



Book Reviews

Henning Ottmann,
Pavo Barišić (eds.)

Deliberative Demokratie

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The *Deliberative Demokratie* Proceedings was published by Nomos in 2015, and edited by the long-time directors of the *Philosophie und Demokratie* course at the Inter-University Center (IUC) Dubrovnik, Henning Ottmann and Pavo Barišić. This book of proceedings is precisely the result of one of the conferences held at the IUC, from which it delivers 10 contributions signed by, in order, Pavo Barišić, Stefano Saracino, Marita Brčić Kuljiš, Hans-Otto Mühleisen, Karl-Heinz Nusser, Sulejman Bosto, Klaus-Gerd Giesen, Olga Simova, Jörg Wernecke, and Henning Ottmann. The language of the book is German and it encompasses 237 pages.

The introduction is written by the co-editors, Pavo Barišić and Henning Ottmann, and the content of the Proceedings is divided into five sections: “On the Roots of Deliberative Democracy in the Thought of Antiquity” (*Zu den Wurzeln der deliberativen Demokratie im Denken der Antike*), “Deliberative Democracy in the View of Other Authors” (*Die Idee der deliberativen Demokratie im Spiegel anderer Denker*), “The Question of Deliberative Democracy in Habermas’ theory” (*Fragen zur deliberativen Demokratie bei Jürgen Habermas*), “Deliberative Democracy and the EU” (*Die deliberativen Demokratie und die EU*), and “Plans and Prospects of Deliberative Democracy” (*Chancen und Möglichkeiten der deliberativen Demokratie*).

Through this structure, the book covers the overall theme of deliberative democracy: from its origins in Antiquity, through its analysis from the perspective of the theories of contemporary authors, especially Habermas, and to the opening of the current debates on

its prospects and perspectives, particularly within the framework of the European Union.

The idea of deliberative democracy is quite relevant today, particularly in the discussions on the democratization of the European Union and the participation of citizens in political decision-making. The awareness of the limitations of the existing system of representative parliamentary democracy and of the political apathy it entails has encouraged the two key debates: the one on the post-democracy (as a current experience, a fact) and the other on the possibility of *salvaging* democracy through its new forms (direct democracy, participative democracy, discursive democracy, deliberative democracy, etc.).

Therefore, what is being discussed here is a form of democracy which, as opposed to the classical representative democracy based on the principle of voting, has genuine deliberation (from Latin *deliberare* – (to consider) consciously, deliberately) as its foundation, perceived as the key element in joint decision-making, wherein the elements of majority rule and consensus are combined. Hence, the earlier principle of preferential voting is substituted with collective consulting. Therefore, deliberative democracy is referred to as the human democratic form the purpose of which is overcoming the limitations of representative democracy, as well as preventing the neglect of the people’s will, wherein the key role is played by communication mechanisms.

In practice, it is possible to combine this idea both with the classical immediate or direct democracy and with the indirect or representative democracy. What is being discussed thereby is either the elite or the populist deliberative democracy: in the first case, deliberation is related to the authorized (for example, legislative and judicial) decision-making bodies, while in the second case it is related to the possibility of all the concerned citizens participating in making concrete decisions.

The term “deliberative democracy” was coined by J. M. Bessette in 1980 in his eponymous work on the principle of majority in

representative governments, but the idea itself can be traced back to even earlier times, almost throughout the entire history of Western civilization. Thus, in empirical terms, certain similarities can be found even with the hunter-gatherer peoples who used a comparable way of making decisions in the times before the organization of the division of labour, while, in theoretical terms, the conception of the idea can be found already in Aristotle.

This is precisely what Pavo Barišić wrote about: in the first article in the Proceedings, he presented Aristotle's, the earliest vision of deliberative democracy. In ancient Greece, the place that emphasized the importance of decision-making for the political community, deliberation – i.e. collective discussion, consultation and debate – was highly revered. Although Thucydides already spoke of the rise of deliberation in the time of Pericles, the culmination of the ancient reflection on the matter is found in Aristotle. According to him, collective responsibility requires the participation of all citizens in real politics. Only thus is a general cognitive and moral level, higher than the level of a few experts, achieved.

Following this article, which introduces us to the contemporary debate on deliberative democracy through Aristotle, the next two sections of the Proceedings deliver several contributions on the idea of deliberative democracy in John Milton, Thomas Hobbes, and John Rawls, and critically review the thesis of Jürgen Habermas as the greatest of the modern advocates of deliberative theory.

Stefano Saracino wrote about the modern understanding of deliberation which, on the one hand, designates internal dialogue and, on the other hand, marks a discursive intersubjective form of discussion. He focused on John Milton and Thomas Hobbes, whom he found interesting for the reason that, in his work "Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society" (German: *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*), Habermas relied on them as the antipodes in the approach to deliberation. While Milton called on the Parliament to be willing to hear the voices outside itself, that had previously been the humblest measure of political freedom (civil liberty), Hobbes considered the question of deliberation from the perspective of the concept of sovereignty. What is particularly interesting is the influence of John Milton, considering that research indicates that the political semantics found in his work *Aeropagitica* (published in 1644) considerably resemble Habermas' theory of political deliberation.

On the other hand, Marita Brčić Kuljiš dealt with deliberation in Rawls. The backbone of her thesis is the article "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited" in which Rawls presented his belief that the idea of the public mind, the framework of constitutional democratic institutions that enables deliberative legislative bodies, and citizens' knowledge and desire to follow the public mind and actualize its ideal in their political activities are the three basic elements of deliberative democracy. According to the author, this is precisely what was the basis of linking the tendencies of deliberative democracy with Rawls' political liberalism, whose core elements of democratic citizenship, of the principle of reciprocity and of the principle of consensually also supported this. Her thesis is, however, that such attitude of Rawls does not mean that he advocated deliberative democracy, but only used its elements in order to ensure the stability of liberal democracy.

Following Brčić Kuljiš, there is a number of contributions by Hans-Otto Mühleisen, Karl-Heinz Nusser and Sulejman Bosto on Habermas' understanding of deliberative democracy.

Hans-Otto Mühleisen presented a new critique of Habermas' reflection on the theory of democracy. The author believes that, if Habermas considered communication (which is also realized via the Internet) the key of deliberative politics, then it means that its objective is not the good life, but the "free floating" (p. 129), i.e. thinking. And if the real content is in *framing* politics, the author brings up the question of this *empty* politics. In the second article in this section, Karl-Heinz Nusser examines the definition of human rights and human dignity in Habermas' theory, primarily in the work *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (German: *Faktizität und Geltung*). Here Habermas establishes human rights in the discourse as subjective rights, which have validity only as a derivative of democratic rights. The author criticizes his standpoints from the perspective of the traditional difference between the natural and positive law, discarded by Habermas. Namely, Nusser believes that human rights and human dignity, as natural rights, are derived from the human essence itself, i.e. they are *a priori* valid and therefore precede the positive law. The author also criticizes Habermas' idea of a global deliberative democracy based on the moral judgment of human rights by means of public discussions, aimed at general consensus. This criticism is based on concrete examples of public debates that fail to meet the requirements of Habermas.

In the last article in this section, on the basis of Habermas' argument Sulejman Bosto critically examined the question of the relationship between tolerance and post-secular society, especially in times of post-secular "reappearance" of religion and its requirements. The fourth section of the Proceedings, dedicated to questioning the concrete possibilities of realizing deliberative democracy in the European Union, is also focused on Habermas. The consistency of Habermas' following of the general requirements for deliberative democracy and his understanding of the Eurozone crisis is analysed by Klaus Gerd-Giesen while Olga Simova focused on the reasons for the necessity and general possibility of democracy at transnational and global level.

In the last section, dedicated to the analysis of the prospects (chances and opportunities) of deliberative democracy, we can find two contributions by Jörg Wernecke and Henning Ottmann. Jörg Wernecke analyses the relationship, difference and knowledge of experts and citizens who are, each in their own way, incompetent in decision-making processes. In doing so, the question he brings up is whether participatory democracy can assist in resolving this situation of having *professionally incompetent* citizens and *socially and politically incompetent* experts. If we go back to the introductory article by Pavo Barišić, we can see that even Aristotle was aware of this problem, and that he saw a positive impact both on the individual development of persons and on the stability, adaptability, and theoretical and practical wisdom of the political community as a whole precisely in the exchange of opinions.

Finally, in the last contribution in the Proceedings, Henning Ottmann criticizes Habermas' understanding of deliberative democracy as a synthesis of republican and liberal elements, as well as the thesis that deliberative democracy guarantees democratic quality. This debate on the real achievements of the theory of deliberative democracy is crucial to its positioning in the current political discourse. In times of the possibility of establishing a global public sphere by means of transnational communication forms and transnational areas of public discussion (such as global media), the opportunities for the realization of a global radical democracy on the trace of Habermas seem quite great. However, as highlighted in the articles above, there are a number of obstacles, starting from the questionability of the internal consistency of the theory to the realistic (interest) obstacles to which the attempts at increasing democracy at the supranational level will come across, principally in

the field of economics. However, the value of deliberative democracy (at least as a theory of public consultation) is not thereby declining.

On the contrary, critical reviews of this concept, especially in the situation of the crisis of the European Union and the recent collapse of the global economy, are the central assignments of political philosophy as the places of a prudent reflection on the possibility of a more inclusive political practice. In this sense, this volume becomes not just a collection of outstanding academic articles on the matter, but also a serious participant in the debate on the political future and the future of politics.

Anita Lunić

Melvin L. Rogers

The Undiscovered Dewey

Religion, Morality, and the Ethos of Democracy

Columbia University Press,
New York 2012

In his previous essay, "Action and Inquiry in Dewey's Philosophy" (2007), Melvin L. Rogers contends that John Dewey modifies Aristotle's epistemic categories (*episteme*, *phronesis*, and *techne*) and thereby offers a theory of person and inquiry that post-Analytical philosophers need. With his much deeper understanding of Dewey, Rogers once again offers an Aristotelian interpretation of Dewey's philosophy in his recent work, *The Undiscovered Dewey: Religion, Morality, and the Ethos of Democracy*. This time, however, he brings up Dewey's theory of democracy. He recognizes that Dewey links democracy to both religiosity and morality and attempts to reveal the secret of the linkage among them. He wants to suggest that Dewey's conception of democracy as a way of life is worth a theoretical source of participatory republicanism that is a moral and political idea required for public today: with Dewey's theory of democracy, Rogers is well equipped to critically respond to those advocates of the elitism in politics who are cynical of the public and their capabilities in democratic government.

As an initial step to achieve this goal, Rogers discusses Dewey's theory of civic religiosity

which is a core concept of democracy as a way of life. He opens his discussion by raising a question as follows: “In the absence of unifying theological commitments, how do we go about the business of managing democracy while simultaneously paying respect to religious commitment?” (xi). Rogers makes a claim of religious naturalism that men can live a religious life that is “pious without lapsing into blind deference and so threatening democracy” (242). He refers to men who live such religious lives as an informed body of democratic citizens. They are men of democratic faith in human nature: faith that, given the conditions, men realize their individualities that would otherwise remain potential, and fully function. (Cf. John Dewey, “Creative Democracy – The Task Before Us,” 1939, (LW 14:226)) For Rogers, those religious men are democratically participatory citizens. They are cooperatively deliberative (or intelligent) to construct (or improve) the milieu whereto their better potentialities actualize themselves. When inquiring into situations, they work together to identify their problems and resolve them in such a way as to manifest the democratic ideal, which is all-around human growth. These democratic inquirers do not hold the dictatorship of fixed morality. Normative authority is not given from the outside, but rather within their activity of democratic inquiry. The democratic inquirers admit their fallibility. They are humble and tolerant to different ideas from their own. For that reason, they can mediate conflicts between pluralistic values, but without occasioning a crisis of normativity.

So far, I have briefly explained how Rogers negotiates a wide range of Dewey’s thought. Despite the danger of being somewhat redundant, I clarify each chapter’s points made by Rogers, in order to illustrate how civic religiosity, democracy, and morality are intertwined. His book consists of five chapters, which are divided into two parts. In Part I (From Certainty to Contingency), Rogers attempts to offer a revisionist reading of Dewey’s view of religion and his theory of inquiry. Part I is the stage for his discussion of civic religion, pragmatic ethics, and radical democracy as a way of life, all of which are his key topics in Part II (Religion, The Moral Life, and Democracy).

Part I is comprised of the first two chapters. In Chapter 1 (Protestant Self-Assertion and Spiritual Sickness), Rogers puts Dewey in a three way of conversation with Calvinist theologian Charles Hodge and liberal Protestants, such as Henry Ward Beecher, Lyman Abbott, James McCosh, and John Fiske. Rogers focuses on and understands two top-

ics: piety and faith. According to him, Hodge believes that only Calvinist theologian worldview can be a candidate of the moral idea needed to contemporary soulless, immoral men. It persuades men to accept the object of their piety – namely, God. It helps them realize the purpose in world and offers a sense of moral commitment to self and society. On the contrary, liberal Protestants made an intellectual attempt to understand piety by pursuing quest for “certainty”: in this liberal theology, surely, “progress remains, but it finds expression through a divinely sanctioned vision of *self-assertion*” (30).

Rogers recognizes that Dewey gives us an alternative to Hodge’s reactionism and liberal Protestants’ modernism. Rogers criticizes that the former promotes fundamentalist dogmatism which is not correspondent to our contemporary pluralist world, and the latter leads to disenchantment of the self’s relation to the world. He believes that there is an alternative to both theologies and the alternative should be a naturalist progressivism or progressive naturalism with which fallibility and transactionalism are presupposed. It is correspondent to moral pluralism and links the self to the world. According to Rogers, Dewey builds this progressivism by accepting Darwin’s scientific worldview. Indeed, Dewey secures a great insight on “nature” from Darwin’s scientific worldview, that is, the idea of “contingency” (For Rogers’ articulation of Darwin’s concept of contingency, see, 31–35). Dewey understands men and their religious, pious lives in the contingent Darwinian nature, and advocates transactionalism: “there is transaction relationship among self, other, and the world – resulting from the movement of and disruption in life (what he called ‘problem’) – that generates and structures frameworks of meaning” (48). Rogers argues that this transactionalism allows Dewey to avoid the pitfalls that can present serious metaphysical and epistemological problems emerging out of Hodge’s Calvinism and liberal Protestantism. Metaphysical problem refers to the order of universe which they think is given, hence certain and necessary. In the universe that shuns the contingency, self is just an occasion for a sick soul that loses piety: self is underwritten by piety that is implicit in the contingency. Epistemological problem is that a sick soul pursues the quest for certainty.

In Chapter 2 (Agency and Inquiry After Darwin), Rogers deals with the epistemological problem by focusing on Dewey’s theory of inquiry and agency. For Dewey, inquiry is not a certainty-begging epistemological enterprise, and agency is not an intellectual atom considered to be a sick soul. Dewey conceives

inquiry as an empirical, naturalistic, moral, and socio political action wherein normative authority lies. The key element to this action is “the place of contingency therein” (61). He believes that through their inquiring action, men improve their envioning conditions. Rogers writes: men’s inquiring “action and knowledge (that is, of both self and world) are emergent environmental properties, potentially defying human mastery and control” (61). Roger recognizes that as such, Dewey’s meliorism presupposes the nature of man as humble yet hopeful. In the process of inquiry, humans understand that the results of their inquiry, including hypotheses employed in their project to resolve problems they are faced with, are fallible. Accepting fallibility, inquirers are humble. However, this does not mean that they lose hope. With hope, “humility is the gift of inquiry” (101). In other words, their inquiring action would not be possibly made without their desires accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment. They *can* have such desires because they have the democratic faith.

Living a life controlled by civic religiosity as such, men will not stop pursuing inquiry: they will continuously rearrange their experiences (and reconstructing their knowledge) to make their envioning conditions better and more fruitful. At the end of the Preface of the book, Rogers delivers a central message of the book: “The defining feature of Dewey’s philosophy (...) is an understanding of humility that does not extinguish hope.”(xiii). Along with his idea of contingency, his theory of human agent as humble yet hopeful is the core area of Dewey’s philosophy.

Part II weds Dewey’s theory of inquiry and human agency to Dewey’s core areas flagged by Rogers’ subtitle, that is, Religion, Moral Life, and Democracy. Rogers offers an Aristotelian interpretation of these areas. This is important because Aristotle is commonly identified with a group of philosophers who advocate political elitism. Even so, there are still thinkers who have used Aristotle as a source of participatory republicanism.(We find this especially in Arendt’s *The Human Condition*, and the relation of Aristotle to the civic republican tradition is also found in John Pocock’s famous book, *The Machiavellian Moment* and is repeated by many who have been influenced by it.) In Part II, Rogers contends that this reading of Aristotle’s politics is not correct. He sees that Dewey corrects this misreading and offers a democratic ethics and a pragmatic theory of democracy. Rogers recognizes that for Dewey, the best political regime that was imagined by Aristotle is not the aristocratic republic where a few educated elites whose

minds are self-restraint govern for the good of all, but the kind of participatory democratic government where all citizens participate in ruling and are ruled by themselves. According to Rogers, Dewey regards Aristotle as a significant critic of the political elitism, which is a systematic but failed attempt to theorize how the common good can be formed and achieved. In short, Rogers reads Dewey as Aristotelian of participatory republicanism, who advocates a small participatory democratic government where educated and deliberative citizen run politics for the common good. As such, my correct reading of Part II, especially Chapter 5 (Constraining Elites and Managing Power), is verified by Rogers’s positioning Dewey against Walter Lippermann. Rogers notes: “for Lippermann experts give shape to the problems that are only dimly perceived by both citizens and political officials” (201). Along with Dewey, Rogers critically evaluates Lippermann’s conception of citizens – citizens who “are dogmatic and irrational, hence incapable of “understanding problems and assessing potential proposals” – as rootless: “there is no reason to posit this (conception) as fundamental to human psychology and human socialization, precisely because citizens invariably move away from or rethink the belief they hold” (parenthesis is mine, 201).

Rogers notes that Dewey conceives democratic citizens as deliberative and informed elaborates. This is critical insofar as citizens have been deemed incapable of managing powers in politics over themselves and thus some intellectuals like Lippermann have embraced the practice of political elitism. For Dewey, they are capable of addressing their moral and socio-political problems and adept at imagining hypotheses to lead them to resolving those problems. This is how they improve their conditions, and there is no reason to be ruled by the political elites. With deep trust of democratic faith, Dewey can say this.

In Chapter 3 (Faith and Democratic Piety), Rogers articulates Dewey’s concept of civic religiosity. This is linked to the democratic capacity. It is well known that for Dewey, the adjective, religious, does not refer to the quality of deity as an attribute of divine being or object, but rather, to the quality of human experience, that is of contingent nature. Rogers writes: “what Dewey (...) wants to identify as religious” is those forms of experience that “intensify and deepen our communion with the large world” (125–126). When it is narrowly or mistakenly used to indicate a feature of organized religion or a property of institutions, religious life is meant as a life living according to faith as the body of dogma of

an organized religious institution. On the contrary, when the adjective, religious, refers to the quality of human experience, religious life is meant as a democratic life of faith in human nature.

Rogers recognizes that in this Deweyan religious naturalism, religiosity denotes piety that is without falling into the body of dogma and allows us to live a life controlled by the democratic faith: a life of “democratic piety” (For Rogers’ full articulation of the phrase, see: 126–136). Rogers urges his audiences to “understand piety and faith as *democratic virtues*” (*italics* are mine, 127). Men who cultivate themselves toward those “religious” traits of character are deemed democratically virtuous. They are pious, but not in a sense that their lives and experience are incorporated to the order of supernatural beings or objects as fixed and related to infallible dogmas behind this order. Instead, they are democratic in their lives and expand the horizon of experience to make our lives richer and flourishing.

In Chapter 4 (Within the Space of Moral Reflection), Rogers recognizes that in Dewey’s pragmatist ethics, there is a connection between morality and democracy, and attempts to explain this linkage. For Dewey, moral inquiry is not a pure reason-based and autonomous action to give the moral laws that are completely independent of enviroing conditions. It is rather a cooperatively intelligent action of democratic deliberation – wherein morality lies – to address various socio-political and economic issues in contemporary pluralist world. “Moral conflict” between diverse views of issues emerges and “deliberation” is thus required to resolve the conflict that would otherwise develop into culture war (170). Rogers supports Dewey’s argument that deliberation should be democratic. Dewey’s religious naturalist concept of democracy – which is understood in the context of meliorism – directs our moral thought and judgment along the lines to address hindrances to human growth and the actualization of individuality. We as a cooperatively intelligent society have “mutual responsibility” to identify problems we commonly share together and resolve them in such a way as to lead to all-around flourishing of human life (170). Rogers concludes the chapter that as such, moral inquiry is considered to be the best method to pursue the quest for the common good in our pluralist world.

I have reviewed each chapter in a reversed way because I feel that Rogers’s reading of Dewey’s theory of democracy should be highlighted in his moral philosophy. Dewey’s view of moral life embraces the participa-

tory republicanism, which is his Aristotelian understanding of democratic life. In Rogers’s interpretation of Dewey’s theory moral life, I see him emphasizing on democratic deliberation whereon moral life is based. According to Rogers, Dewey does not refer to deliberation as the kind of “utilitarianism’s calculative understanding of deliberation” because this “calculative approach undercuts the deliverances of the imagination, and in some instances simply ignores them altogether” (177). It is referred to as the imaginative action that allows us to “have access to” and “focus on funded experiences for future possibilities” (176).

Rogers offers a great insight into Dewey’s moral life, but it seems to me that his understanding of deliberation-based moral life is limited, since he does not include a discussion of Dewey’s theory of democratic virtues. Briefly conceived, democratic virtues are traits or habits of character, which are considered morally good because they are dispositions to kinds of cooperatively intelligent and constructive activity by which individuals work together to create the proper conditions, thereby actualizing their individualities that might otherwise remain merely potential. In his recent book, *Human Eros: Eco-ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence*, Thomas Alexander writes: “the core of democratic virtues lie in the ability to learn the art of living meaningfully, cultivating experience so that society can intelligently act for those consummatory experiences which realize the deepest sense of embodied value and meaning in our existence.” (Thomas M., Alexander, *Human Eros: Eco-ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2013, 202.) For Dewey, moral life refers to a form of life constrained by democratic virtues. Living moral life is bringing democracy (understood in terms of civic religiosity) to our problematic situations. Democratically virtuous men are the participatory republicanism-oriented public. With his concept of democratic virtues, we can not only critically respond to the elitism in politics, but also mediate moral conflict between our plural values which are incommensurate. Dewey’s concept of democratic virtues should have been articulated in Rogers’s discussion of Dewey’s ethics, and he could have found out and filled the gap between morality and democracy.

Chanhee Lee

Graham Oppy (ed.)

**The Routledge Handbook of
Contemporary Philosophy of
Religion**

Routledge, London – New York
2015

The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion was edited by Graham Oppy, professor of philosophy at Monash University in Australia, and a co-editor of the multivolume work *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, and author of *Ontological Arguments and Belief in God, Arguing about Gods, Philosophical Perspectives on Infinity, The Best Argument against God, Re-inventing Philosophy of Religion, Describing Gods: An Investigation of Divine Attributes*, and co-author of *Reading Philosophy of Religion*. This handbook is an outstanding reference source to all topics and problems concerning religion, science, philosophy, and contemporary philosophy of religion. As many other Routledge handbook series, which are meant to be an introductory collection of essays, the book is divided into seven parts which then deal with various problems and concepts. More than thirty professors, scholars and researchers have contributed to this outstanding handbook with their essays, writing about various topics which include anything ranging from traditional conceptions of divinity, to religion and cognitive sciences. Some of the contributors are Sahotra Sarkar, philosopher of science and conservation biologist at the university of Texas, Todd Tremlin, professor in the Religion department at Central Michigan University, and author of the book *Minds and Gods: The Cognitive Foundations of Religion*, and Michael Levin, philosophy professor at City University of New York.

First part of the book deals with *theoretical orientations* which takes six different approaches to religion. Chapter one of the book deals with “Feminist Approaches to Religion”, written by Beverley Clack. In short, it deals with feminist theology which includes the problems of sexuality and identity because it is impossible, for them, to consider spirituality and belief in God without understanding how sexuality and gender affects the construction of these concepts. Feminist theologians have a very similar critique of religion compared to German philosopher and anthropologist, Ludwig Feuerbach. The basis of their agreement lies in that they both argue

that the concept of God is entirely a human creation which then holds certain beliefs and values. From there, Feuerbach and feminist theologians split up. Feminist theologians claim that “God is made in man’s image and that image defines masculinity in a manmade society” (p. 8).

Chapter two then takes a different approach – “Phenomenological Approach to Religion”. Basically, this chapter deals with phenomenology and phenomenological method, developed by philosopher Edmund Husserl, and religion. In other words, John Panteleimon Manoussakis, the author of this chapter, tries to define what religion is when we take the phenomenological approach to it. The problem surfaced, author claims, at the beginning of the twentieth century when science tried to examine religion from its own perspective. For example, Durkheim tried to define religion as “pertaining to things sacred, in contradistinction to the profane” (p. 22). In other words, the world is divided into two domains: one sacred and the other one profane.

“Postmodern Approaches to Religion” is a third chapter, written by N. N. Trakakis, and it discusses several concepts that characterize postmodern theology, namely negative theology which deals with “radical transcendence, incomprehensibility, and ineffability of God” (p. 37), Nietzschean ‘death of God’ theology movement which originated in 1960, “taking their lead from Nietzsche’s famous parable of the madman” (p. 37), and phenomenological approaches with its ‘theological turn’.

Next chapter, written by Trent Dougherty and Logan Paul Gage, thematises “New Atheist Approaches to Religion”. To be precise, this chapter gives criticism to New Atheism conceived by Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris and Daniel Dennett and their arguments against God’s existence. Authors focus on Richard Dawkins and his arguments against existence of God to show readers that he and the New Atheists are not providing “any reason at all for the proposition that God does not exist” (p. 61).

Fifth chapter deals with “Wittgensteinian Approaches to Religion”, or, to be more precise, his rejection of the idea that “Christianity offers us a philosophical theory about what goes on in a celestial realm” (p. 63).

Six and the last chapter of the first part of the book is written by Harriet A. Harris and it deals with “Fundamentalist Approaches to Religion”. In short, this chapter examines fundamentalism in Protestant Christianity where the term first appeared. It suggests that fundamentalism must be analysed so we can explain larger philosophical trend of the modern

times. As Harris says, “If we understand fundamentalism as it has developed historically and philosophically, we can use a study of it to assess the effects of foundationalism and empiricism upon religious belief” (p. 89).

Second part of the book deals with *conceptions of divinity*, in chapters “Cosmology, Divinity and Self-Cultivation in Chinese Thought”, “Islamic Conceptions of Divinity”, “Hindu Models of Divinity” and “Christian Conceptions of God”.

When writing about Chinese thought, author Karyn L. Lai focuses on Confucian and Daoist characteristics of religious belief. She explains the purpose of divination as relationship between the human and the divine through time as it is a practice of securing the future through oracle bones and various pyromantic rituals. Confucian and Daoist traditions both put emphasis on self-cultivation as an “attempt to empower individuals, for them to develop skills and capacities” (p. 109). A really useful addition to this chapter is the list of dates that effectively put dynasties into a time table for easier understanding of Chinese history. Also, at the very end of the chapter is a glossary of Chinese terms which spans on four pages. Purpose of this glossary is to further explain certain terms and words that are appearing in the text.

As for Islamic conceptions of divinity, author Imran Aijaz tries to introduce us to the Islamic understanding of God in Qur’an and ahadith, which are reports describing the words and actions of Muhammad. Aijaz, through discussing attributes of God that are mentioned in those two sources, claims that Islamic religion and its God does not necessarily fall under the standard theism in which exists a omnipotent and omnibenevolent God like, for example, in Christianity. Aijaz explains that it is necessary to understand concept of God because it will affect our religious commitment towards Him. He then proceeds to examine God’s transcendence and how, because of that, it is irrational to believe in Him. On top of that, he adds that Islamic God is not omnibenevolent because He does not love non-believers nor wrong-doers, and so on. Addressing those questions, claims Aijaz, are important part of Islamic philosophy of religion.

Next chapter deals with Hindu models of divinity, namely “Divinity in the Vedas”, “Nyāya Concept of God”, “Popular Hindu Traditions and Their Concepts of God”, “Vedānta Concept of God”. When writing about divinity in the Vedas, authoress Monima Chadha shows us that God is not at the centre of religious intelligibility, but instead it is re-

placed by *Rta*, a cosmic law “which maintains the natural and moral order of the cosmos” (p. 130). According to her, not even gods have power over *Rta*. Contrary to the Vedas, *Nyāya* scholars put God in the centre of their belief system. He is the cause of the universe, according to the three *sūtras* presented in this chapters. God presented by *Nyāya* scholars does not create the world *ex nihilo*, like Christian God does, but rather He only arranges atoms that already exists. *Vedānta* concept of God somewhat portrays pantheism, claiming that the world is God’s body, in which term ‘body’ means “any substance of a conscious being which can be entirely controlled and supported by that being for the latter’s own purposes, and whose proper form is solely to be the accessory of that being, is the “body” of that being” (p. 135–136).

Last chapter of the second part of the book deals with Christian conceptions of God, by John Bishop. In contrast to previous chapters, God is presented as a Creator *ex nihilo*, as a sole object of worship and an ultimate productive cause.

Jerome Gelman opens the third part of the book with chapter about “Religious Experience”, which is “an experience purportedly granting acquaintance with, or supporting belief in the existence of, realities or states of affairs of a kind not accessible by way of sense perception, somatosensory modalities, or standard introspection and having religious meaning for the subject” (p. 155). Author claims that philosophers have advanced three approaches when it comes to religious experience, namely “Swineburne’s Principle of Credulity”, “Alston’s Doxastic Practice Approach”, and “Plantiga’s Proper Functionalism” approach.

Second chapter is written by Mark Wynn and it thematises “Religious Faith”. He deals with the conception of faith in Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*. For Aquinas, the act of faith does not depend on the evidence presented, but upon the will that draws us towards God, or the divine good.

Bryan Frances in his chapter “Religious Disagreement” tries to motivate and formulate the main *epistemological questions* to ask about the phenomenon of religious disagreement. In short, it deals with various methods which can put a person in doubt when it comes to his own religious beliefs. One of the examples is being aware of other religions that have different (or similar) beliefs than your own, and thus the person starts questioning his own beliefs and religion.

“Religion and Superstition” written by Edward Feser explains superstition in Aquinas’

way, where he offers us a typology of superstition. He gives us four species of superstition, namely “improper worship of the true God, idolatry, divination or consulting with demons, and vain observances, such as the use of amulets or other purportedly magical practices” (p. 192). Author then proceeds to explain each one of them throughout his essay.

Fourth part of the book deals with *metaphysics and religious language*. It’s first chapter is written by Michael Scott, named “Realism and Anti-Realism” and it deals with both realist and anti-realist positions of interpreting religious language. Author claims that there are three areas of interpretation. First one focuses on the type of content that religious sentences can possess; second one focuses on the truth conditions of religious sentences; and the third focuses on the meaning of religious utterances.

Next chapter, written by Roger M. White, “Analogy, Metaphor, and Literal Language”, discusses how is it possible to use human language to speak about God, without anthropomorphising such a God with our fears, wishes, morality, aspirations etc. The problem is in human language, claims the author, because it is imbued with human fears, values, and aspirations. Author then proceeds asking if we can ever talk about God without falling into anthropomorphisms and projections of our own wishes and ideals, while retaining the meaningfulness of the language. He tries to answer his own question with linguistic use of analogy, and religious claims that are interpreted metaphorically.

Chapter “The Scientific Interpretations of Religious Texts” by David Bartholomew takes scientific method and applies it to the interpretations of religious texts, namely Bayes’ theorem, and linguistic method called *stylo-metrics* which shows us the structure or authorship of texts by “analysing their statistical characteristics” (p. 232).

Last chapter in this part of the book deals with “Metaphysics and Religion”, written by Kevin Hart. Author deals with several positions in Christianity and their adoptions of some aspects of metaphysics. First, there is metaphysics in service of natural theology in, for example, scholasticism or in contemporary analytic philosophy. Second, metaphysics is bracketed into theologies. For example, “Kant’s attempt to bring religion within the limits of bare reason” (p. 246), or “medieval contemplative theologies that prize *affectus* over *intellectus*” (p. 246), and so on. Third and last is the restraining of metaphysics which was started by Friedrich Nietzsche.

Fifth part of the book thematises *religion and politics*. Victoria S. Harrison, writer of the first chapter, examines “Religious Pluralism” and its integration into philosophy of religion. To do that, author claims that philosophers of religion should take into account different religious traditions and their ties to their corresponding philosophical traditions.

A very short chapter written by Marci A. Hamilton on “Religion in the Public Square”, deals with “how those advocating for religious entities have borrowed the term ‘public square’ from the Supreme Court’s free speech doctrine in the attempt to gain leverage for their public policy positions” (p. 270).

“Religious Tolerance”, chapter written by Mehdi Aminrazavi deals with religious diversity in Western societies. Author claims that the concept of religious tolerance as an harmonious utopia of different religious groups is an illusion and it cannot be achieved. He presents his arguments for intellectual intolerance of religious beliefs throughout the chapter, claiming that intolerance is more of a virtue than a vice. He does that in a way that he gives us standard, accepted arguments which are in favour of religious tolerance, for example *Argument from utility*, and *Feeling-good argument*, and then replies with his own arguments denying their validity.

Last chapter of the fifth part of the book somewhat compliments the chapter before. Daniel J. McKaughan writes about “Religious Violence” and its occurrences throughout the history. Concerned about religion and violence which it can be responsible for, he asks questions on why people commit violent acts under the name of their religion. He is interested under what circumstances is violence justified and why do religious institutions rationalise violence. McKaughan claims that one of the reasons is the sheer belief in God to whom we are morally submitted, and if He wills us to kill someone or group of people, we are obliged because His will must be followed.

Religion and ethics is the topic of the sixth part of the book, and it starts with chapter named “Religion and Meta-Ethics”, written by Michael Smith. He focuses on the relationship between existence of God and ethical obligations it carries.

In chapter “Religion and Normative Ethics”, David S. Oderberg takes Christianity as the paradigm for discussing the connection between religion and morality, claiming that those two categories do not depend on each other. In other words, a person does not have to be religious to be moral and vice-versa.

Chapter “Religion and the Meaning of Life”, written by Neil Levy, examines three arguments (*The plan argument*, *The immortality argument*, and *The objectivity argument*) designed to show that meaning in life requires the existence and devotion towards God. He claims that all three arguments are weak, claiming that God is not necessary for a meaningful life.

Michael P. Levine and his chapter “Religion and Suffering” focuses on the claim that suffering is the central element of all religions. In recent decades, the problem of suffering transformed into the problem of evil due to the “contemporary analytic philosophy of religion’s effort to contain, sanitize, and even obscure a problem that has long kept philosophers of religion on the back foot” (p. 341). In other words, as the author claims, contemporary analytic philosophy has nothing new to say, so it is finding a new way to say the same things over and over again.

Last chapter of the sixth part is “Religion and Flourishing”, written by Christopher Toner. In this chapter, author points out the differences between secular and religious morality, and then focuses on the religious morality, claiming that it is grounded in relations between human person and a divine person that must follow certain requirements, such as *fear of God*, *obedience to God*, *love of God*, and *denial of self* (p. 367).

Last part of the book is dedicated to *religion and scientific scrutiny*, and it opens with the chapter “Religion and Reason”, written by Robert C. Koons. In four chapters he examines the nature of reason and religion, their relation to one another, and in the end, if reason can be grounded in faith.

Chapter written by Todd Tremplin, “Cognitive Foundations of Religions” takes a psychologi-

cal spin on religion, claiming that its origin is actually an accidental byproduct of the brain. In other words, religion is a some sort of error, a product of “false perception and cognitive blunders” (p. 401), an illusion.

Sahotra Sarkar, writer of the chapter “Religion and Science”, focuses on four topics in his essay. First one deals with “the origins of religion in human culture, viewed as a scientific problem” (p. 402). The second one deals with “the relations between religious beliefs and ideologies and modern science” (p. 402). The third topic deals with “the relations between institutionalized religion and modern scientific practice” (p. 402), and the fourth with “the role of naturalism in modern science” (p. 402).

Last chapter in the book is dedicated to “Religion and Metaphysical Naturalism”, written by Neil A. Manson. He explains that naturalist believe only in existence of natural entities. In other words, there are no spirits, gods, ghosts or other immaterial and otherworldly beings. Author then proceeds giving three theories, ranging from *anthropomorphic projections* and *sociological theories*, to *Freudian psychological theories*.

To conclude this book review, a lot of material is presented within the covers of this handbook. It is well written and has a lot of information that, although only introductory and somewhat summarised, provide a good insight into wide range of topics concerning contemporary philosophy of religion. It should be noted, in addition to already great essays, that bibliography on the very end of the book provides enough material for further reading and deepening the already interesting array of topics.

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