

sporadically throughout the text (mostly chapter 6), a few spirited discussions (at the end of chapters 6, 9, 10, and 11), and an analytic index for which every Lonergan scholar continues to be grateful.

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*Religion and Practical Reason: New Essays in the Comparative Philosophy of Religions.* Ed. Frank E. Reynolds and David Tracy. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994. ISBN 0-7914-2217-8. Pp. ix+444.

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*Religion and Practical Reason* is the third and final collection of essays resulting from a series of nine international conferences held from 1986–92 at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. Seen beside the two previous collections *Myth and Philosophy* (SUNY Press, 1990) and *Discourse and Practice* (SUNY Press, 1992), this collection represents both a denouement and a summons to further, more self-conscious comparative philosophizing.

The notion of practical reason, which both emerged from and linked the Chicago colloquia, is defined here not in the Aristotelian sense (that is, as a mode of reason to be distinguished from theoretical reason), but rather as referring to that “realm where those details of contingent human life that we include in ‘practice’ actually meet the sorts of disciplined thinking we mean by ‘theory’” (2). Practical reason refers then to critical reflection on practice and practices, and this central concern ties together the two poles of the comparative philosophy of religion identified by editor Frank E. Reynolds: the formalist or methodological pole on the one hand and the descriptive and historical pole on the other (3). Both of these poles can be seen in terms of practice—the prior relating to the practice of scholars and others involved in the comparative philosophy of religion, the latter referring to the practices involved in or emerging from the philosophies of religion being compared.

The essays collected here can therefore be divided into those dealing, at the meta-level, more strictly with the methodological and theoretical issues involved in comparing religions philosophically, and those that, though aware of these methodological issues, work closer to the ground level of particular religious and historical data, comparing particular religious philosophical practices. Of course these are not strict divisions: most of the essays straddle to some extent both of the poles comprising comparative philosophy of religion and some work equally well in either mode. In this respect the chapter by Hallisey, “In Defense of Rather Fragile and Local Achievement: Reflections on the work of Gurulogomi,” is particularly successful. While the essays dealing with particular religious practices (ranging from discussions on religious practices in Islam and Buddhism, to studies of religious philosophers such as Gurulogomi and Al-Farabi) will have obvious relevance to scholars working with those traditions, the methodological papers should be of interest to all who study comparison and do comparative studies. I shall therefore limit my comments to some of these essays.

Franklin Gamwell's chapter, "A Forward to Comparative Philosophy of Religion," is an interesting and involved elaboration of primary definitions of religion and philosophy. After reprising Reynold's distinctions (above), he sets out to defend the thesis that "comparative philosophy of religion may be identified as interreligious dialogue that has become critical reflection" (21). A detailed argument follows in which Gamwell suggests that philosophy is critical reflection on the most general understandings of human activity and comparative philosophy of religion is exalted as "reflection on explicit answers to the very question that distinguishes philosophy itself" (45). Stated concisely, Gamwell argues that since religions are cultural systems made up of the concepts and symbols in terms of which the most general questions of philosophy are asked, and since philosophy is comparative because it assesses, comparative philosophy of religion is the one form of philosophy "in which an answer to its identifying question is a full comparison of the understandings identifying its subject activities" (45). "Comparative philosophy of religion" is therefore redundant, but usefully so.

Jeffrey Stout, in "The Rhetoric of Revolution: Comparative Ethics after Kuhn and Gunnemann," focuses on the problem of incommensurability, criticizing those who argue, misconstruing Thomas Kuhn, that revolutionaries and their opponents operate out of such incommensurable contexts that rational argument becomes impossible. Stout argues that those (like Gunnemann) who employ Kuhnian arguments to justify radical incommensurability define rationality too narrowly. Kuhn is best understood, Stout argues, as an Aristotelian ethnographer (of sorts) doing fieldwork among scientists, rather than a theorist of epistemology. Kuhn's Aristotelianism shows by his "effort to break down classical distinctions between theoretical and practical reason and between logical demonstration and rhetorical art" (348). This reassertion of the importance of rhetoric is, moreover, a form of practical wisdom—*prudentia* or *phronesis*—and like all such virtues it must be fostered by practice. This implies that discourse on ethics must itself be ethical—that the real danger to moral reasoning in revolutionary situations is injustice, not epistemological conundrums. Stout thus concludes with an exhortation to develop and teach "rhetorically-aware practical reason" as the mode of moral discourse for comparative religion.

In the final essay in this collection, "Comparison, Pragmatics and Interpretation in the Comparative Philosophy of Religion," Richard Parmentier draws together three emergent strands linking the book's contributors. The first emphasizes a comparative *philosophy* of religions, that is, a philosophical study undertaken in a comparative perspective; the second a *comparative* study of philosophies of religion, that is, the comparative study of those texts and discourses created by individual theologians, philosophers, and others; and the third the comparative philosophy of *religions* which focuses on the various doctrines or implicit stances taken by religious writers and thinkers of a given tradition towards other religions (416). Parmentier ends with an exhortation for further, more systematic work in this newly constituted field of comparative philosophy of religion—work that proceeds with greater attention paid to the "bi-causal relationship between philosophical discourse and the cultural traditions in which that discourse emerges" (426), as well as greater methodological clarity (427).

Each contributor grapples seriously with the methodological and substantive issues in a field that is emerging from the margins of several overlapping academic discourses. In an academic climate of overspecialization this can only be a good thing. Anyone working in the comparative philosophy of religion will know the problems scholars face in describing their project(s) to their peers and to the public. The movement towards definition and critical self-understanding realized by this collection should make that task a good deal easier.

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*Nature, Reality, and the Sacred: The Nexus of Science and Religion.* By Langdon Gilkey. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. ISBN 0-8006-2754-7. Pp. xii+245.

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Given the title of Gilkey's offering, one is led to believe that he is out to provide a wide-ranging view of the world in which religion and science would effectively be connected. Gilkey does not, however, supply such an overarching cosmology. Rather, his intention is to convey certain intimations of sacrality in nature, as well as in other aspects of reality, and how science qua science fails to recognize them.

Gilkey opens by stressing that nature cannot be understood in exclusively religious or scientific categories. To adopt an either-or methodology is irresponsible in Gilkey's estimation and stems from a positivistic orientation of science or a strict adherence to religious tradition (12). If either discipline monopolizes what can be known about reality, it commits what Alfred North Whitehead referred to as "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (15), where the abstract is mistaken for the concrete. In actuality neither religion nor science establishes an exhaustive and completely reliable account of the universe, for there are "other modes of knowing such as aesthetic [and] intuitive" (2). Either approach mistakenly leads not to "careful inquiry" but to dogmatism, and hence neither properly conducts the business of its own discipline (13-16).

Gilkey subdivides his investigation into three parts. The first two deal with religion and science *vis-à-vis* reality and then nature; the third is devoted to an examination of the sacred in nature. In his initial section Gilkey distinguishes two varieties of realism—one "critical" and the other "naive," indicative of the scientific community (36). For Gilkey, critical realism correctly illumines "experience and knowing [as] response[s] to an external world" (214, n. 33). In the case of naive realism, scientific explanation leaves no room for mystery, and any competing explanations are rendered suspect (50-1).

According to naturalistic science, nature is the real, prompting science to regard itself as holding a mirror up to nature (14). This type of science imagines itself as self, recognizing neither that it deals in abstractions nor that philosophy as "the critic of abstractions" can inform it (53). Yet Gilkey insists that it is sufficient that the empirical method does not have a lock on knowledge, since valuable insights can be obtained by other means, including "interior self-aware-