

**[\\*Final Deadline Extension 12/31/21\\* Call for Abstracts for an edited volume: "Avatar: The Last Airbender and Theology" under contract with McFarland Press](#)**

Announcement published by Michael Riggins on Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Type:

Call for Papers

Texas,

Date:

December 31, 2021

Subject Fields:

Asian History / Studies, East Asian History / Studies, Popular Culture Studies, Religious Studies and Theology, Southeast Asian History / Studies

McFarland Press is currently seeking papers for an edited volume on the intersection of the Avatar Universe and Theology. Essays should mainly concentrate on *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *The Legend of Korra*, but may also consider the graphic novels or the live action film if appropriate. Essays should be accessible to a lay reader, but focused on an academic audience.

Since its release on Netflix, *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and its sequel series *The Legend of Korra* have surged in popularity as both shows gain a viewership far beyond what the creators envisioned for the franchise. Undergirding the series' ability to cut to the heart of thorny issues about war, oppression, genocide, and redemption is a deep spirituality that focuses on maintaining balance in the world and in one's own self and carrying that balance into one's relationship with others. From Aang's refusal to give up the teachings of the Air Nomad Monks and kill the Firelord to Iroh's commitment to drawing wisdom from each of the four elements, Avatar continues to shape and reshape the spiritual, moral and theological imaginations of two generations. With the recent announcement of the Nickelodeon-backed Avatar Studios to expand and develop the Avatar Universe, one can be sure that Avatar will continue to be a cultural fixture in the years to come.

This volume then seeks to deeply engage with the Avatar Universe at the

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intersection of theology and philosophy. While we understand that Avatar draws heavily from several Eastern religions and traditions, we welcome contributions from any religious tradition responding to the material while respectfully acknowledging if the object of study is outside of their own tradition. We welcome engagement with religious, spiritual, moral, or aesthetic aspects of the franchise.

Contributors may write on any Avatar-related topic in theology, religious studies, and philosophy of religion, but we would be particularly interested in pieces that deal with the following topics:

- The Avatar Universe, Myth, and J. R. R. Tolkien
- The spirituality of bending styles and their real world Martial Art counterparts
- Spirituality, Civil Rights, and the Earth Kingdom oppression
- Katara and Feminist Theology
- Bending and Sacramental Theology
- Liberation Theology and Jet and the Freedom Fighters
- The political theology of the Equalizers
- Buddhist non-violence and Aang's pacifism
- Eastern and Western Buddhist aesthetics in Avatar
- Individual character studies of any of the major characters

#### Submission Guidelines:

If interested, please send an abstract of 300-700 words along with a CV to Michael Riggins at [Mriggins1999@gmail.com](mailto:Mriggins1999@gmail.com) and Anthony G. Cirilla at [Acirilla@cofo.edu](mailto:Acirilla@cofo.edu) by December 31st, 2021. Notifications of acceptance will be delivered no later than January 3rd, 2022. Final drafts of all chapters between 5,000 and 7,000 words (specifications to accompany notice of acceptance) will be due by March 31st, 2022, and any editorial revisions will be completed by May 31st, 2022.

#### Contact Info:

Contact Michael Riggins at [Mriggins1999@gmail.com](mailto:Mriggins1999@gmail.com) and Dr. Anthony Cirilla at [Acirilla@cofo.edu](mailto:Acirilla@cofo.edu)

#### Contact Email:

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