

Introduction

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Philosophy of religion is, as Wesley J. Wildman argues in this volume, a field of inquiry that is multidisciplinary and comparative, not a discipline. It is folly, therefore, to desire mastery over it. It is also folly to assert a mastery over writings that recognize or assume the singly unmanageable nature and sweep of the field. For this reason, I am humbled by the task of organizing this volume's material, modest perhaps in number but significant in understanding and visionary in orientation. What is equally elusive are categorical distinctions suggestive of an uncomplicated series of answers to a vexing question. And so one will be hard pressed to find a uniform vision in this collection. Indeed, the careful reader will spot several points of contention, which is both healthy and part and parcel of any field of inquiry. What Clifford Geertz (1973, 29) famously stated about anthropology applies no less to philosophy of religion: a field "whose progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate. What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other." It is this individuality, present here, that I would argue is a key strength of this volume. It exemplifies, while speaking to, an identity crisis—Carl A. Raschke describes it as a crisis more contextual than existential or socially introspective in nature (153–154). Global awareness and hypercritical self-consciousness stamp it. The eclectic nature of the contributions is proportional to an appreciation of plurality and difference unprecedented by former generations of philosophers of religion, their ideas of critical reason *vis-à-vis* "religion." While being hypercritical does not or should not provide *carte blanche* or pose as a comfy alternative to tidy universalist perspectives, it is nonetheless better to see it present than absent.

The vexing question noted above can be surmised from a cursory reading of the chapters. In some form or another, each author wrestles with the question of philosophy of religion's future, a truly vexing question not only because, as Raschke notes, "everyone from philosophers to geophysicists to economists . . . have a horrible track record when it comes to divining the mysteries of tomorrow" (153). It is also and especially vexing because, despite the fact that the exercise is not frivolous, which Raschke himself reiterates, the unlikelihood of a better track record still renders the exercise—"this sophisticated academic version of play therapy" (153)—necessary—necessary, that is, if philosophy of religion is to be open to a future, to have a future. To put it in "Derridese," this experience of the unlikely, because it pertains to the impossible (i.e., knowledge of the future), releasing its possibility in thought; this experience of the unlikely is an integral dimension of the messianic structure, the *a-venir*, of this particular "play therapy." Each author invests in the task, knowing full well that we speak only to a possible future, a future we are opening ourselves to and inviting ourselves to consider—hence the book's subtitle. The visions of reconfiguration here concern a possible future, variations of it, helping us to negotiate, as Raschke notes, a "real trauma or a niggling feeling of emergent crisis" (153).

In certain cases, this possible future is coped with by looking for aid to thinkers of the distant past (e.g., Spinoza and Kierkegaard) and the not-so-distant past (e.g., Paul Ricoeur, Hannah Arendt, and Grace Jantzen). Sometimes it is managed by reflecting on the different thinking styles of the philosophical tradition, Western and Asian, analytic and continental. The reader will encounter proposals of rapprochement and even of supersession in a mind-numbing trail of thinking that moves from the poststructuralist and postcolonial to the whimsically branded post-postmodernist. While not exhaustive, the representation is both consequential and suggestive. Particularly refreshing is the problematic of ushering philosophy of religion into a post-phenomenological era of religious studies and theology. This is an underlying theme unique to this work. It is a neglected dimension in many laudable current discussions about contemporary philosophy of religion. In fact, and to offset what was said earlier, because of this theme, a commonality surfaces that is easily missed on account of the different register of voices. This affords (this editor, anyway) a look at the forest despite the trees, discerning a polyphony rather than a cacophony. A postcritical, post-secular appreciation of *religio* or *darshana* (a Sanskrit term that combines philosophy and religion, meaning "perspective" or "worldview") dawns each chapter. The positivistic role of reason, inherited from the Enlightenment,

has been sufficiently negotiated, if not altogether abandoned. An appreciation of “religion” can be detected here that transmogrifies the topically invested philosophy of religion of yesteryear. Present is a strong sense of retrieval, reimagi(n)ing, and self-affirmation, that is, affirming, embracing, the singularity of the “faith-full” self through reason, be it the postanalytic, deconstructive, semiotic, or non-philosophy variety. This might make a Lord Herbert of Cherbury or Lord Shaftesbury wince, while a Shankara, Aquinas, or Maimonides might grin. I am not suggesting that the volume’s contributors are in solidarity with so-called New or Radical Orthodoxy—not that there would be anything “wrong” with that, of course. The point, rather, is to identify an implicit sensibility that connects somehow with the past, all of it, while deconstructing the dividing practices inherited from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theisms and deisms that still brand the field. Put otherwise, each installment typifies something of a second (third or fourth) naiveté, making its peace while breaking with the past. This disease, the precariousness of this faltering and yet necessary “play therapy” (to continue with Raschke), is crucial if we are to say “*oui, oui*” to the future, to the vitality of the institution under consideration (see Derrida in Caputo 1997, 6, 27–28).

With all this in mind, a word remains to be said about the chapters themselves and their organization.¹ In part 1, an overriding concern is with the philosophical tradition. In what might philosophy of religion consist that recognizes both the strengths and weaknesses of Western analytic and continental traditions? How might developments in ideology critique, gender studies, and Asian philosophies kickstart a less stilted view of the field? To whom might one turn in the tradition, both Western and Asian, to negotiate the perceived stalemate of philosophy of religion? It is to questions such as these that our first round of thinkers primarily addresses themselves.

Morny Joy launches the discussion by arguing that religious studies needs to reclaim philosophy of religion—a principal concern of the second part of the book. Joy is interested in how developments in the continental philosophical tradition can help to achieve this. Her piece is included in part 1 because it provides a useful segue into subsequent discussions with a general overview of basic distinctions and thinking styles.

Religious studies as a discipline, Joy argues, has been much criticized in recent years for its continued adherence to outdated methods and a basically Eurocentric orientation. Philosophy of religion, as a subset of religious studies, has mainly been associated with Anglo-American analytic philosophy and a rationalist method that focuses principally on proofs and truths.

During the past decade, Joy has been involved in a number of projects that have attempted to revise the ways in which philosophy of religion can be studied. These activities have resulted in two books that she has edited: *Continental Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion* (2011) and *After Appropriation: Explorations in Intercultural Philosophy and Religion* (2012). In her chapter, “Re-envisioning Philosophy of Religion,” she surveys certain of the changes proposed in these books that investigate respectively: (1) the contribution that the approach of continental philosophy can make to rethinking the tasks of philosophy of religion, and (2) the impact that non-Western philosophies and religions can have when they are not analyzed in a way that proceeds solely by means of a comparative method. This often has resulted in a form of reductionism whereby interpretations of other philosophies and religions are described mainly in terms of Western categories and concepts. Joy calls upon the work of Grace Jantzen, Hannah Arendt, and Paul Ricoeur, all of whom reject this accustomed method and prefer to start from an affirmation of life in this world, and not to be preoccupied with life after death, with proofs of the existence of God, and theodicies that defend or reject the existence of a good and omnipotent God in the face of evil. In this way, she proposes ways whereby philosophy of religion can move beyond the restrictive parameters that have largely determined its definitions and methodology.

In chapter 2, Maurice Boutin joins Joy in the “search for a new paradigm of philosophy of religion” but based on a critique of one of Joy’s dialogue partners: Paul Ricoeur. (Joy’s theme of a life-affirming philosophy is put on hold until the next chapter in which Pamela Sue Anderson details her vision of a philosophy of religious life.)

Boutin focuses on three statements: (1) human being is fragile (referencing the work of Yves Ledure); (2) human being is fallible (referencing the work of Ricoeur); and (3) human being is finite. The latter statement directly challenges Ricoeur’s question “whether human transcendence is merely transcendence *of* finitude or whether the converse is not something of equal importance” (40–41) and also Ricoeur’s “working hypothesis concerning the paradox of the finite-infinite” (41) whose full recognition—essential to the elaboration of the concept of fallibility, according to Ricoeur—implies a move from human finitude to infinitude, from perspective, desire, limited nature and death, to discourse, demand for totality, love and beatitude. Boutin offers a fourth statement: freedom is the basic dynamism of finitude provided that finitude ceases to be identified and thus confused with limitation (35).

Ricoeur's promise of "unlimited rationality," which is part of human destiny, goes along with what he calls "the sadness of the finite" nourished by primitive experiences expressing themselves negatively as lack, loss, dread, regret, deception, or dispersion. Boutin wants to reconfigure the anthropology that informs Ricoeur's philosophy of religion by arguing that human being is indeed finite but that human finitude is kept alert through transcendence. To read divine transcendence into human finitude is a reminder that a god who does not become human only enjoys a transcendence akin to the transcendence of ideas for which finitude can only be limitation. This has consequences on the approach to human rights and freedom. Freedom is enabled only through actually engaging in the realization of others' freedom. The latter is not a limitation; it is not a virtual threat to one's own freedom; it is the condition of its possibility: one is free only to the extent to which one cares for others' freedom. Freedom emerges from finitude itself. The mutual conditioning of personal freedom goes not, as Ricoeur suggests, from finitude as limitation (dependency) to the infinite, but rather from finitude to otherness. This leads Boutin to assert that only a finite being can be a transcendent being. This is a point of departure, he argues, perhaps even a new paradigm for philosophy of religion and not just a matter of choosing a new accent or tone.

Pamela Sue Anderson manages the basic élan of the continental philosophical tradition in terms of her concept of "life," a concern that reconnects with a feature in Joy's contribution. Anderson argues that the meaning of the concept "life" is contested at its very core by philosophers with fundamentally diverging conceptual schemes, especially on matters of bodily experience and human morality. In her chapter, "Re-visioning 'Life' in Philosophy of Religion Today—Or: A New Concept for a Global Philosophy of Religious Life," Anderson suggests that the meaning of life is to be found in a global philosophy, which is open to re-visioning its core concepts. Her proposal for a new, more dynamic conception of life as a core concept for a global philosophy of religion(s) is worthy of critical study precisely because traditional philosophy of religion, especially in its control of moral questions and answers, is failing to keep up with new understandings of matter and material integral to virtual, actual, and possible life in all of its ever-increasing complexities. Debates about life in philosophy of religion, she contends, will generate their own future, as we live, thinking, acting, and reacting within and across fields of immanence. In brief, disagreements about "life" in contemporary philosophies will inevitably result, she argues,

in new thinking, new possibilities, and either new retreats to past “life” or new freedom to create viable “life” for the future.

The next three chapters branch off in a different direction but are related to one another in elaborating on this question of philosophy of religion and the philosophical tradition, its critique and expansion. N.N. Trakakis develops, while correcting, some of his earlier ideas in his book *The End of Philosophy of Religion* (2008). In that work, Trakakis calls for an end to be put to certain approaches to the philosophy of religion, particularly those enshrined in the analytic philosophical tradition, and advocated instead a fresh start that would broaden and deepen philosophers’ engagement with religion. After the end comes renewal. This renewal, he argues, has both a methodological and metaphysical character. First, he contends that analytic philosophy of religion urgently requires a methodological reorientation so as to jolt it from its current “dogmatic slumber,” enabling it to retrieve the value of critical and imaginative thinking. Second, he challenges continental philosophy of religion likewise to be re-engaged with metaphysics. Signs of a return to metaphysics are already evident in both analytic and continental philosophy, but philosophers of religion have yet to appreciate the significance of so-called Eastern metaphysics for their own thinking about God. By overcoming its restriction to Western religious thought and entering into serious dialogue with Asian religious traditions, philosophy of religion could be provoked to develop new, more interesting, and more fruitful, ways of understanding divinity.

As with Joy and the notion of “life,” we put Trakakis’s emphasis on hold until the next chapter in which Jin Y. Park calls for a broader perspective of philosophy of religion from East Asian perspectives. At this point in the discussion, the reader is faced with a critical assessment of the élan in Trakakis’s *The End of Philosophy of Religion*. Timothy Knepper, in his chapter “The End of Philosophy of Religion?” wants a fuller account than Trakakis outlines in his book concerning that which threatens to terminate philosophy of religion. As we see in his chapter, Trakakis now wants the same, but Knepper is after an alternative set of goals so that the “ends” of any philosophy of religion may be properly redrawn. He feels that the failure to do so is instructive of what is really wrong with our currently ascendant philosophies of religion, particularly with respect to their negligence to learn from and contribute to the academic study of religion. Knepper articulates five features of a philosophy of religion that has something to offer to religious studies, demonstrating in each case how extant forms of analytic and continental philosophy fall short of these marks.

Park closes this section, joining Trakakis and Knepper in the call for a broader philosophy of religion through more elaborate examples drawn from East Asia. Philosophy of religion, she argues, emerged as an academic field at a certain point in the intellectual history of the West. This field has been specific to a certain region and tradition: regionally, it is based on Western philosophy; religiously, it is based on the Abrahamic religious traditions. In the East Asian tradition, whose philosophies become concerns with the development of religious studies in the West, distinct terms for “philosophy” (哲學, Jap. *testugaku*; Chi. *zhéxué*; Kor. *ch’ŏrhak*) and “religion” (宗教, Jap. *shūkyō*; Chi. *zōngjiào*; Kor. *chonggyo*) emerge only in the mid-nineteenth century. Japanese philosopher Nishi Amane (西周) introduced the term “philosophy” in an 1874 publication. The word “religion” entered the region through a translation of a letter from Commodore Perry in 1853. If philosophy of religion is to claim relevance for our time, Park argues—and Trakakis and Knepper would agree—it needs to open its borders to excluded religious traditions.

Park asks what it would look like to approach philosophy of religion from a tradition in which the categories of philosophy and religion are themselves put into question. She considers the concepts of philosophy and religion at the dawn of the modern period in East Asia and discusses how the traditional themes of philosophy of religion, such as the proof of the existence of God or interpretation of the existence of evil, might be understood differently, and how incorporating new religious and philosophical traditions into the field would open up new possibilities for the philosophy of religion.

Park discusses these issues with a focus on three modern East Asian thinkers—Inoue Enryō, Kim Iryōp, and Tanabe Hajime—on three topics: (1) the definition of philosophy and religion; (2) the nature of the transcendental being and the religious agent; and (3) the act of religion and the meaning of religious practice.

Part 2 begins and ends with the two contributions alluded to earlier by Carl A. Raschke and Wesley J. Wildman. They frame this section nicely by developing explicitly, that is, theoretically and practically, the concerns of earlier chapters regarding a philosophy of religion that is to be both post-colonial (i.e., Joy, Trakakis, and Park) and multidisciplinary (i.e., Knepper). But in this section the focal point is philosophy in the context of scholarship in religion and theology. Raschke makes a case for a philosophically astute understanding of religious studies in a postcolonial context. Wildman, by contrast, takes us in a direction that is more “practical” in nature, calling

for a philosophy of religion whose only hope for survival in the academy is by being a multidisciplinary comparative inquiry. I will get to a summary of Wildman's directives in turn.

In his chapter, "The New Geophilosophy: How Globalization and Postcolonial Theory Are Redefining Contemporary Philosophy of Religion," Raschke considers how globalization and postcolonial theory are redefining philosophy of religion. While Western philosophers and philosophers of religion continue to wrangle over whether philosophy and theology can have anything to do with each other anymore, especially in a university setting, or whether "the future" of the philosophy of religion should be extrapolated from the latest innovations in phenomenology, linguistic research, cognitive science or physical, or whatever, a trend barely noticed in the traditional academy is shifting the entire scene of emergent discourse. It is the decline of the West not so much in Oswald Spengler's sense, but the decline of the importance and utility of the very inferential system—what Raschke calls the "hermeneutical engine" of discourse itself—in which academics are accustomed to pose these questions in the first place.

This chapter puts forward the view that two global and broad-based trends are raising significant doubts and generating conundrums regarding the very hermeneutical engine of Western philosophy, which has operated fairly consistently and efficiently since the age of the ancient Greeks. These trends are all interconnected with each other in a larger perspective, but Raschke focuses on the two main factors or forces that are challenging the current state of affairs: the phenomenon increasingly understood as "globalization," as well as the new "geo-philosophical" (Gilles Deleuze's term) language incubated within the cross-disciplinary field of the humanities and religious studies known as "postcolonial theory," or more recently "decolonial theory." Both globalization theory and postcolonial discourse have their origins in late twentieth and early twenty-first century continental philosophy of religion. However, just as the emergent and former colonized nations of the world have turned the mechanisms, institutions, and policy strategies of Western capitalism against itself to create a vast, brave new kind of economic order, so the Western-educated philosophical elite of these cultures have stood Western philosophy on its head with an even more radical reformulation of what Michel Foucault would call the current "episteme" than even the French poststructuralists of the last generation might have imagined.

Raschke explores how these trends are mirrored in the work of certain current academic writers and theorists who have critical relevance for the traditional task of the philosophy of religion. He attends largely to the pub-

lications of select figures from the postcolonial literature. He demonstrates how the efforts of these postcolonial theorists, conventionally considered as simply derivative when it comes to contemporary philosophy, actually concentrate and more finally attune the thought of well-known philosophers.

The chapter by Jim Kanaris, "The Eneccstatic Jig: Personalizing Philosophy of Religion," could be included in the first part of the book since he looks to the continental tradition to reconfigure philosophy of religion. However, his consideration of controversies in academic circles of religion, phenomenological and post-phenomenological, makes it a natural fit for this part as well. The issue of Orientalism, high on the minds of scholars of religion and which Raschke discusses at some length, is also a presupposition, making Kanaris's entry here a reasonable one.

The dance reference in Kanaris's title pays homage to an ethos entrusted to philosophers by Nietzsche, as does the neologism "eneccstasis" to Heidegger. Both Nietzsche and Heidegger radically reshaped philosophy, providing for understandings of personal reflexivity that foundationalist programs ineluctably misplace. This aporia suffusing the desire for engaged thought points to a complex history. As a result, it has metastasized (hence is ever precarious) into a peculiar form of transcendental reflection in contemporary continental philosophy. As deracinating and subversive, this eneccstatic form disrupts the intonations of an invariable program. As hypervigilant and affirming, it incites the participation of the concerned individual whose horizon for theory selection is context specific. Reminiscent perhaps of the simple two-step, the musical measure proposed by the tradition Kanaris relies on is far more difficult to follow, not only because of its erratic rhythm but also because its interpretation is exclusively agent dependent.

Eneccstatic philosophy of religion broaches these issues in the context of religious studies where analytic philosophy, as Joy indicates, has remote relevance. Consequently, Kanaris reconfigures the personalist gesture of phenomenology of religion in line with developments in current continental theorizing of religion. *Sui generis* religion is replaced by a topology within which individuals philosophize variant cultural forms, nurturing their *own* appreciation of and for "transcendence." Kanaris calls this "disruptive agential self-possession."

This disposition connects well with the next two entries in that the personalist accent raises questions about the incorporation into religious studies of new philosophical forms of theology, "critical reverence" and "radical theology." In his chapter, "Reverence as Critical Responsiveness: Between Philosophy and Religion," Tyler Roberts offers a compelling vision of what

this might mean. He disrupts efforts to defend the academic legitimacy of the study of religion that draw sharp lines between religion and the academic study of religion, between the religious and the secular, and between philosophy and theology. Various conceptual strategies have been employed in this effort. Persuasive to many today is the distinction between the academic study of religion as a “critical” discourse and religious modes of thought and practice as “uncritical.” Roberts rightly challenges this claim, and dominant views of the philosophy of religion, by considering the nature of criticism at the boundary between philosophy and religion. Ordinarily, philosophers of religion think about philosophy as a critical discourse that takes religion as its object or data: philosophy of religion thinks critically *about* religion. Roberts argues that we should consider the critical possibilities for a philosophy that thinks *with*, not just about, religion. Specifically, he explicates and develops the arguments of William Desmond, who writes about a “two-way intermediation or communication between religion and philosophy, not just a singular direction from religion to reason” (190); Stanley Cavell, who argues for a conception of criticism as a “conduct of gratitude . . . a specification and test of tribute” (199); and Rowan Williams, who argues for the critical function of theological appeals to “revelation” and “dogma.” Each raises historical and theoretical questions about how mainstream traditions of philosophy and theory have understood critique, cultural criticism, and critical thinking; and each offers resources for constructively rethinking philosophy and criticism in terms of religious moods, practices, and concepts such as reverence, gratitude, praise, and faith. To follow these lines of thinking is to reorient philosophical criticism in an affirmative direction and to redirect future philosophies of religion.

Related to this is the thesis of John D. Caputo in his chapter, “Radical Theologians, Knights of Faith, and the Future of the Philosophy of Religion,” in which he thinks through the conditions of possibility that underlie the vexing question of philosophy of religion’s future discussed at the outset. Caputo argues that the future of philosophy of religion is rooted in what he calls “radical theology,” which, he maintains, is the very thing that motivates our interest in philosophy of religion and repays all our work. He compares radical theology to what Kierkegaard called “hidden inwardness,” where the philosophy of religion is asked to provide an incognito for radical theology, just the way the knight of faith appears under the cover of a tax collector. Radical theology is what is going on *in* the philosophy of religion while not always being visible to the eye. It gives words to our deepest hopes and desires and, as such, is turned structurally

toward the future. Philosophy of religion has a future because it is in its deepest stratum an elementary thinking of the future, a way we say what we hope and pray is to-come (*à venir*).

After identifying what he means by the “to-come,” Caputo spells out what he means by radical theology by contrasting it with confessional theology, which has a place in the confessional community, whereas radical theology is always out of place, displaced. Furthermore, if it is not at home in the religions, because it is too radical, it is no less unwelcome in the university, because it is too theological. Caputo then points out that the predecessor of radical theology is not Kant’s abstract, rationalist, and reductionistic approach to religion, but Hegel’s embrace of the concrete and historical, even if it is a kind of heretical Hegelianism (no “absolute knowledge”). Caputo’s point is that radical theology is an infinite passion amid the finitude of institutional structures; its incommensurability with the world is radical and hence ineradicable. So, the only refuge of radical theology is a subterfuge, a cover, an incognito. It gains admittance to the university by outwardly adopting the good manners and the protocols of the university, all the while inwardly dreaming of the future, of the promise of what is to come, keeping its own messianic secret, while calling for a new species of theologians, for a new humanities, in a university to come. In the meantime, were we ever to meet a radical theologian, we would step back and exclaim that this person looks for all the world like a philosopher of religion.

Clayton Crockett’s chapter, “What Can Non-Philosophy Do for Philosophy of Religion? Non-Science and Non-Religion in the Work of François Laruelle,” sounds off in a different direction. It is included here because Crockett, too, is after a new form of philosophy that is vital to the study of religion and not just a subset of philosophical inquiry. As his subtitle indicates, Crockett looks to the contemporary French philosopher François Laruelle for inspiration. Laruelle develops the notion of non-philosophy as a way of criticizing philosophy’s intrinsic appeal to a totalizing self-sufficiency, which Laruelle calls the “principle of sufficient philosophy.” Laruelle suggests that appeals to difference on the part of contemporary continental philosophy are not radical enough; Laruelle wants to think from the One in what he calls a “vision-in-One.” Thinking from the One or the Real constitutes a “unilateral duality” because it only goes one way. Laruelle appeals to science, including quantum mechanics, to offer a unified generic theory of science and philosophy under the name of non-philosophy or nonstandard philosophy.

At the same time, Laruelle appeals to a kind of religious heresy or gnosis in constructing a non-Christian idea of the human as Christ, or “Future-Christ.” Crockett reflects on the asymmetry of Laruelle’s engagements with science and religion, and suggests that science offers him something that religion cannot, and this is why Laruelle insists, against Gilles Deleuze, that there is no non-science. However, Laruelle does argue for a kind of non-religion that is compatible with non-philosophy. This tension in Laruelle’s work concerns the universality and applicability of religion as a category and framework. Despite this tension, Crockett argues, Laruelle helps us think about an idea of insurrection as a human political concept that has religious implications and applications.

Finally, we get to the proposal of Wesley J. Wildman that puts a face on Caputo’s “good manners and protocols of the university” into which a philosophy of religion to-come can gain admittance. In his chapter, “Reforming Philosophy of Religion for the Modern Academy,” Wildman argues that there is shrinkage of jobs in philosophy of religion, especially in research universities, because the field strikes decision makers in philosophy and religion departments as lacking in objectivity, not about religion, and ravaged by internal conflicts. Much of this perception, he continues, is *not* due to misunderstanding. The first step toward reforming philosophy of religion in the modern academy is to understand and acknowledge these problems. Subsequently, philosophers of religion need to reform the field by taking back the name “philosophy of religion” for philosophical reflection on religious ideas and practices in all their complexity and variability; by surrendering the old ideal of philosophy of religion as a discipline and treating it as a field of multidisciplinary comparative inquiries using numerous styles and contributing to several philosophic traditions; by enclosing internal debates within the publicly intelligible frame of “philosophical research into religious beliefs and practices,” conducting those debates courteously and quietly; and by rewriting textbooks in philosophy of religion to reflect a wide appreciation and close analysis of religious beliefs and practices from around the world and across eras and traditions. To be able to function within the enclosing frame of “philosophical research related to religion,” philosophers of religion are advised to settle some questions by consensus: philosophy of religion must not promote any religion, belief, or practice; it must not focus on only one religious worldview (e.g., theism); it must be open to addressing what he calls first-order religious questions; and it must prove itself useful within religious studies. On other questions, philosophers of religion can and should debate their disagreements, which is healthy for

the field so long as these debates are conducted within the ambit of a shared minimal consensus and mindful of larger institutional realities.

The future will come, no question. The ideas of what it entails pertaining to philosophy of religion is a question and, finally, remains in question since the future is always coming. “Nonetheless,” as Trakakis advises, “something can be said about where *we would like* philosophy [of religion] to be in the future, even if we are unsure whether such a future will ever materialize” (72). That, to reiterate, is the basic problematic guiding all the contributions here. They constitute a “play therapy,” a *jouissance*, that each thinker invests in; the field’s vitality depends on it. To this end the book is offered. It remains to the reader to decide whether its various visions provide a desirable future for philosophy of religion. The rest, of course, the relative actuality of what materializes, is and can only be future. *Oui, oui!*

NOTE

1. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for the division of the chapters into two parts. The reviewer suggests a division in terms of a two-way dialogue between philosophers of religion and scholars of religion. I have translated this to mean a division of foci or issues pertaining to (1) philosophy of religion and the philosophical tradition and (2) philosophy of religion and religious studies, theology, and the modern academy. All the contributors are “card-carrying” philosophers of religion; the only thing separating them is their departmental titles.

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