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OPEN LECTURES

MA Myth, Cosmology and the Sacred

SPRING 2017



Canterbury
Christ Church
University

MA Myth, Cosmology and the Sacred

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Come along and join our MA students at five Open Lectures this term.

Attendance at these events will cost £5 per lecture (*free to students and staff of Canterbury Christ Church University*). Payable on the door (cash payments) or by booking online in advance.

The Open Lectures take place at our Canterbury Campus (Newton building, Ng07) on Saturdays from 6.15pm-7.45pm.

You can book your place online at www.canterbury.ac.uk/cae/open-lectures or call us on 01227 782919

SATURDAY 21 JANUARY 2017

Visions of the Imaginal: Imps, Goblins, Fairies and Machine Elves

William Rowlandson



'All was this land fulfild of fayerye./The elf-queene, with hir joly compaignye.' Chaucer's Wife of Bath wished to make England great again. Her age lacked fairies. 'Who are the Little People?' asked Robert Louis Stevenson, 'they are near connections of the dreamer's, beyond doubt.' Borges wrote that elves 'are tiny and sinister. They steal cattle and children and also take pleasure in minor acts of deviltry.' Terence McKenna rapped bemushroomed with 'self-transforming machine elves. Sort of jewelled basketballs all dribbling their way toward me.'

Elves and other wee folk have been with us for generations, and will likely remain with us. Are they still cattle-snatchers? Why elves? Why now? Drawing in part on Jung's engagement with daimonic beings and in part on James

Hillman's visions of the 'imaginal', William will investigate the cultural resonance of elven experiences, reflecting not so much on the ontological status (*where* and *what* and of *what* are the elves?) but on their meaning as aspects of a greater social and cultural ecology.

William Rowlandson is Senior Lecturer in Hispanic Studies at the University of Kent. He is the author of *Reading Lezama's 'Paradiso'* (Peter Lang, 2007), *Imaginal Landscapes* (Swedenborg Society, 2015), *Borges, Swedenborg and Mysticism* (Peter Lang, 2013), and co-editor with Angela Voss of *Daimonic Imagination: Uncanny Intelligence* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013). He has published widely on Latin American cultural and political history. He plays drums as often as he can.

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2017

Tarot Readings: The Influence of Set and Settings

Nikki Wyrd



Tarot cards have been used for around two hundred years, in various guises. Ranging from fortune telling device, to in depth psychological analysis tool, the ways in which they can be deployed are fascinating in their own right.

Tonight Nikki describes some of her own experiences as a tarot reader in different settings. Nightclubs, tattoo conventions and kitchen tables each have their own glamour. Taking symbol manipulation as the common theme, Nikki reflects on how tarot cards act as non-ordinary encounters with the self for those who come to her for advice.

Nikki Wyrd has read tarot cards for 30 years, mostly for friends and sometimes for paying customers. Her deep curiosity about life has resulted in an ecology degree, lots of thinking, talking and writing about the human condition, and

many years practising chaos magic; she now spends her time copyediting, publishing books, and editing the *Psychedelic Press Journal*. In her spare time, she acts as a director of both the Breaking Convention conference, and the Psychedelic Museum.

SATURDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2017

The Calling, Training and Practice of Sangomas in Relation to an Astrologer's Vocation

Darby Costello



During the 1970s, the field officer for a small museum in Johannesburg, South Africa and a Zulu witchdoctor began a project to gather and record the traditions and practices of various other witchdoctors around the country. They both felt strongly that these practices were of immense value, both culturally and spiritually, and must not be lost with the increasing encroachment of Western values.

In this talk Darby will present some of her experiences and research in this project which lasted some seven years, and illustrate and discuss the calling, training and practice of these healer/diviners in relation to her astrological vocation today.

Darby Costello, MA, Hon DFAstro is a practising astrologer who lives in London. She was born in America where she was educated traditionally until the late 1960 when she discovered and studied astrology in Boston. In 1971 she visited Southern Africa and stayed twelve years where she spent much of that time with *sangomas* - tribal healers - transcribing their lore and practices for a small museum in Johannesburg. During that time, she began making her living by practising as an astrologer.

The *sangomas* saw that she was 'working with her spirit' - with the stars - as they were with their ancestors, and what she learned there still informs her practice today. Darby has taught at the Centre for Psychological Astrology since 1988 and the Faculty of Astrological Studies since the early 1990s and she lectures and teaches internationally. She has written several books on astrology; some on her own and some in collaboration with other astrologers. In 2006 she was awarded an MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology at Bath Spa University. Her consultation practice is at the heart of her working life as an astrologer.

SATURDAY 4 MARCH 2017

Hathor of Dendara: Marrying Heaven and Earth

Alison Roberts



The divinization of the human being is at the heart of Dendara Temple in Egypt, built at the end of the first century BCE and the last lovely temple dedicated to the goddess Hathor, Eye of the Sun and mediatrix of the ancient Egyptian solar love mysteries. Requiring neither 'escape from the flesh' nor abandonment of desire, hers is a greening wisdom, a divinizing way celebrating transformation, renewal, and life.

In this illustrated talk Alison will explore her stunning temple, with its astrological ceilings and underground crypts, especially how 'above' and 'below' were united each year in the New Year rooftop ceremony of *Uniting with the Sun Disk*, drawing down life from the heavens to make statues live.

Dr Alison Roberts has a DPhil from Oxford University in Egyptology. She is the author of three books on Hathor and the sacred Feminine in ancient Egypt: *Hathor Rising*; *My Heart, my Mother and Golden Shrine*, *Goddess Queen*. She is currently writing the final one in the series, which will be about transformational Egyptian Alchemy and the Book of Life.

SATURDAY 18 MARCH 2017

What Canst Thou Say?

Belinda Hunt



Metamorphosis V is one of a series of seven works in pastel by Belinda Hunt, which emerged spontaneously over a few days in 2013, after the death of a close friend. Images speak, and to the artist, this one seems to say: to follow a true spiritual path, the aspirant needs the heart of a Lion and the eye of the Hoopoe – the one hailed in symbolic language as the embodiment of courage, and the other as a guide whose piercing vision opens the way to the Source of Life itself.

As a professional artist Belinda has found that images may burst free of the framework foisted upon them by the painter's best intentions – they become archetypal presences with messages that can demand of their 'creator' a change in spiritual direction. In an earlier lecture in 2014, Belinda described the imaginal power and purpose of images, illustrated with examples of her work. A mural, still in progress, entitled *The Feast of the Gods*, drew some challenging responses from the audience.

This 2017 lecture seeks to bring new insights to that work, and will explore more recent works as well. The talk's title invites attention to the voice of soul, a responsibility we all share, and must act upon and give voice to, in whatever creative way we can.

Belinda Hunt is an artist and researcher. She has MAs in German and Modern History (Oxon.), Mysticism and Religious Experience (University of Kent), and Transpersonal Arts and Practice (University of Chichester).