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Volume 28, Nos. 1 & 2

Religion, Activism, & Social Change

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Change and Transition

An Introduction by the Editor

When we first drafted the call for papers for the current edition, one of the themes we had in mind was social change as a catalyst for particular forms of activism, the effect of trans-national politics and globalization, the erosion of local cultures, as well as the role of new media in the sharing of ideas. We were also interested in seeing how scholars are affected by or respond to modern issues involving politics, identity and social justice. How are societies responding to changes, and what are the challenges that our current political system is faced with in attempting to rectify forms of social injustice? What are the methodological and ethical problems scholars are confronted with when conducting research? How are current inquiries in the humanities and social sciences attempting to address some of the current problems or reflections of it?

The following volume offers insight into current, nuanced forms of activism, and strives to bring a level of awareness on the events and social changes and resistance that are shaping our current cultures. While social activists and their opponents have been passionately marching and enlisting their audiences for their causes, scholars have been examining and interpreting the nuances of the current events.

While there are no simple answers to modern social, international and political issues, we hope that the following volume will shine a different light to the topic of activism as well as social changes.

The first article of Volume 28, no. 1, *Religion in the Art of Colonial Resistance: Hinduism and the Struggle for Indian Sovereignty, 1870-1920*, by Katja Rieck, discusses the role that Hinduism played in resisting forms of colonialism in India in the late nineteen and early twentieth century. The author demonstrates how modern-Hinduism centered in its own culture and forms of religiosity to make room for an authentic form of life, which consequently served to supplant the models that Western civilization had imposed.

Twenty-First-Century Looting, Academic Ethics, & The Antiquities Market in Egypt by Chance Bonar looks at the network of workers in the field antiquaries in Egypt in contrast to recent socio-economical changes in Egypt. In doing so, the examination focuses on the impact that these social-changes brought to Egyptian archaeological sites and museums, as well as the excavators, dealers, collectors and first-hand merchants. As such, the article frames instances of looting and the destruction of archaeological sites as side-effects of social changes.

Take it Like a Man: The Marriage Commissioners Reference, Masculinity, and Law's Private/Public Parts by Connor Steele looks at three cases in which a public officials refused to perform their duty of officiating same-sex civil marriages and the legal debate over the constitutionality of it at the Supreme Court of Saskatchewan, Canada. The author frames this debate through the queer theory as presented by Clarke and Edelman, challenging the assumption that the public sphere is asexual and nonreligious.

The JRC is also introducing a new section titled *In Conversation* where we interview contemporary scholars about their recent work and issues that pertain to their research. The goal of this new segment is to profile innovative and exciting research while providing an alternative way for our readers to connect with current scholarship. For our inaugural *In Conversation* section, we interviewed Emily Suzanne Johnson from Ball State University over her recent book, *This is Our Message: Women's Leadership in the New Christian Right*. This interview addresses the events that inspired the author, while also bringing to light some of the challenges found when writing about women involved in the Christian right.

In Volume 28, no. 2, « *Se changer soi pour changer le monde* », *entre spiritualité et innovations sociales : Le cas des créatifs culturels*, by Julia Ite, addresses new spiritual movements that emerged in the late Twenty and early Twenty-First century in North America. The author argues that the generation labelled as *créatifs culturels* have founded their moral and political engagement in part on their spiritual quest.

Black Femmes Black Gods: Magic as Justice, by Marcelitte Failla, examines the usage of black magic in African-derived religious practices as a form of healing and grieving violence inflicted upon queers and trans communities in the twenty-first century. Through an intersectional lens and a post-colonial historical inquiry, the author introduces the use of black magic as a weapon for resistance and quest for social change, but most importantly as a space for survival.

Monster Theory and Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John, by Tyler Smith, addresses the notion of the “other” through a narrative lens, focusing on the discourse between the protagonist and antagonist. The author is interested in addressing the portrayal of the “other” as an archetype of Monster, paying particular attention to the accusation of antisemitism that has been placed against this text. As such, the author claims that the text needs to be historically situated in the years that followed the destruction of the temple to understand the accusation brought against the Jews by members of their own community. Conclusively, the author advises that the monsters to watch out for are not the ones found in the text but rather, those who use the text to justify antisemitism and violent acts.

The second section *In Conversation* details Melissa M. Wilcox recent book *Queer Nuns: Religion, Activism, and Serious Parody* (2018), where she also talks about her career, activism and her insight in the study of religion.

Finally, I would like to thank our small but diligent staff; Lindsey Jackson, Laurel Andrew, T. Scarlet Jory, Ana Mota de Soussa, and Maryam Amirdust. A big warm and special thank Alexander Nachaj, former editor-in-chief, for all his advice and help. This publication would not have been possible without their continuous work and support. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

We are excited to present you this current issue, and we hope you enjoy it. Bonne lecture!

Joseph E. Brito
Editor-in-Chief