
Editor's Introduction

Since we began publication in 2007, the editors of the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* have sought to consistently provide our readers with excellent and diverse research on the religion/nature/culture nexus. With this issue, we are happy to continue this theme of theoretical, methodological, and geographic diversity.

The issue begins with Michael Hughes' account of a 1921 trip by British writer Stephen Graham and American poet Vachel Lindsay through Montana's Glacier National Park. Analyzing their works, Hughes finds that both writers (popular in their own time but perhaps less well-known today) envisioned their adventure as a kind of Thoreauvian journey to discover deeper spiritual meanings in the wild. Graham and Lindsey viewed excursions into remote places as potential cures for the spiritual maladies of modern life. Still, as Hughes concludes, Graham and Lindsey broke in important ways from other contemporary wilderness advocates, thus making them unique voices from early twentieth-century nature writing for contemporary scholars of religions, wilderness, and literature to consider.

Our next article moves from the mountains of Montana to fishing villages of Mali. Dianna Bell presents ethnographic data from Muslim villagers in the West African nation who have historically depended upon fishing and agriculture for their livelihoods. With decreased and inconsistent river flow due to climatic changes, these villagers are turning to religion to help understand and explain their new challenges. Bell's article provides an examination of the regional impacts of climate change along with a study of localized religious perceptions of global ecological and political processes. Following Bell's regional study, Gillian Tan's article turns to a theoretical discussion of the 'ecology of religiosity'. Building upon Gregory Bateson and other influential anthropologists, Tan explores how scholars might reconsider meanings of 'nature' when studying human/nature relationships while avoiding problematic dichotomies between 'nature' and 'culture'. Tan's 'ecology

of religiosity' seeks to do just that, emphasizing relational systems among humans, cultures, and the non-human world as key for future work on religion, nature, and culture.

The issue continues with a 'Perspectives' article by Pat Brereton and the late Robert Furze. Brereton and Furze employ the theoretical perspectives on Emmanuel Levinas and Roland Barthes to describe religion-like themes of transcendence in Terrance Malick's film *Tree of Life*. The result is an intriguing analysis of religious themes in film. Next, Tony Watling's review essay evaluates several recent publications on religion, ecology, and science, examining how they each both critically reflect upon the history of the field and continue to push scholarship on religions and ecology in new directions. The issue concludes with a handful of reviews of interesting new books. Gary Marcuse reviews Robert P. Weller's *Discovering Nature, Globalization and Environmental Culture in China and Taiwan* and Susan Power Bratton reviews Laura Hobgood-Oster's *The Friends We Keep*, a volume that examines the place of companion animals in Christian history. Finally, John Gatta reviews Susan Power Bratton's volume *The Spirit of the Appalachian Trail* on spirituality and long-distance hiking, and Sigurd Bergmann reviews *Placing Nature at the Borders of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics*, a volume edited by Forest Clingerman and Mark Dixon based on a conference of the same name at Ohio Northern University.

As the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* quickly approaches its tenth year of publication, we continue to encourage excellent submissions that will expand the scholarly boundaries of the study of religion, nature, and culture. Please see the 'Notes for Contributors' at the end of this volume for more information on submitting an article or review. Thank you to all of the scholars who have contributed to the JSRNC and helped to make it a leading scholarly publication in its area, and thanks as well to all of the editors and editorial assistants who have worked diligently to produce this journal on a quarterly basis for the last eight years.

Joseph Witt
Senior Assistant Editor