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reckon with the event of “holy envy” itself. One wonders what difference it would make if the focus was less about the gnoseological outcome of “holy envy” than the interior process itself that may disclose data for mystical and theological reflection. Stendahl’s remarks on “holy envy” as events where we “recognize something in another tradition that is beautiful but not in ours, nor should we grab it and claim it…” seems to move in that direction. (3) I recommend the book for graduate courses in religious studies, theology, and pastoral ministry, all of whom may benefit from engagement with dimensions of the book. It also speaks to the growing consensus that theological reflections on interreligious themes be grounded in friendship, history, and practice, rather than abstract discussions of truth.

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**FRANCIS X. CLOONEY’S** *Reading the Hindu and Christian Classics*, which began as a series of lectures he gave at the University of Virginia, is the recipient of the 2020 Best Book Award from the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies. It is a brief, idiosyncratic, and challenging book, one that only a scholar of Clooney’s erudition and linguistic breadth could have written. It is also a work that goes against the grain of current trends in the academy. At a time when sessions devoted to textual studies at scholarly conferences are becoming less common, Clooney’s book calls readers to return to a method of slow learning and attention to textual detail that he claims earlier Hindus and Christians understood as central to their respective religious traditions.

To exemplify this method of slow reading he chooses three pairs of books, each pair consisting of one Hindu and one Christian text. The first pair, Mādhava’s “Garland of Jaimini’s Reasons” (*Jaiminīyanyāyāmālā*) and Peter Canisius’ “Greater Catechism” (*Catechismus Maior*), he classifies as “instruction.” The second pair of texts, Appayya Dikṣita’s “Collection of Right Perspectives on Our Position” (*Siddhāntaleśasamgraha*) and Peter Lombard’s “Sentences Articulated in Four Books” (*Sententiae in Quattuor Libris Distinctae*), represents “doctrine.” The third pair, Maṇavāḷamāmuni’s “One Hundred Linked Verses on the Holy Word of Mouth” (*Tiruvāyōmoḷi Nurrāntāti*) and Louis Grignion de Montfort’s “Admirable Secret of the Most Holy Rosary” (*Le Secret Admirable du Très Saint Rosaire*), is about “participation.” Clooney anticipates that some readers will find this list strange. That was my first reaction: the logic or necessity behind these choices eluded me. They were written from the 12th to the 18th century in four different languages (Sanskrit, Latin, Tamil, and French). The three texts on the Hindu side come out of different, and arguably rival, traditions: Mīmāṃsā, Advaita Vedānta, and Śrīvaiśṇavism. By contrast, the three Christian texts all have Roman Catholic authors. What is it about these texts in particular that makes them candidates for slow, patient reading? Could we have
replaced these with six others? The answer is evidently yes. For Clooney, these texts are “gateways, portals, not ends in themselves” (p. 21).

What these texts do have in common is that they might be described as capstones of intellectual and devotional traditions that began centuries earlier. This is one of the quietly revolutionary characteristics of *Reading the Hindu and Christian Classics*: it calls into question the very definition of a "classic," exploding the notion that there could be a settled canon for Hindu-Christian studies. In a work with such a title we might expect close readings of central passages from the Bible and the Veda, or of foundational intellectuals like Augustine and Śaṅkara. But most Hindus and Christians, and even many religion scholars, will have never even heard of these six works. These are not the normal objects of *lectio divina*, the Christian practice of slow, meditative reading of scripture that inspires Clooney. Perhaps influenced by Paul Griffiths’ distinction between “religious reading” and “consumerist reading,” Clooney observes that his method of slow reading “may ill fit the modern university, not just because we race along by a much faster, economics-driven pace of life, but because such learning, in religious scholarship, entails new and possibly unsettling thinking on the truth we study and the truth of ourselves” (p. 56). This type of reading might be described as an *I-Thou* relation of dialogue and self-transformation, not an *I-it* relation that uses the text as a diversion or a means to career advancement.

If readers are looking for an overarching theory of slow, religious reading and of a universal truth that each of these six texts bears witness to, they will not find it here. In lieu of a global theory of religious reading, the fourth chapter, “Reading with Wittgenstein,” offers a kind of anti-theory, as Clooney claims that “the smoothing out ordinarily achieved by theory can be a malady that derails proper learning” (p. 105). Part of what Clooney has in mind are theories from the sub-discipline known as the theology of religions, which he critiques between the lines of this book. He takes pains to avoid any totalizing theory about the relation between the world’s religions, whether “a simple and flat assertion of one-truth only” or “an all-encompassing relativism that may inadvertently diminish every firm and passionate tradition” (p. 58). Wittgenstein offers a way out for Clooney insofar as he understands Wittgenstein to follow the path of Mādhava’s Mīmāṃsā: both eschew broad conceptual generalizations and instead focus on the particular, employing case-based reasoning. The Mīmāṃsā school was also notable for its central concern with the systematic interpretation of the injunctions (*vidhis*) contained in the Vedas, in contrast to Vedānta, which oriented itself around Vedic statements describing a fundamental reality.

This Mīmāṃsaka reading of Wittgenstein reveals how the first text Clooney discusses, Mādhava’s “The Garland of Jaimini’s Reasons” sets the tone for his project. Insistence on an anti-theoretical method, and of patient reading attuned to textual particularities, makes sense in this context, but it is not a method shared by all Hindu authors. For instance, Appayya’s “Collection of Right Perspectives on Our Tradition” reads as if it was written to save intermediate students the difficulty of reading dozens of lengthy Advaita Vedānta sub-commentaries on the Brahma Sūtras. It is quick to generalize about each of the differing conclusions (*siddhāntas*) of the Vedānta sub-schools, often without citing a source or explaining the process of reasoning leading up...
to the conclusion. Is Appayya engaged in slow, patient reading, or is he himself flattening the complexities of earlier authors’ works to create something like an early modern textbook of Advaita Vedānta? If the latter, this raises the possibility that earlier religious figures themselves sometimes had means-ends reading habits.

It may be a mistake to get caught up too much in any particular text discussed in this book. Reading the Hindu and Christian Classics is not about these six texts per se, but ultimately about the process of reading itself, and the proper mode of attention one should direct toward a classic. Like the works of the Mīmāṃsakas who inspired it, it is more injunctive than descriptive. Clooney demands that readers go beyond his book to undertake a practice of slow reading on their own. But what are the criteria for choosing a text? Must it be a religious text at all? Could it be On the Origin of Species or Atlas Shrugged? Leaving the possibilities so wide open and implying that almost any text could be a classic, even a 16th century catalog of doctrines or 17th century guide on how to pray the rosary, may seem an invitation to dilettantism. There are also obstacles of translation and language mastery, since two of these six texts have never been translated into English. Even reading one of these in translation can be bewildering, given the challenges in translating complex, culturally embedded concepts. It is not clear whether Clooney believes that there is one cross-cultural mode of slow, religious reading, or whether there are many. Cultures that were primarily or exclusively oral tended to have a different way of engaging with texts than those in which literacy was widespread. For instance, Patañjali’s method of Vedic memorization and self-recitation (svādhyāya) was not the same as Benedict of Nursia’s lectio divina, in spite of their temporal proximity in the mid-first millennium CE.

Judging it solely by its injunctive focus, Reading the Hindu and Christian Classics has been a success: it moved me to pick up a fairly obscure 16th century text and renew my own practice of slow reading, without any definite objective other than trying to make sense of the text’s words. Clooney’s book is an important reminder that in times of crisis such as ours, reading a text from a different era can be a balm for our worries and even an opportunity for self-transformation, if we are attentive enough to let it do its work.

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**Raimon Panikkar: A Companion to His Life and Thought. Edited by Peter C. Phan and Young-chan Ro. Cambridge: James Clarke and Co, 2018. 320 pp.**

**RAIMON PANIKKAR** died in 2010 in his native Tavertet, high up in the Pyrenees above Barcelona. The son of a Hindu father and a Spanish Catholic mother, he famously declared that ‘I “left” as a Christian, “found myself” as a Hindu, and “returned” as a Buddhist, without having ceased to be a Christian’. Not all his sayings are so memorable, nor so doubtfully consistent. His collected works, the *Opera Omnia*, are now being published by Orbis in what is projected to be some eighteen volumes. His spiritual journal, *The Water of the Drop* (ISPCK,