

## Introduction

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## Introduction

*Illumine* is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal produced by the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS) Graduate Students Association at the University of Victoria. The journal provides a forum for graduate work that contemplates religious and other spiritual and philosophical systems enmeshed in diverse cultural, societal, temporal, and geographic settings. This fifth issue of *Illumine* explores the many ways in which spirituality and ideology are reflected in assorted cultural products such as art, literature, oral histories, and print media.

Beverly Bouma uses the ethnographic method of interviewing to examine the everyday, lived experiences of feminist Christian women in relation to Biblical texts in her article “Jesus Was a Feminist: An Institutional Ethnography of Feminist Christian Women.” The author explores the variety of responses provided by competing discourses associated with feminist and Christian institutions.

Alison Campbell examines the art work of Jim Logan, who challenges tradition through his incorporation of First Nations imagery into significant Christian works in the Western art canon. Campbell addresses this dualism by means of post-colonial analysis in her article “Beer Bottles and Saints: A Postcolonial Reading of Jim Logan’s *Let Us Compare Miracles* from His *Classical Aboriginal Series*.”

In “The Popes and the Cold War: Examining Encyclical Evidence and the Evolution of their *Ostpolitik* 1945–1990,” Robert Dennis provides discussion about the changing nature of the Vatican’s *ostpolitik*. Dennis separates his paper into historical periods beginning with the papal rule of Pope Pius XII in 1945 and ending in the midst of Pope John Paul II’s rule in 1990. He uses encyclical evidence to understand the contemporary Vatican’s position on the Cold War.

Cynthia Korpan takes a look at *The Tale of the Nativity*, a composite narrative about the birth of Christ. The author utilizes textual and visual analysis to highlight the role that animals played in the retelling of this story by a group of Okanagan children from the Nk’Mip Reserve in British Columbia during the 1930s. The article is fittingly called “The Role of Animals in *The Tale of the Nativity*: A Textual and Visual Analysis.”

Bronwen Magrath conducts a comparative case study of Alsatian and Algerian classrooms to reveal how the French government sought to strengthen the

Republic by fostering patriotism among youths during the interwar period. In her article “Conflict in the Classroom: Religion and Republicanism in Algeria and Alsace, 1918–1940,” Magrath concentrates on the way cultural identities were created and recreated in education policy so as to demonstrate how individuals and groups on all sides of the colonizing relationship interacted.

Carolyn Salomons discovers the linkages between premodern and postmodern texts in such areas as the construction and maintenance of power, as well as in the varieties of resistant experience. The author explores and compares different examples of resistance found in St. Augustine, the desert fathers, the mystics, and the “little saints” of Aquitaine from the postmodernists. The article is titled “What the Age Demanded: Power and Resistance in Premodern and Postmodern.”

Janice Young, in “A Spider Woman Story,” explores Spider Woman, the Cosmic Weaver, as a healing symbol and image of empowerment. The author traces the emergence of Spider Woman in her many cross-cultural manifestations and textile metaphors, and links this to the “gynocentric language” and new linguistic landscape evident in contemporary women’s writing.

The essays in this issue contain thoughtful discussions of ideologies, practices, and expressions that permeate the lives of people in distant places at divergent times. The vitality of the contributions is a testament to the scholarly inspiration that awaits those who venture into the entanglements of religion and society.

The CSRS graduate student fellows who formed the editorial board for this issue would like to express sincere thanks to all of the contributors for the effort they took to make their pieces so expressive and engaging, as well as to those students who contributed submissions that were not published. Support from the CSRS and its administrative staff, Moira Hill, Susan Karim, and Leslie Kenny, were central to the completion of this project.

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For the Editorial Board, November 2006