

as *plоче* (repetition in structuring an argument), *anthypophora* (question-answer format), *gradatio* and *sorites* (two distinct series configurations), and grammatical structures peculiar to English, the author guides her reader to attend to the effects produced by subtle shifts in discourse. O’Keefe’s familiarity with Catholic moral discourse, such as M. Cathleen Kaveny’s work on intrinsic evil, greatly enriches her rhetorical analysis. An impressive works cited concludes each chapter. A notable omission is any account of the voter guide’s production. Does an USCCB staff member or single bishop produce a draft that a committee edits? Has authorship changed over time? She, in a sense, reinforces the bishops’ rhetorical ploy by failing to specify authorship. Another surprise, given O’Keefe’s familiarity with Catholic theological discourse, is her selection of sociologist Anthony Giddens’ definition of tradition as a “closed system” (115). This choice masks the complexities in the rhetorical uses of “tradition” not only by bishops but also by nuns on buses. Such comments are mere quibbles in comparison with the many insights that O’Keefe’s timely analysis of the USCCB’s voter guides offers her reader. This book is especially recommended to those interested in US bishops’ public discourse, Catholic influence in US electoral politics, as well as those considering wide-ranging impact of clerical sexual abuse scandals on episcopal authority.

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Thomas Merton’s Encounter with Buddhism and Beyond: His Interreligious Dialogue, Inter-Monastic Exchanges, and Their Legacy. By Jaechan Anselmo Park, OSB. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2019. xxxii + 285 pages. \$29.95 (paper).

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Forty years ago, Sri Lankan Jesuit theologian Aloysius Pieris offered a provocative insight into Thomas Merton’s pioneering witness with respect to interreligious dialogue. “It was really not in Asia,” observed Pieris, “that Merton discovered the East; there he only recognized and named what he had already sought and found in his own monastic cell.... The West can recover its *Eastern sense* by dialoguing with its own monks” (*Love Meets Wisdom*, 12). To recover Christianity’s “Eastern sense,” Pieris suggested, would be to rediscover the contemplative heart of our personal and shared life in Christ. Merton was remarkable for his insistence that such consciousness is the inheritance of every Christian, and not only the monk; yet Merton himself, it seems, in no small part through his encounter with

Buddhism, attained a level of understanding and contemplative realization reached by few Western Christian practitioners. In this groundbreaking study, recently awarded the International Thomas Merton Society's prestigious Thomas Merton Award, Fr. Anselmo Park sets out a bold thesis: in the particular journey that was Merton's life in Christ, something of humanity's primordial unity-in-diversity is disclosed.

As a Korean Christian and Benedictine monk, Fr. Park is well positioned to elucidate the depths of Merton's commitment to "contemplative dialogue" that culminated in his meetings with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other Buddhist practitioners in Asia. Originally written as a dissertation for the University of Toronto, this is the first book-length study in English to evaluate both Merton's sustained encounter with Buddhism *and* its ongoing relevance for interreligious and inter-monastic dialogue. Its four chapters and conclusion do so with clarity and sobriety, resisting hagiography in favor of careful systematic analysis that will be of considerable value to scholars of Christian-Buddhist dialogue, comparative theologians, and indeed to all "those men and women who look primarily to a transformation of human consciousness and a spiritual awakening from within their respective traditions" (xxiv).

Most interesting for this reader is Fr. Park's case for Zen practice as the hermeneutical key to Merton's discovery of the transformational power of interreligious dialogue now and into the future. "He believed that Zen, as transreligious consciousness, expresses the *contemplative core* in all Asian religious traditions, including Christianity" (254). Fr. Park allows Merton's provocative declaration that "Zen and Christianity are the future" to spur his inquiry, while resisting the temptation to turn the declaration into a dogma. In Fr. Park's able hands, Merton's experiential approach to interreligious dialogue—climactically in Asia as encounter, *cor ad cor loquitur*—provides living witness to Rahner's famous statement that the devout Christian of the future "will either be a mystic—someone who has 'experienced' something—or they will no longer be devout at all" (*Karl Rahner: Spiritual Writings*, 24).

I am aware of no other study that combines both a critical appraisal of Merton's limitations with respect to Buddhism while celebrating his capacious desire to learn from and be transformed by the other. In other words, Fr. Park keeps the spiritual motivation of Merton's search at the heart of his study while illuminating Merton's witness to "transcultural maturity" (154–58) that calls Christians today, and monastics in particular, to go and do likewise. The book's most valuable contribution may be chapter 4's intimate history of interreligious and inter-monastic exchanges in the wake of Merton's death, through the Gethsemani Encounters and international

organizations such as Monastic Interreligious Dialogue. There are personal and poignant touchpoints as Fr. Park considers the future, as in the recognition of suffering (*dukkha*) as the common ground on which Buddhists and Christians have much to learn from one another (209); and the author's humble recognition, through the lens of Merton's growth in Christ, of his own biases and blindnesses as a Catholic priest and monk (255). Although set as an academic study, this is a book written from the heart of contemplative prayer and gratitude, such that Pieris' conviction bears out, with a welcome twist: Christianity can recover its Eastern sense by dialoguing with its own monks, especially those from the East.

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Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a New Field. Edited by Eboo Patel, Jennifer Howe Peace, and Noah J. Silverman. Boston: Beacon Press, 2018. xxi + 262 pages. \$28.00 (paper).

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This collection of chapters argues that interreligious/interfaith studies is an emerging but legitimate field of study, branching out from religious studies and reflecting upon interfaith activism. Links are made to the tradition of world religions courses in religious studies and their inherent goal of religious literacy for students. These courses are criticized for their essentialist views of religion, their representation of a limited number of worldviews, their ties to Orientalist or colonial histories (as well as to White Christian privilege), and their lack of affective learning outcomes. In this manner, world religions curricula are found to be relatively ineffective at imparting genuine religious literacy to students. On the other hand, interreligious/interfaith courses or programs are portrayed as more adaptive to the true diversity of religious and secular worldviews as well as more effective at achieving religious literacy through affective learning outcomes. Through pedagogical methods such as case studies and religious site visits, students are challenged to grow in compassion and empathy for "religious others" as well as in appreciation for the difficulties in interreligious understanding and engagement.

The ties to interfaith activism are clarified particularly in the coauthored chapter "Toward an Interreligious City" by Heather Miller Rubens, Homayra Zaid, and Benjamin E. Sax. The authors explain the connection of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and racial segregation in Baltimore to the need of "building interreligious learning communities" at the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies (210–13). These interreligious learning