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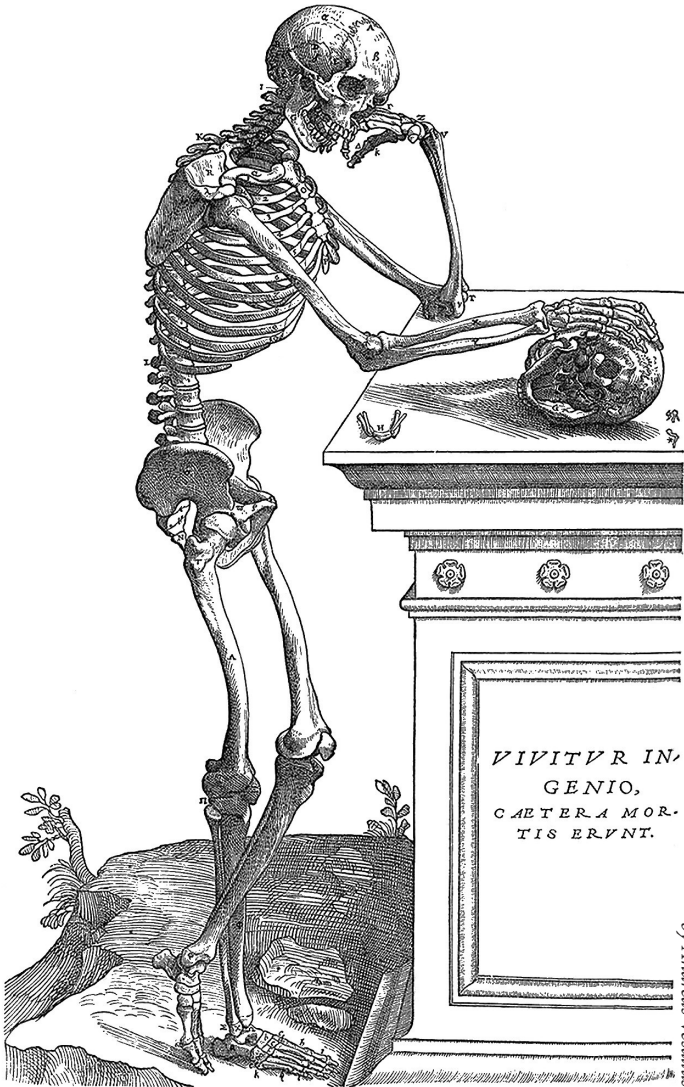
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by Andreas Vesalius

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On this Body of Work

An introduction by the Editor

I thought this would begin differently. Perhaps I'd open with a pun, say something witty about bodies, or trade provocations with a single word. But that was when I first began writing the introduction to this volume, back in the early Fall Semester of 2015, before the odd email we received from our department administrator one fine morning not unlike the others.

The message was simple. There had been a break-in over the weekend in our building. One of the professor's offices had shown signs of forcible entry; an office that shared a lonely corner of a lonely hallway next to ours. One door away from ours. A few footsteps, nothing more. It was one of those moments where your skin seemed to crawl. Sometimes the premonitions we fear come true after all.

Our publication editor, Joseph, was the first to confirm the break-in at our office, while I arrived later that afternoon. Seeing the very *body of the JRC* battered and beaten, papers, books—its very innards—strewn about like discarded waste, felt a remarkably gruesome scene to witness. Of course, the very literal violence inflicted against our office was only secondary to the intruder's cause. They escaped with our laptops, drank the bottle of Kosher wine we kept on the shelf—a leftover from a previous celebration—and even pilfered our drawers for the loose pile of AA batteries that rolled freely at the back of our desk.

And with that, I knew there would be no edition sent to the printers that fall. And so began the delays. And delays. But ultimately, recovery.

But enough with my clumsy metaphors of bodies and violence. Violence, after all, is slated to be the topic of our forthcoming 2017 edition. So let's not linger a moment longer on moments better left in the past. On to better things.

2016 marks the publication of the 26th volume of the JRC, and what an edition it turned out to be. Bodies, sex, gender and all the slippery, messy, wonderful things we've learned to appreciate between the sheets, lie be-

tween these sheets. As a double edition, we've stuffed these pages with more articles, reviews and little extras than one would normally witness from a tiny little publication at a university often overshadowed by its peers. Somewhere amid all this text, scholars, interested parties, and readers of bodies in general should find something to satiate their appetites for the academically carnal.

We also begin the second volume of this edition with a special, and personal tribute to a longtime professor, sometimes department chair, and all around exemplary man of the cloth and written word, Dr. Donald L. Boisvert. Donald has acted as a mentor and inspiration not only to this editor, instilling in my younger academic self a love for saints, their bodies, and ultimately pushing me towards the PhD I am now undertaking, but to many more here in the Department of Religion at Concordia University (not to mention a past Editor in Chief or two).

Donald has led us to places where even the brave sometimes dare not go, into our wardrobes and under the skirts of Gods and Saints. We hope his slow retreat from academia finds him well.

In this edition, we are pleased to publish the following peer-reviewed works:

“Feminization and Authority in Thomas of Celano's First Life of Francis Assisi” by Gina Froese, visits Thomas of Celano's rendition of the life of Francis examining the gendered language used to construct the religious authority of the saint and the possible implications it may have hold for how the author and his community viewed women.

“Miasma and Sexual Intercourse in the Ancient Greek World: a Literature Review” by Spyridon Loumakis, also takes us back to a time and place where this journal seldom visits. Bearing in mind the work of Mary Douglas, we examine differing concepts of bodily purity and impurity with a focus on ancient Greece.

“Using a Thorn to Dig Out a Thorn: A Buddhist Laywoman's Response to Gender Ideology in Late Imperial China” by Christopher Byrne, swings this journal to a period and place seldom examined in gender studies, exploring the poetry of the Buddhist laywoman Tao Shan as a tool for other women in her socio-historic context to respond to dominant gender ideologies.

“The Courage to Be Yourself: A Que(e)rying of Contemporary Protestant Existentialist Theology” by Jordan Wadden, takes us on a journey through the queer feminist hermeneutics of Marcella Althaus-Reid and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza towards an exegesis of Paul Tillich's work *The Courage to Be*.

“The Reproduction of Saint Sebastian as a Queer Martyr in *Suddenly, Last Summer and Lilies*” by Nikola Stepić, examines how the figure of the martyr Saint Sebastian is evoked, appropriated and deployed in the works of director John Greyson and American poet and playwright Tennessee Williams.

“Discipleship and Gender in The Gospel of Thomas: A Narrative Analysis of Salome and Mariam Through The Implicit Narrator” by Joseph E. Brito, revisits everyone's favourite non-canonical gospel and offers a new approach for understanding the narrator's use of gender and gendered characters in the text.

In addition to the above listed works, we have also included in this publication the following book reviews of recent publications:

The Christ Child in Medieval Culture: Alpha es et O! edited by Mary Dzon and Theresa M. Kenney. Review by Daniel Sáenz.

Becoming Women: The Embodied Self in Image Culture by Carla Rice. Review by Ashely L. Crouch.

Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages edited by P. H. Cullum, and Katherine J. Lewis. Review by Alexander Nachaj.

Mortality and Music: Popular Music and the Awareness of Death by Christopher Partridge. Review by Jeremy Cohen.

Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts by Brittany E. Wilson. Review by Alexander Nachaj.

Muslims in the Western Imagination by Sophia Rose Arjana. Review by Parnia Vafaieikia.

Humanism: Essays on Race, Religion, and Popular Culture by Anthony B. Pinn. Review by Amin Mansouri.

Pastrami on Rye: An Overstuffed History of the Jewish Deli by Ted Merwin. Review by Claire English.

We also begin the second volume of this edition with a special, and personal, tribute to Dr. Boisvert and his career, composed by our department's very own Dr. Steven Lapidus.

As some parting words, we of the JRC would like to acknowledge and thank the Concordia Council on Student Life (CCSL) and its Special Project Committee for their funding support which made this edition possible. In spite of severe funding cuts wrought by the university's austerity measures, we have near-miraculously been able to continue printing the bodies of our work the old-fashioned way, with ink and paper. There's simply something about touch, the tactile sensation, that electronic editions are unable to convey.

We would also like to thank: Noémie Jean-Bourgeault (you can look up her artwork at <http://www.noemie-jb.com/> as well as <https://www.facebook.com/creationsno>) for her permission to display her artwork for this edition; Ethel Gamache, the Religion Librarian at Concordia University, for continually stocking our library with editions of the JRC; all our peer-reviewers in the department, those brave professors who go out of their way to read, review, and criticize the papers we flood their inboxes with and whose stamp of approval makes the JRC a credible peer-reviewed journal; our readers and editors, for volunteering time out of their busy academic schedules to relieve us of our burdens; and anyone else who went out of their way, willingly contributed or otherwise "found the time" to help this volunteer enterprise keep its head above the rising waters.

Lastly, I would like to personally thank and acknowledge outgoing book reviews editor Anthony Easton for his years of work and support, and the other executive editors of this edition: Elyse MacLeod, Joseph E. Brito and Georgia Carter. Editing can sometimes seem like a thankless job. At least there's beer.

Alexander Nachaj
JRC Editor-in-Chief, April 2016