

CFP- Chapter abstracts for the edited collection “Depicting the afterlife: morality and religion in contemporary film and media
For possible inclusion as part of the Routledge Advances in Popular Culture Studies series)

As Garrett (2015) contends, popular cultural representations of the afterlife are a means of imaginatively and creatively grappling with the unknown. These representations can offer explanations about life after death or the in-between, to rationalize the existential, support and challenge religious doctrines, and entertain and educate so that society might live life to the fullest or feel assured that there is something more.

These popular cultural representations, then, present “a range of narratives, consumer choices, moral dispositions and selected rituals of conduct” (Saenz, 1992, p. 43), which people “may adopt, adapt, criticize or reject as components in our implicit knowledge” (Dant, 2012, p. 24). With media such as *The Good Place, Upload, The Inbetween, Afterlife of the Party, Coco, Soul, Reaper, Elsewhere, If I Stay, and Boo Bitch *(to name but a few), focused on the afterlife, it seems timely to explore the messages promulgated in such texts about morality and/or religion. This is especially given media can prompt questioning and reasoning that aids self-reflection (Hawkins, 2001) and integrates people into an established order offering models of appropriate ways of being (Krijen & Verboord, 2016).

Therefore, this collection aims to explore representations of morality and/or religion in 21st-century popular cultural texts that feature and emphasize the afterlife. It asks how the afterlife is understood but moreover, how are people encouraged to live their lives? Such aims will inevitably consider what place (if any) religion has in shaping popular cultural texts and understandings of the beyond, and what perceptions of morality are favoured and guide character story arcs. Ultimately this edited collection will contribute to a continued and growing discussion on the representations of morality, religion, and the afterlife in contemporary society.

Please send 300- word abstracts, including a title and short biography to Angelique Nairn angelique.nairn@aut.ac.nz by November 17th 2022.

Please note that the edited collection will not be published before 2024.

Possible topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Moral motivation/reasoning and life after death
- Dichotomies of Heaven and Hell
- Representations of the ‘soul’

- Cultural differences in constructions of the afterlife
- Depictions/constructions of the spiritual realm
- Ghosts, the paranormal, and the afterlife
- Religious motifs in texts that feature the afterlife
- Representations of Supreme Being(s)
- Notions of suffering and reward in the afterlife