



BROWSE



 ***Radio Canada International: History and Development by
Arthur Siegel (review)***

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

HUMANITIES 119 It is not clear that any of the essays in the volume would fall under Smart's 'Science of Religion,' although I can imagine that he might point to one or two. As I read them, however, all of the essays reveal at least something of the author's religious and cultural identity and all of them seem to advocate something that may be called 'religious..' Several of the writers are explicit about their religion, starting with Sharma as Hindu and Smart as Christian world pluralist, with Sharpe himself named as Christian, notably Methodist. All the writers seem to disclose their religious selves to some degree via the very language and concepts they use to name and discuss 'religion' and the phenomena they call 'religious,' In this manner most of them exhibit some variety of Christian, post-Christian, or ex-Christian expression, and no expressions emerging from aboriginal, Buddhist, or . Shinto sensibilities are evident. I am not complaining about the presence of an author's religion, for I think such presence is a normal and quite important

constitutive element in any study of religions. In any case - and I speak as a historian - I am amazed that Smart puts historical study of religion into his 'Science of Religion.' For at least a generation, historians have been learning that the belief in historical study as 'scientific' is hopelessly unworlded. Everything about historical study is permeated by the social, religious, political, cultural and gendered personhood of the people who research and write the histories. Indeed, the claim that any history, including the history of religions, is 'scientific' is itself a prime indicator that the study is not. I find myself placing the 'Science of Religion' next to Christian Science, Vedic Science, and Scientology as another religious expression. It attempts to legitimate the study of religion by appealing to a long out-of-date rendition of 'science,' while simultaneously seeking hegemony for one class of views about the study of religions. The study of religions needs only an appeal to the past and present significance of religions, religious experience, and the religious dimension of human life to justify a place in university and school curricula. (C.T. MCINTIRE) Arthur Siegel. Radio Canada International: History and Development Mosaic Press. vi, 200. \$21.95 AB Arthur Siegel points out, the history of Canada's international shortwave radio service 'is largely a story of missed opportunities.' Throughout the 1990s, Radio Canada International has lived a precarious, year-to-year existence, orphaned from its domestic public broadcasting parent, subject to draconian cuts in funding and service levels, and threatened with imminent extinction. In recent years, RCI's survival has depended on whimsical political promises, eleventh-hour financial deals among various government departments, the indefatigable lobbying of a 120 LETTERS IN CANADA 1996 small band of supporters, and perhaps most important, the 'strong survival skills' of its own management and staff, who have courageously refused to roll over and play dead - sometimes at considerable personal and professional cost. However, this latest chapter in the history of Radio Canada International is not the focus of Siegel's study, and is relegated to a short postscript. Most of its pages are devoted to the service's first twenty years, from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s. Siegel demonstrates clearly that the challenges the International Service has faced for over half a century - and continues to face today - were implicit in its origins. Chief among these perennial issues, Siegel argues, is RCI's ambiguous status as 'the stepchild of both the CBC and External Affairs.' Should it be an instrument of Canadian foreign (and domestic) policy, or an independent journalistic voice? Originally organized and financed by the federal government, but operated by the CBC, the service was subject to constant - but by no means consistent or timely - policy direction and even editorial review from External Affairs throughout the postwar and cold war years. One of the strengths of the book is to show how the vagaries of this interaction mirror the history of Canadian international relations over the same period. A more arms-length relationship was not achieved in practice until the mid-1960s, and not enshrined in RCI's mandate until more than a decade after that, when External...

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In any case – and I speak as a historian – I am amazed that Smart puts historical study of religion into his 'Science of Religion.' For at least a generation, historians have been learning that the belief in historical study as 'scientific' is hopelessly unfounded. Everything about historical study is permeated by the social, religious, political, cultural, and en-gendered personhood of the people who research and write the histories. Indeed, the claim that any history, including the history of religions, is 'scientific' is itself a prime indicator that the study is not. I find myself placing the 'Science of Religion' next to Christian Science, Vedic Science, and Scientology as another religious expression. It attempts to legitimate the study of religion by appealing to a long out-of-date rendition of 'science,' while simultaneously seeking hegemony for one class of views about the study of religions. The study of religions needs only an appeal to the past and present significance of religions, religious experience, and the religious dimension of human life to justify a place in university and school curricula. (C.T. MCINTIRE)

Arthur Siegel. *Radio Canada International: History and Development*
Mosaic Press. vi, 200. \$21.55

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