

Biographical Information for Contributors

Marybeth Baggett is Assistant Professor of English at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. Her research and teaching interests include literary theory, contemporary American literature, science fiction, and dystopian literature, with particular concern for the works of Kurt Vonnegut. Recent presentations cover topics such as humor as hope in Vonnegut's *Player Piano*, the function of grace as salve for political division in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*, and the usefulness of Lacan's gaze as a means of understanding Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*. An essay version of this Larsen presentation appears in the Fall 2012 issue of *The Griot*.

Daniel Boscaljon has a doctoral degree in Religious Studies with an emphasis in secularism and theology, and a doctoral degree in English with an emphasis in nineteenth-century American Literature. His interdisciplinary work in both fields explores the liminal margins of human experience, particularly the value of humility and uncertainty. He is the author of *Vigilant Faith: Passionate Agnosticism in a Secular World* (University of Virginia Press, 2013) and editor of *Resisting the Place of Belonging* (Ashgate, 2013).

Diana Fritz Cates is Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at The University of Iowa. Her research and teaching focus on religious studies, religious ethics, and moral psychology. She is the author of many publications that concern matters of virtue, vice, care, and emotion, including *Choosing to Feel: Virtue, Friendship, and Compassion for Friends* (Georgetown University Press, 1997) and *Aquinas on the Emotions: A Religious-Ethical Inquiry* (Georgetown University Press, 2009).

Melissa Anne-Marie Curley is Assistant Professor of Japanese religion at the University of Iowa. Her research focuses on modern Japanese Buddhism,

particularly the interaction of sectarian Pure Land thought and Kyoto School philosophy. Recent publications include “Shinshū Studies and the Legacy of Liberal Thought,” in *The Social Dimension of Shin Buddhism*, ed. Ugo Dessì (Brill, 2010) and “Zen-boy Ikkyū,” in *Little Buddhas* (Oxford, 2013).

Verna Marina Ehret is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Mercyhurst University in Erie, Pennsylvania. Her primary fields of study are philosophical and constructive theology. She has given a number of presentations on redemption and globalization, and her current research focuses on religion, humanism, narrative, and globalization.

J. Sage Elwell is Associate Professor of Religion, Art, and Visual Culture at Texas Christian University. He is author of *Crisis of Transcendence: A Theology of Digital Art and Culture* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2011) and also publishes and presents in the areas of suffering and embodiment, the aesthetics of atrocity, religion and film, and atheism and the arts. He also works as an artist in digital media, photography, and book art.

W. David Hall is Associate Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Centre College. He is editor of and contributor to *Paul Ricoeur and Contemporary Moral Thought* and author of *Paul Ricoeur and the Poetic Imperative*. He has published broadly in the areas of phenomenology, philosophical theology, rhetoric and philosophy, and political philosophy.

Everett Hamner is Associate Professor of English at Western Illinois University—Quad Cities. His essays may be found in *American Literature*, *Science Fiction Studies*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, and *Religion and Literature*. His primary research and teaching interests are in relationships between contemporary fiction and film, global religions and postsecular theory, and intersections of science, technology, and culture.

Benjamin K. Hunnicutt has been a professor of Leisure Studies at The University of Iowa since 1975. He is the author of *Kellogg's Six-Hour Day; Work Without End: Abandoning Shorter Hours for the Right to Work*; and *Free Time: The Forgotten American Dream* (Temple Press, 2013). In addition to working as a consultant to unions and businesses interested in shorter work hours and the potential of leisure to improve the community and workplace, Hunnicutt has written for *The Wall Street Journal* and appeared in a variety of nationally and internationally broadcast television and radio programs.

Ezra L. Plank received his PhD from the Department of Religious Studies at The University of Iowa. His dissertation, entitled *Creating Perfect Families: The French Reformed Church and Family Formation, 1559–1685*, examined the zealous program of early modern French Reformed Churches to create domestic microcosms of the larger church, changing nuclear families into spiritual communities. His historical research relies heavily on the use of church discipline records to gain insights into how common people understood, co-opted, and accepted/contested theological ideas.

Steven Schroeder earned his PhD in Ethics and Society from the University of Chicago in 1982. He is the co-founder, with composer Clarice Assad, of the Virtual Artists Collective (vacpoetry.org) that has published fifty collections of poetry since it began in 2004. From 2002–2009 he taught philosophy, poetry, and peace studies at Shenzhen University in China. He currently teaches at the University of Chicago in Asian Classics and the Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults. His most recent poetry collections are *Turn* and (with Debby Sou Vai Keng) *a guest giving way like ice melting: thirteen ways of looking at laozi. Four Truths*, a collection of three short stories and a drama in verse (with paintings by Debby Sou Vai Keng) was published by Wipf & Stock in 2011. A new poetry collaboration with David Breeden, *Raging for the Exit*, was published by Wipf & Stock in 2012.

Holly White is a PhD candidate in the Religion Department at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York. Her dissertation research analyzes the roles of desire and transcendence in the anti-foundationalist philosophies of Luce Irigaray and Gilles Deleuze. She has taught courses at Syracuse and at Ithaca College on the topics of Utopia, modernity and Western religion, and world religions.