

even in the bibliography. Despite the gripes, however, if I had to point to one book that illustrates for a sophisticated reader what the anthropology of religion is, I would point to this one.

RANIER FSADNI

RE-ORDERING NATURE: THEOLOGY, SOCIETY AND THE NEW GENETICS edited by Celia Deane-Drummond, Bronislaw Szerszynski (with Robin Grove-White), *Continuum: T&T Clark, London, 2003, Pp. xiv + 368, £17.99 pbk.*

GOD'S BOOK OF WORKS: THE NATURE AND THEOLOGY OF NATURE (Glasgow Gifford lectures) by R.J. Berry, *Continuum: T&T Clark, London, 2003, Pp. xvi + 286, £17.99 pbk.*

These are two quite different books covering similar ground, setting out to plough furrows but ending up merely harrowing the ground. The ground is modern-day questioning of the concept of Nature, and the need of a theological answer. The first book takes its origin in a colloquium held at Lancaster in March 2000. Four papers from that colloquium, with responses, constitute Part 1 of the book. The first paper, by the editors, entitled 'Genetically Modified Theology'(!) argues that public concern about GM is more than a surface apprehension about the risks involved that can be soothed away by scientific statistics and thin consequentialist ethics. Rather it runs deep, and is 'religious in nature'. In his reply to this paper Christopher Southgate agrees that there *is* a theological point to be raised (human being's hubris in the face of creation), but thinks the public concern is rather more prosaic: a thick ethical distrust of private profit versus common good. The third paper in part 1 (Michael Banner) criticises the efforts of two ethicists (Bernard Williams and David Wiggins) to re-interpret away the 'religiousness' of public concern by talking of it as a healthy (Promethean) respect for the treacherousness of nature, or a holy dread of the sublime. Banner thinks we must stand firm against such weakening of our Judaeo-Christian tradition, and reaffirm the importance of God's call to a Sabbath rest to temper our technological servility of labour. The part of Michael Reiss's response to this that particularly interests me and which sums up my feeling about the whole book, is his statement that Banner wants to return to building the Temple; whereas 'unlike Ezra and Nehemiah, I am more concerned at how we can worship in Babylon than return to Jerusalem'.

It seems to me that the book tries to jump in one leap up the ladder of science, ethics, religion, theology, revelation. It uses 'theology' as a sort of trump card to shortcut a whole series of good, proper discussions at the scientific, ethical and philosophical level. The editors

seem to share a sociological disdain for claims of scientists to be pursuing objective truth; consequentialist ethics is pilloried without adequate account of what secular (rather than religious) ethical values it is overlooking; and there is a vagueness about the word 'theology' that disguises whether we are talking (philosophically from reason) about a creator God or (Christianly from revelation) about the history of salvation. Grace cannot heal our world by a sort of evangelical fervour of rebuke; it must befriend that world from within, paying it every secular respect owing to it.

But to end there would be to do the book gross injustice. If I cannot go along with the furrow that it is attempting to plough, I can still recognise that the ground is turned over well, this way and that way, and thoroughly. Part 2 (called Reflections from Specific Cases) covers very good discussions on moving genes from species to species (Reiss) and just experimentation on animals (Stephen Clark). Part 3 returns to the point that I think exaggerated – the theological nature of public concern – but in the process reports some very interesting survey data. Part 4 suggests new and old theological approaches (Ellul, Aquinas) and contains a puzzling chapter from Peter Scott which seems to oppose a theology of the eschatological sabbath to one of the initial creation sabbath; whereas perhaps the theological problem is just how to combine these: the nature given to us and the nature to be transformed by us. A lot of thinking and labour has gone into the book, and it is worth reading.

The second book is a one-man effort (a printing of Gifford Lectures given in 1997–8), but in some ways is even less unified. The author was a professor of genetics, and writes as a scientist most of the time (though one very opposed to the school of thought that says nature is 'nothing but' matter). For the early part of the book he traces the growth of science and especially evolutionary science; and then by way of a discussion of ecology and 'Green science' approaches a religious notion of human being as steward of God's creation, which is 'God's book of works', parallel to the scriptures, 'God's book of words'. But then the lectures seem to fizzle out, without managing to wed the two books. There is a chapter on awe with a brief reference to bible wisdom, and another chapter entitled 'Science and the Cross' which in nearly twenty pages mentions the cross only once (on page 231). Possibly the author was constrained by the peculiar concept of natural theology that Adam Gifford prescribed to those giving his lectures; the end of practically every lecture refers to this problem in some way or another. But the result is that it is difficult to see the furrow that the author thinks he is ploughing (the stewardship one, I think). However, in the course of the book he does a very thorough job of harrowing the ground. I should guess that quite 50% of the text offers quotations from a multitude of different sources, some old, some very new, all of them interesting.

And the author himself writes with experience and attractiveness; so that the book is very informative and alive on every page.

TIMOTHY McDERMOTT

PHILOSOPHY BRIDGING THE WORLD RELIGIONS edited by Peter Koslowski, [A Discourse of the World Religions], *Kluwer Academic Publishers B.V., Dordrecht, 2003, Pp. ix + 259, £59.00 hbk.*

The expensively produced set of five volumes, of which this is the last, originated in a series of dialogues which contributed to the EXPO 2000, in Hanover (Germany). They focus on the following themes in the world religions: *The Concept of God, the Origin of the World and the Image of the Human* (vol.1); *The Origin and Overcoming of Evil and Suffering* (vol.2); *Nature and Technology* (vol.3); *The Progress and End of History, Life after Death, and Resurrection of the Human Person* (vol.4). All have included a varied group of scholars and practitioners from different faith backgrounds whose details are recorded at the end of each book alongside an index of persons mentioned and full details of the companion volumes. This final volume also includes a useful index of subjects across all five collections.

Points that I have raised in previous reviews are worth repeating at the conclusion of the publishing enterprise. The excellent intention of the dialogues was to promote an encounter of persons, but the language of the texts suggests that Islam and Christianity etc dialogue, rather than that particular Muslims, Christians *et al* with particular backgrounds are doing so, and this makes a great deal of difference to claims and emphases. Neither the language nor the participants lists are gender inclusive, though two women were given the task of compiling the index of subjects and summarising the discussions! There are also problems with the lack of discussion of what is to be included or excluded as a 'world religion', and an assumption that the language of revelation and God is shared by all. Difficulties in translation and with use of English make some of the essays difficult to read, and ideas in them difficult to access.

The original dialogues preceded the events of September 11th 2001, but the *Foreword* of this fifth volume links its purpose with those events, and asserts that 'the establishment and enforcement of international law is not possible without agreement among the world's religions, which must clarify amongst themselves what is right and wrong', and that 'blind aggression against the West is incompatible with Islamic jurisprudence'. Philosophy and theology are seen as influences on conceptions of legality, and philosophy, in the first