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John Fraser was born in London. He wrote on and taught social and political theory (especially Marxism) in the UK, Canada and, after 1980, in Rome and Ferrari.

Since 1982 he has lived in Rome. He has also worked as a musician.

Also by John Fraser and published by AESOP Modern:

- Black Masks
- The Magnificent Wurlitzer
- The Observatory
- The Other Shore
- The Red Tank
- Runners

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Jacket art and design by Martin Noble, AESOP  
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John Fraser's *Medusa* is a stunning fable for our times, in which the stories of Medusa, the Gorgon and the French ship *Medusa* are intertwined to form a Pilgrim's Progress for the 21st century.

'*Medusa* is a trip, a bending of the legends, and a retelling. It is a symphonic poem, where at the end we even hear a few notes of a hymn to joy. The fragments of myth, legend and belief drift round like harmonies that seek resolution. But this mode is post-modern, post-Christian; it is about the end – yet there is no end: it is story. The resulting tale is an apocryphal blast and a literary tour de force that uncannily captures the zeitgeist.'

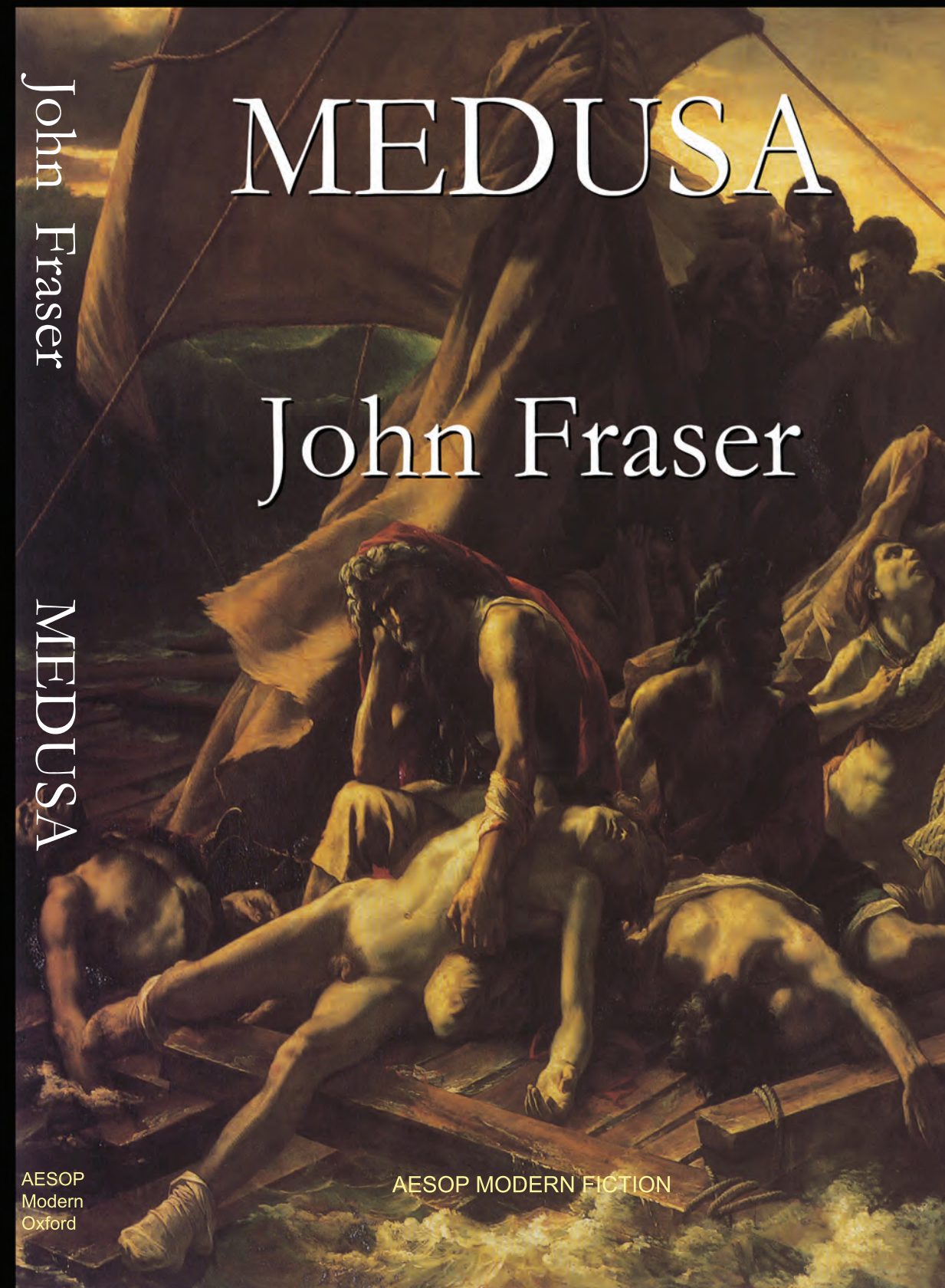
Jean-Paul Boulter

In Fraser's fiction the reader rides as on a switchback or luge of impetuous attention, with effects flashing by at virtuoso speeds. The characters seem to be unwitting agents of chaos, however much wise reflection Fraser bestows upon them; they move with shrugging self-assurance through circumstances as richly detailed and as without reliable compass-points as a Chinese scroll.

John Fuller

Front cover illustration: *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818–1819) by Jean-Louis-Théodore Géricault (Musée du Louvre).

Back cover illustration: *Alexander (Sikandar)* annuls the magic of the malevolent idol at the entrance to the ocean, while the wise Apollonius consults his astrolabe. Illustration by Bihzād to Nizāmi's *Alexander romance*, MS of the *Khamseh* copied for the emir 'Alī Fārsī Barlās, 1494–5, British Library Or.6810, fol. 225v.



AESOP Modern Oxford

AESOP MODERN FICTION

'The Western empire's sinking now, I go on. 'Civilisation's spread all round, it's just the same – and then we have this other fate, the planet's all screwed up, our species is endangered, should we just let it go – although, we have a stake ...

'Then there's the raft, we watch the grand *Medusa* going down – the storms, the waves, no water you can drink, nor air to breathe – the ship, you understand, is just not viable.

'A metaphor, you see, stands as you wish – for planet, or for just the Western empire. At any rate, down it all goes, and I'm the captain of the raft. A kind of prophet, if you like,' and I think, *On the raft*. Looking back. All turned to stone.

from *Medusa*

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