
Introduction

In this issue of *ARC* the non-thematic format of prior issues (i.e., volumes 23 and 24) remains, which, it has become customary to say, reflects the interreligious and interdisciplinary nature of religious studies. Charles Adams's Birks Lectures, "Religious Studies: Luxury or Necessity?" (featured here in article form), expand on the theme of the 1995 Birks Lectures, given by Douglas John Hall, which were published in the last issue of *ARC*. Looking to the scientific, moral, and theological implications of the study of religion, Adams seeks to demonstrate the importance and role of religious studies in the university, confronting various objections often put to religionists and theologians by fellow academics and administrators. Although Adams speaks to the concerns of the McGill community, the nature of his topic, which addresses a problem currently raging in North America, is such that those in the larger community will quickly identify with those concerns.

In "The Sacrifice of Feminine Eros in *Heavenly Creatures*," Alyda Faber invokes the competing theories of Georges Bataille and Jessica Benjamin on eros as important means of elucidating and critically engaging the tendenz of the film *Heavenly Creatures* (1994). Sean McEvenue's article provides a foretaste of the kind of exegesis we can expect from a proposed "International Catholic Bible Commentary," for which he serves as Old Testament editor—the commentary, scheduled for release in 1998, is being translated into several languages. What contemporary exegetes of the Bible need to concern themselves with, McEvenue argues, is the "original power" or "presence of God" in the text. Distinguished philosopher Merold Westphal voices a similar concern in his attempt to re-contextualize what he views as the secular face of postmodernism (i.e., Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Foucault, and Rorty) in "the theistic context" of Kant and Kierkegaard. Appropriators of postmodernism who are open to the claims of (Christian) faith need not despair that they have no access to the Truth; it is enough, Westphal counsels, that the Truth has access to them.

Turning to issues of ethics, Scott Kline compares and contrasts the discourse theories of Karl-Otto Apel and Wolfgang Huber, arguing that both viewpoints require (*pace* Apel) a *telos* to deem moral decisions

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responsible. In “The Emotive Body in the *Aṣṭayāmalilā* Festival: Pilgrimage Within to the Sacred Realm of Krishna,” A. Whitney Sanford describes the significance of a festival performed in India in 1992 and how it dramatizes the constitutive nature of the body, emotion, and physicality in the devotee’s participation in the eternal sport of Krishna. Harold Coward, Director of the newly established Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, University of Victoria, provides various timely programmatic suggestions about the study of religious pluralism in Canada. Lastly, but certainly not least, Gregory Baum fills out the largely neglected narrative of radical Protestant currents (i.e., Christian socialist movements) in Montreal during the thirties, forties, and fifties, bemoaning the fact that as of yet there exists no historical monograph of the Student Christian Movement on the McGill campus.

A fascinating array of book reviews has been brought together by Erin Runions, which continues to mirror the interdisciplinary mandate of *ARC*. Here, as in the former issue, we include the abstracts of dissertations from the faculty’s successful doctorandi in 1996–1997. We look forward to a future blossoming of the “Dissertation Abstracts” section, undertaken in the past on a national plane but discontinued for various practical reasons.

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