

**History of the Recipients of the John Cooper Memorial Prize
School of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney**



The Theosophical Society in Australia, for the past seventeen years, has funded an annual prize at the University of Sydney for work on the Perennial Philosophy in its Eastern and Western traditions. The prize is named the John Cooper Memorial Prize, in memory of John Cooper (pictured left) who had a long association with this Society and who also gave courses on Gnosticism at the University. Dr Cooper was awarded a posthumous doctorate by the University of Sydney after his passing in 1998. His extensive library, of more than 10,000 volumes, was donated to the Australia National Library in Canberra.

Below is the list of the prizes which have awarded up to date:

2000:

Undergraduate: (Ms) Frances Di Lauro, essay on philosophical and religious Daoism

Postgraduate: (Mr) Paris Mawby, 'The Kingdom is Within: Religious Themes and Postmodernity in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*'

2001:

Undergraduate: Ian Drummond, 'Landscapes of Power and Transformation: the Question of Religious Syncretism in Tibetan Buddhism'

Sarah Penicker, 'The Golden Apple'
(Concerning the spiritual significance of plants to the ancient Celts)

Postgraduate: David Pecotic, PhD candidate, 'Gurdjieff and the Fourth Way: Giving Voice to Further Alterity in the Study of Western Esotericism'

2002:

Undergraduate: Sarah Penicker, essay, 'The Syncretics of Mistletoe: A Study of Love and Tree Worship in Germanic Myth and Religion'

Postgraduate: Julian Droogan, Honours thesis, 'A Lotus Floating on the Sea of Dissolution, The Symbolism of Pre-urban Earthworks from First Millennium BCE North India'

2003:

Undergraduate: Honours student, Ms Shannon Hughes, ‘Seyyed Hossein Nasr and the Perennial Philosophy’

Postgraduate: Mr Christopher Hartney, ‘The Divine Path to Eternal Life’

2004:

Undergraduate: Frances di Lauro, B.A. Honours thesis, ‘The Noblest Conception of That Age’: Conceiving Dante’s *Purgatorio* (1308-1312) in the Twentieth Century’

Dominique Wilson, B.A. Honours thesis, ‘The Creation and Function of Mythic Histories in Esoteric Movements, and their Relationship to Popular Culture’

Postgraduate: Mr David Pecotic, Ph. D. thesis, ‘Body and Correspondence in G.I. Gurdjieff’s *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson*: A Case Study in the Construction of Categories in the Study of Esotericism’.

2005:

Postgraduate: David Kim, PhD Candidate, ‘The Community Rules of Thomas: A Social Reading of the “Fifth Gospel” ’

Postgraduate: Julian Droogan, ‘Esoteric Hermeneutics’

2006:

Postgraduate: Annabel Carr, in partial fulfilment of requirements of Bachelor of Arts (Honours), ‘Grounding the Angels: An Attempt to Harmonise Science and Spiritism in the Celestial Conferences of John Dee’

Undergraduate: Sabrina Khan (first year), ‘Doing the Beautiful: Expressions of a Mystical Quest’
and
Suzanne Langford (second year), ‘Examine the Pseudo-History of Feminist Witchcraft’

2007:

Postgraduate: Glenys Eddy (PhD thesis), 'Western Buddhist Experience: The Journey from Encounter to Commitment in Two Forms of Western Buddhism'

Undergraduate: Venetia Robertson, 'What is Gnosticism?'
and
Stephanie Majcher, 'Wayang: The Development and Cultural Adaptation of Islamic Ritual'

2008:

Undergraduate: George Ionnides, 'The Goddess in the Hindu Tradition'
and
Elli Grien, 'Religion and the Body'
and
Carly Barton, 'What is the relationship of Western sex magic and Hindu Tantric traditions?'

Honours: Paul Terracini, 'Religion in Akbar's India 1556-1605'

2009:

Undergraduate: Samuel Meenahan, 'How can desire be understood to disable and enable relations with the Sacred?'

2010:

Undergraduate: Sally James, 'Gender is Everywhere: Body, Gender and the Environment in Australian Indigenous Religious Traditions'

Senior: A. M. Boag, 'From Being God to Being Human: Biblical Influences in the Teachings of J. Krishnamurti'

Postgraduate: Alex Norman, 'Spiritual Tourism – Secular Examination of the Self in the Mirror of Religious Practice'

2011:

Undergraduate: Michael Deegan, 'Sethian Gnosticism: Issues in its History and Teachings'

M.A. Thesis: Yahya R. Haidar, 'Thinking Without Religion – Religion, Essence and Existence'

2012:

Undergraduate: Vivien Cinque, 'Choose one Hindu pilgrimage site that was active during the Classical period and discuss its significance (or lack thereof) to cosmology and/or the divine'

Postgraduate: Johanna Petsche, 'Music For Remembering: The Gurdjieff-De Hartmann Music and its Esoteric Significance'

2013:

Undergraduate: James Thorpe, '“Christians” and Amulets in Early Medieval Byzantium'

Postgraduate: Dominique Beth Wilson, 'Shaman, Sage, Priest, Prophet and Magician – Exploring the Architecture of the Religious Wise Man'

2014:

Undergraduate: Sophie Morstyn, 'Sex and Religion in Wicca and Raelianism'

Postgraduate: Mario Baghos, 'Eternal Cities: Rome, Constantinople, and their antecedents as symbolic images and centres of the world'

2015:

Undergraduate: Giselle Bader, 'The Role of Magic and Religion in the Domestic Sphere of Ancient Egyptian Life'

Postgraduate: Alan M. Boag, 'Concealed and Revealed: Madame Blavatsky's "Lost Word" Key and Esoteric Eschatology in the Teachings of J. Krishnamurti'

2016:

Undergraduate: Jackson Clement, 'Could Clement of Alexandria be considered a Gnostic?'

Bachelor of Arts: Giselle Bader, 'Mind-Body Dualism in the "Apocryphon of Jon"'
(Honours)