1) (1979) and *Payback* (1994). He co-taught with Eric J. Sharpe between 1978 and 1997.

Jim Tulip was a member of the Department of English at the University of Sydney from 1962 until his retirement in 1996. He was Head of the School of Studies in Religion at the University from 1991 to 1996. He is now located at the Centre for Religion, Literature and the Arts at the Australian Catholic University.

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Ian Weeks has taught Philosophy and Religious Studies at McMaster, Melbourne, Yale and Deakin Universities. He is presently in the School of Social Inquiry at Deakin. He is currently working on the interrelations between Carl Schmidt, Martin Heidegger and Karl Barth.

Henrik Williams is Docent in Scandinavian languages at Uppsala University. He is a specialist on runic inscriptions and other Old Norse texts and has done research on Viking Age runestones, the origin of the runes, and the Christianisation of Sweden.

John Wren-Lewis was originally an applied mathematician. He worked in research and research planning for a large multi-national corporation in the U.K. from the end of World War 2 until the early 1970s. During this time he published widely on the relations between science and religion, and his writings during the 1950s and 60s played a significant role in the so-called 'Death of God' movement. In 1983, his sixtieth year, he had a radically new kind of religious study thrust upon him by a close encounter with death in Thailand. He now lives in Australia, where he is an Honorary Associate of the University of Sydney's School of Studies in Religion.