

## Editors' Introduction

Since Plato's *Symposium*, where flight from the allure of bodily things was presented as a necessary stage in the attainment of wisdom, the question of the role of the body in the spiritual life of the human being has been the object of considered reflection. The present collection of essays seeks to address a number of aspects and stages of the history of philosophical and theological reflection on embodiment. The articles in this collection represent and investigate a variety of religio-philosophical traditions, attesting to the universality of the problem of embodiment.

We are delighted to publish an invited contribution by Ola Sigurdson, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, a leading scholar in theological somatology and co-editor of *The Body Unbound: Philosophical Perspectives on Politics, Embodiment, and Religion* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010). In "Religious Embodiment Between Medicine and Modernity," originally delivered as a keynote address for the European Society for the Philosophy of Religion, Sigurdson reflects upon the effect of the development of modern medicine on attitudes towards the human body, detecting a quest for human immortality in the early-modern mechanization of the body. Sigurdson concludes that "essential to any discussion of religious embodiment or embodied religion is both some kind of historical genealogy of religion as well as of the body, and a philosophical or theological account that tries to lay bare how we always already exist bodily in ways that cannot reduce our embodiment to a manipulable object."

We are also delighted to offer to the reader several peer-reviewed contributions on a number of themes related to the concept of embodiment:

In "The Method-and-Wisdom Model of the Medical Body," Vesna A. Wallace (UCSB) discusses the treatment of the body in Mongolian Buddhist medicine, proposing that the Method-and-Wisdom model "emphasizes integration rather than a reductionistic process, and it seeks to show the

structures and levels at which various psychophysiological functions operate through their immense and complicated networks and interactions.”

In “The Faithful Departed,” David Givens (University of Pittsburgh) explores the issue of religious embodiment under the aspect of human illness, illustrating how saints identified as patron saints of those afflicted with illness, as well as patron saints who themselves suffered from illness associated with the exercise of their apostolate, are coming also to be identified specifically as patron saints for people living with HIV/AIDS.

In “The Embodiment of Fear,” Julie B. Deluty (New York University) explores the ways in which Ugaritic literature addresses the experience of fear, investigating the role of embodiment of fear in the generation of hierarchical social dynamics.

In “Reconsidering Religious Experience,” Alessandro Lazzarelli (National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan), examining the role of the body in specifically religious experience, develops a phenomenology of religious experience, contending that “the attempt to emphasize either the emotional or the cognitive aspect of religious experience fails to capture the relationship between felt and discursive ways of knowledge, that is, how consciousness is embodied.”

In “The Body of Christ as the Instrument of Timing,” Timothy Watt (University of Massachusetts) discusses John Milton’s work *Paradise Regained*, proposing that the concept of *kairos*, or right timing, is crucial for understanding the obedience of the Son in response to the temptations of the devil. Christ’s obedience consists in his self-orchestration according to God’s concept of timeliness: “all the temptations are one temptation: the temptation to transgress the will of God, to be disobedient, in terms of *kairos*, to either rush or drag, either way to be out of step with the timing of the will of God. Thus, the Son waits, saying, ‘All things are best fulfilled in their due time, / And time there is for all things, truth hath said.’”

In addition to these peer-reviewed articles, we have the opportunity to present to the reader a number of contributions to the recent McGill Centre for Research on Religion Graduate Students’ Conference on *Personhood, Practice, and Transformation: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives* (McGill University, October 2012). In this volume we have included the keynote address by Ravi Ravindra, Professor Emeritus at Dalhousie

University in Nova Scotia. We have also included two papers from the conference to introduce to the reader some of the many topics discussed at the conference: Daniel Robinson (Graduate Theological Union) discusses the commonalities between the Christian personalisms of Max Scheler and Christos Yannaras, and Daniel Wood (Villanova University) compares Blondel's and Hegel's respective treatments of the relation between God and acts of volition.

We are also pleased to be able to present to the reader a number of reviews of recent scholarly publications.

There are many people whose invaluable assistance in the publication of this volume we must acknowledge. We are indebted to the members of the *Arc* advisory board, Dean Ellen Aitken and Prof. Gerbern S. Oegema, as well as to the staff at the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University who have liaised with us to bring this journal to publication: Samieun Khan, Francesca Maniaci, Deborah McSorley, and Alex Sokolov. We received 23 article submissions, of which we ultimately accepted 5 for publication in this volume (this represents an acceptance rate of 21.7%), and we are deeply grateful for the assistance of all those who served on the peer-review board for this volume: James Benn (McMaster), Donald Boisvert (Concordia), Kenneth Borris (McGill), Giovanni Burgos (McGill), Wayne Hankey (Dalhousie), John-Paul Himka (Alberta), Victor Hori (McGill), Torrance Kirby (McGill), Patricia Kirkpatrick (McGill), C. Pierce Salguero (Penn State), Ian Wood (University of Leeds), and Michael Zheltov (Moscow). Finally, we truly appreciate the inestimable forbearance of our respective spouses in helping us to balance our various academic, editorial, and familial obligations.