

Introduction

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The painting chosen to represent this volume—Canadian Group of Seven artist Frederick Varley’s vibrant 1936 depiction of the resurrected Christ emerging from the tomb—is entitled “Liberation.” Death, even sin or “corruptibility,” might be the standard “doctrinal” answers to the question as to from what precisely that liberation consists. But one might also think this event—whether it is formally confessed or not—in relation to arguably one of the most persistent themes (or cluster of themes) in Continental philosophy of religion today. For the risen “Body of Christ” encapsulates the paradox of discrete, even unique—dare we say “substantial”?—individuality, which is yet “wholly open,” transparent, and intimately and infinitely relational with the “other.” But how are such “wholly open individuality” and “infinite relationality” to be understood? What would such understanding, if it were possible, mean for inter-personal community, for love, for cross-cultural and, perhaps especially, inter-religious dialogue?

The ontological, epistemological, ethical, even political implications of this paradox, in a whole variety of interconnected ways, constitute the cluster of themes which this fourth edition of *Analecta Hermeneutica* seeks to explore with its focus on “Refiguring Divinity.” In “re-figuring” divinity, one “thinks divinity again”—in the sense of “figuring something out” (or at least trying to do so); or, else one “thinks (it) differently,” in different language, with a necessary recognition of the limits of language, or with a different purpose in mind. “Re-figuring” divinity could also refer to an attempt to—once more, or, again, differently—*embody* divinity, to give divinity a body, or even to “think it bodily.” While “divinity”—as the “object” of thought, which is nevertheless less “object-evocative” than the expression “the divine,” or even “the Divine”—suggests the (at times profound) ambiguities involved in the task.

The articles gathered together here, each in its own way, undertake just such a task. These articles were solicited from authors who have been deeply engaged with the themes (some for many years) which presently dominate the field of Continental philosophy of religion: questions of God (or of how to talk about God, especially the Christian God, in what is sometimes referred to as the “post-Christian” world) and of the “Absolute”; closely related to these questions is the struggle with the legacy

of Heidegger's critique of metaphysics as ontotheology, including rearticulations of the phenomenological approach itself (following its recent so-called "theological turn"); there are also questions of desire, death, and individual identity; questions of embodiment and "Incarnation"; rearticulations of the "lived body"; questions of time and of the "infinite"; of faith; of community and "otherness"; and ethical questions of hermeneutics and translation in a post-colonial world.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Peruvian-born priest and theologian widely regarded as the father of Liberation Theology, is known for his promotion of orthopraxis over orthodoxy—of "God-walk" over "God-talk," as it is said. But it might also be said that the endeavour to talk differently, and with renewed commitment, about God—to "refigure divinity," with genuine attention to the "other"—can be itself a form of walking: an heuristic exploration of divinity with wonder and humility as one's companions. The editors of this issue would like to invite the reader to join in such a walking along with the contributing authors.