
Introduction

As the new editor-in-chief, it is my pleasure to introduce the 2004 issue of *ARC: The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University*. This issue features a variety of articles pertaining to theoretical and philosophical issues from religious studies. Readers will find that this collection of essays offers a cross-disciplinary perspective, not limited to one school of thought or understanding of academic research. Amidst this diversity, readers will encounter a variety of voices from academia, and their own respective questions, goals, and opinions as students and scholars. Methodologies represented in this year's issue include comparative religion, history of religion, theo-linguistics, and philosophy of religion.

For purposes of organization, I have arranged this collection of papers into three topical sections. Within each of these sections, the papers share some thematic and methodological similarities. The first section is entitled Hope in Cynical Times because each of these papers, in some way or another, offers a philosophical critique of the negativity and despair found in society today. The second section is entitled History and Hermeneutics because these papers touch on the role of interpretation in studying and constructing the histories of religion. Finally, the third section is called Religion and Discourse Theory because it includes papers concerned with literary theory and the linguistic analysis of religious texts. Next, I will briefly identify the papers comprising each section.

In section one, Hope in Cynical Times, we present four essays that examine a variety of topics, such as the meaning of happiness, the problem of evil, apocalypticism in popular culture, and the role of higher education in fostering a spirituality of well being. First, Catherine Smith examines the relationship between personal narrative and resilience in St. Augustine's Confessions. Smith argues that the Augustinian understanding of space and time is the basis for constructing a philosophy of hope in the modern

world. In our second paper, Michel G. Einstein critically examines *Left Behind*, a best-selling series of novels written by two Christian ministers from the United States. In his paper, Einstein consults the work of Deleuze and Guattari, in order to deconstruct the negative influences of capitalism upon contemporary Evangelical Christianity. In our third paper, Dr. Barbara E. Galli examines how the Parable of the Ring is a theodicy from the perspectives of Abraham Abulafia and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Dr. Galli contends that both Abulafia and Lessing have “cast their imaginations into a future of redemptive peace” through this folktale. Finally, in our fourth paper, Rachel Charlop-Powers examines the “phenomenon of unhappy undergraduate university students”. To correct this problem, Charlop-Powers argues for creating a model of pedagogy based upon holistic health.

In section two, History and Hermeneutics, we have four essays that focus upon understanding the social context, intellectual background, and institutional development of special topics from the history of religion. In our fifth paper, Emma Anderson critically examines the earliest contacts between Christian missionaries and aboriginal peoples living along the St. Lawrence River Valley in seventeenth-century North America. Anderson looks at the biography of an Innu man from that time period and documents his struggles with religious and cultural alienation. In this issue's sixth paper, Arlene MacDonald sketches the historical development of *The Nutcracker Christmas* ballet. MacDonald argues that the *Nut*'s emergence and endurance as a public artifact is due to its ability to mold the hallowed symbols of modernity into a mass mediated expression of public sacrality that appeals to pluralistic, contemporary audiences. In our seventh paper, Dr. Young-Gwan Kim historically documents how Karl Barth's theology was introduced and adapted by the Reformed churches in Korea. Dr. Kim argues that “Korean Christianity is strikingly a Confucian-influenced Christianity and therefore that Confucianism has played a very important role in the reception of Barth's theology in Korea”. Finally, in our eighth paper, Harold Penner examines the work of two major figures from twentieth-century theology, Rudolf Bultmann and Reinhold Niebuhr. Penner argues that the concept of myth is very important for understanding how Bultmann and Niebuhr approached the subject of eschatology in their respective theologies.

Section three, Religion and Discourse Theory, consists of four papers that explore religious language from various viewpoints, including semiotics, pragmatics, and cognitive linguistics. In our ninth paper, Dr. Noel Heather proposes an ecclesial typology for Christianity based upon social practice. Dr. Heather's essay places post-liberal theology in critical dialogue with cognitive linguistics. In our tenth paper, Dr. Annabelle Mooney conducts a close text analysis of letters to the editor from the Jehovah's Witnesses publication *Awake!*. Mooney finds that such letters are kind of witnessing that display to the community, as well as to oneself and to non-members what it means to be a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses. In our eleventh paper, Dr. Jean-Pierre van Noppen examines the 'transforming words' of John Wesley from a CDA (critical discourse analysis) perspective. Dr. Van Noppen defends Wesley from his Marxist critics and concludes that the message of early Methodism was not manipulative of the working masses. Our final paper is by Christophe Brabant, a junior research fellow from the 'Theology in a Postmodern Context' research group in Belgium. Drawing from the philosophical work of Paul Ricoeur, Brabant's article examines the etymological significance of religious experience.

In sum, this year's issue brings diverse methods, perspectives, and voices together, providing a general forum for discussing current research in religious studies. Readers will encounter papers from both graduate and undergraduate students alongside the work of established scholars. In keeping with the lineage of the previous thirty-one issues of *ARC*, this volume strives to be a venue for dialogue and collegiality between scholars and students. We have an international gathering of contributors in this issue, featuring authors from Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. This volume also includes a generous collection of book review articles, several of which are extended essays. We hope that our subscribers will find this edition to be stimulating and insightful.

I want to give recognition to a number of people without whom this year's *ARC* issue would not be possible. My editorial team, consisting of the assistant editor, Harold Penner, and the book review editors, Melissa Curley and Adrian Langdon, has been outstanding in its competence. They have all been enthusiastic and supportive. In addition, this editorial team received consultation from various anonymous individuals who

contributed their time to the refereeing process. Next, I want to thank the administrative staff from the Faculty of Religious Studies, including Luvana Difrancesco, Kathleen MacDonald, Deborah McSorley, Peggy Roger, Shelly-Ann Soares-Blackwood and Samieun Khan, for their help in diverse matters of this journal's production. I wish to express my thanks to both Professor Gerbern Oegema and Dean Barry Levy for their sponsorship and assistance this past year. In gratitude, I acknowledge the editorial assistance of my predecessor Phil Tite. Finally, my thanks goes to Willow at Leographic who prepared this volume for publication.

Warren Kappeler

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