

# JR | RELIGION & CULTURE C

Volume 28, Nos. 1 & 2

Religion, Activism, & Social Change

JR  
C

The JRC would like to acknowledge the support of sponsors  
from within the Concordia University community:

Dean of Students  
Concordia Council on Student Life Special Projects Committee (CCSL)  
The Department of Religion and Culture  
Graduate Student Association

We would also like to offer our special thanks to:  
Dr. Carly Daniel-Hughes, our very supportive department Chair;  
Tina Montandon and Munit Merid, administrators extraordinaire;  
all of our referees, readers and everyone else who gave their time to  
the publication of this journal.



# RELIGION & CULTURE

*A Peer-Reviewed Graduate Journal*

2019 Volume 28, Nos. 1 & 2

## *Journal Committee*

### *Executive Committee*

Joseph E. Brito  
Lindsey Jackson  
T. Scarlet Jory  
Laurel Andrew

*Editor-in-Chief*  
*Article Editor*  
*Article Editor*  
*Book Review Editor*

### *Editorial Board*

Maryam Amirdust  
Taylor Roberts Carleton  
Kelly Norah Drukker  
Elyse MacLeod  
Alexander Nachaj  
Purna Roy  
Ana Mota de Souza

### *Faculty Advisors*

Rachel Berger  
Carly Daniel-Hughes  
André Gagné  
Hillary Kaell  
Marc Lalonde  
Steven Lapidus  
Leslie Orr

The Journal of Religion and Culture (JRC) is proudly produced  
by the Graduate Students of the Department of Religions and Cultures  
at Concordia University.

© 2019 Journal of Religion and Culture,  
Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

ISSN 1198-6395  
Journal of Religion and Culture Volume 28, no. 1 (2019)  
Journal of Religion and Culture Volume 28, no. 2 (2019)

All rights reserved. No part of this journal may be used or reproduced in any matter  
without the express written permission of the editors except in the case of brief quotations  
embedded in critical articles and reviews.

For more information:  
Journal of Religion and Culture  
Department of Religions and Cultures (FA-101)  
Concordia University  
1455 de Maisonneuve O.,  
Montreal, Quebec  
H3G 1M8

JRC logo design: Christopher Burkart  
Book design: Joseph E. Brito  
The type face of this journal is Minion Pro,  
designed by Robert Slimbach,  
issued as a digital Open Type font  
by Adobe Systems, Mountain View California, 2000.

## Content

- 9      *Change and Transition: An Introduction by the Editor*  
Joseph E. Brito

### Articles

- 15      *Religion in the Art of Colonial Resistance: Hinduism  
and the Struggle for Indian Sovereignty, 1870-1920*  
Katja Rieck
- 50      *Twenty-First-Century Looting, Academic Ethics,  
and The Antiquities Market in Egypt*  
Chance Bonar
- 81      *Take it Like A Man: The Marriage Commissioners Reference,  
Masculinity, and Law's Private/Public Parts*  
Connor Steele

### In Conversation

- 105      *Emily Suzanne Johnson, Ball State University*  
By Lindsey Jackson

### Book Reviews

- 113      *Paranormal America: Ghost Encounters, UFO Sightings,  
Bigfoot Hunts, and Other Curiosities in Religion and Culture*  
Alexander Nachaj, reviewer.
- 116      *Practices of Selfhood*  
Elliot Mason, reviewer.

## Content

### *Articles*

- 123    « *Se changer soi pour changer le monde* », *entre spiritualité et innovations sociales: Le cas des créatifs culturels*  
Julia Itel
- 139    *Black Femmes Black Gods: Magic as Justice*  
Marcelitte Failla
- 156    *Monster Theory and Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John*  
Tyler Smith

### *In Conversation*

- 178    *Melissa M. Wilcox, University of California*  
Laurel Andrew

### *Book Reviews*

- 186    *Jewish Radical Feminism: Voices from the Women's Liberation Movement*  
Lindsey Jackson, reviewer.
- 189    *The Unbound God: Slavery and the Formation of Early Christian Thought*  
Joseph E. Brito, reviewer.

***The Unbound God: Slavery and the Formation of Early Christian Thought.*** Chris L. de Wet. London, UK/New York, NY: Routledge. 2018. xii + 178 pages. \$145.00 CND (Hardcover).

Chris L. de Wet's recent book, *The Unbound God: Slavery and the Formation of Early Christian Thought*, examines early theoretical and philosophical Christian discourses on slavery. De Wet focuses on patristic and apocryphal literature to demonstrate the complexity of historical Christian thinking about slavery. Expanding on some of the topics presented in his previous work (2015), the author explores three important avenues: the language of slavery regarding the figure of Christ, the figure of the Holy Spirit, and the origin of slavery according to early patristic sources. His work is divided into five chapters, although chapters two to four are where the reader will find new and significant material of exploration.

The first chapter introduces the reader to the main debates in the topic of Roman slavery and early Christian discourses regarding it. De Wet unpacks the terminology that scholars use, the characteristics of Roman slavery, how early Christians talked about slavery (through metaphors and comparison in liturgical and theological discourses), and how historical texts suggest that Christians acted towards slaves. The second half of this chapter addresses the metaphor "slave to God." De Wet argues that while this metaphor is supposed to be understood as a comparison, many Christians took it literally (pg. 13), or as a lifestyle (pg. 21-29). De Wet thus uncovers facets showing how slavery formed (and perhaps informed) the notion of self-identity in early Christian literature. The author presents examples from *The Testament of Solomon*, *The Acts of Thomas*, *The Book of Steps*, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, and the *Life of Febronia*, where the notion of slavery is presented in the spiritual world and reflected onto the material world.

Chapter two, "Savior or Slave: Philippians 2:6-11 and the Problem of Slavery in Origen's Christology," focuses on the figure of Jesus by concentrating on the Christological hymn found in Philippians 2:6-11, in which Jesus abandons his divine nature and takes the form of a slave (*doulos*). In the first half of this chapter, the author presents



Plato's understanding of slavery as connected to cosmology and embodiment (pg. 42). Yet, using the metaphor of slavery as a way to understand power structures in antiquity has repercussions beyond the cosmological and philosophical spheres. Slavery metaphors also impact the political sphere, creating hierarchies of deities and thus justifying authority by association to certain groups of priests and followers over others. This perspective has therefore supported the idea of a need for tyrannical leaders over subjects (pg. 44). According to Plato, slaves needed guidance and to be ruled since they lacked proper reason, otherwise they would fall into chaotic state (Pg. 44). Therefore, there is a fundamental link between slaves (*doulos*) and ruler (*arche*) that informed early Christian leaders and theologians. Following this, de Wet demonstrates that Origen's interpretation of Philippians 2:6 was founded on Plato's philosophy and its dependence on the concept of slavery. The argument presented is that Origen avoided linking Jesus' pre-incarnation existence with slavery motifs. The author draws on interpretations offered by Tatian and Bardaisan of Edessa, who also argued that the pre-existence of souls either were drawn to God and thus enjoyed liberty, or rejected God and moved away from Him, gravitating downward in the cosmological hierarchy, becoming colder and consequently inheriting the form of a slave. For this reason, Origen found it difficult to conceive of Jesus as a slave because of the corporeal consequences of souls that scolded God, and the punishment that awaited them in the afterlife.

In chapter 3, "Emancipating the Spirit: Slavery and Early Christian Pneumatology in Eunomius and Basil of Caesarea," de Wet focuses on how early Christian discourses understood the role of Holy Spirit. The author argues that early Christian discourses on the Holy Spirit were rooted in debates about spiritual hierarchy. For de Wet, the concept of slave and master was a helpful conceptual metaphor, positioning the different aspects of the divine (Father, Son, and Spirit) in relation to demons to reflect the earthly power dynamics between master and servants. The author examines *The Shepherd of Hermas*, and presents the theological debates between Eunomius and Basil of Caesarea arguing about the identify of Jesus as slave versus servant, and the repercussions of these respective claims on the dominant society.

In chapter 4, “The Curse of Ham (Gen. 9:18-27): Slavery, Sin, and Punishment in John Chrysostom, Augustine, and the Cave of Treasures,” de Wet demonstrates the nuances of how Christian discourses on slavery and its *doulology* (that is, the “enunciative process in which slavery and mastery operate together as a concept ‘to think/communicate with’” (pg. 8)) influenced the perception on slavery. The author presents John Chrysostom’s and Augustine’s interpretations of the story on the curse of Ham by his father Noah, found in Genesis 9:18-27. The argument presented is that the institution of slavery influenced the conceptual view of sin. Although slavery was perceived as being a punishment for the sins of Adam, Eve, and Ham, slavery itself was not considered a sin; rather, enslavement to sin was considered a much worse state than slavery itself. For Chrysostom and Augustine, slavery to sin forced one to become a slave to Satan, and as such transformed itself into secular slavery. Slaves to sin became secular slaves, and in this role, they had a way out by being guided and dominated by their masters into living ethical lives. The punishment of the slave, therefore, became justifiable, echoing models of good slaves and bad slaves as found in the New Testament. De Wet warns readers not to assume that because early Christian discourses asked slave owners to treat their slaves justly that the institution of slavery was ameliorated. Instead, he argues, we should look at a form of perpetuation of an oppressive system through both extremes; moderate and excessive treatments.

De Wet’s work is of great importance for the field of early Christianity and its relation to Roman slavery. *The Unbound God* introduces bodies of literature that have rarely been explored in such depth. Perhaps, the only question the reader might have is the missing link between the three main chapters as well as how they connect to create a whole. Otherwise, the author’s application of historiography, gender theories, conceptual blending theory, identity discourse, as well as his treatment of apocryphal and patristic literature provides a rich and engaging work that is insightful and refreshing.

Joseph E. Brito  
Concordia University