COMPARATIVE AND CROSS-CULTURAL ETHICS BIBLIOGRAPHY

**N.B. See also Culture, Inculturation, and Global Ethics Bibliographies**

Compiled by

James T. Bretzke, S.J.
Professor of Moral Theology
Boston College School of Theology & Ministry

Latest update: December 13, 2017

Table of Contents

*Articles on Comparative and/or Cross-Cultural Ethics. ............................. 1*

*Books on Comparative and/or Cross-Cultural Ethics............................. 11*
COMPARATIVE AND CROSS-CULTURAL ETHICS BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compiled by

James T. Bretzke, S.J.
Professor of Moral Theology
Boston College School of Theology & Ministry

**N.B. See also Culture, Inculturation, and Global Ethics Bibliographies**

Articles on Comparative and/or Cross-Cultural Ethics

AA.VV. Philosophy East and West 37 (April, 1987).

Issue on Environmental Ethics, with cross-cultural and Eastern approaches, with articles by J. Baird Callicott, Robert C. Neville, Kenneth K. Inada, Gerard James Larson, David L. Hall, and Holmes Ralston III.


Bosley argues against confusing virtue with a natural property.

Bosley is professor of philosophy at the University of Alberta.


Recent discussion concerning multiculturalism, pluralism, globalization of ethics and the prospects for a "common morality" all provide a challenging context for critical ethical reflection on the notions of the common good as these are found in various cultural and religious traditions. This article investigates the possibility of enriching our liberal Western notion of the common good from a cross-cultural perspective afforded by Confucianism and what might be called the Confucian notion of the "common good," even though the precise terminological equivalent is not found in the Confucian literature or philosophical tradition. An original exposition of the notion of the common good exegeted from the Confucian canon is presented and discussed in reference to the Confucian cardinal virtues, the notion of the chün-tzu (paradigmatic moral individual); the four cardinal virtues of jen, yi, li, and chih; an understanding of community as fiduciary; and the moral force of the notion of the T'ien-ming or Mandate of Heaven.


Investigates the key aspects of the Confucian virtue ethics in relation to the notions of the chün-tzu (Superior Person), the Five Relationships of society, the particular Confucian virtues of jen (benevolence) and li (propriety), the moral vision of the tao (Way), and the understanding of the t'ien-ming (Mandate of Heaven). The thesis of the article is that the moral matrix provided by the web of social relationships is what allows the Confucian ethics of virtue to function well.
As the 20th century closes our universities, theological centers and even seminary settings, can no longer presume a homogeneous religious and cultural academic community among either students or professors. This fact, coupled with recent discussion concerning the globalization of ethics and the prospects for a common morality, as well as related issues such as inculturation, pluralism, and multi-culturalism all provide a challenging context for critical reflection on how religious ethics can and should be done in these universities, theological centers and seminaries. This article outlines both some of the major concerns raised in teaching ethics from cross-cultural, ecumenical, and inter-religious perspectives in the United States, as well as developing a coherent methodology which is grounded in the theological tradition of Christian ethics, but which seeks to integrate these different perspectives. As a practical example of how a concrete course might be developed for undergraduate, graduate, and seminary settings I utilize a course I have designed entitled "Cross-Cultural Christian Ethics" which I have taught regularly at the Jesuit School of Theology/Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. The participants in these courses reflect a diverse background both theological and culturally and thus may provide a reasonable microcosm of many of our contemporary academic institutions. Critical evaluation of the course's theological and pedagogical premises, as well as discussion on the students' participation and feedback on the course, hopefully will stimulate further reflection on both the theological issues connected with doing cross-cultural ethics in the Christian theological tradition as well as aiding concrete curricular development in this area.


See also “responses” in the same issue by Robin Lovin, Ronald M. Green, and a “response” to the responses by Cho herself.

Cho is Asst. Professor of Buddhist Studies at Georgetown University.


Looks at the opposition between a so-called “foundational” universalism, which the author holds is articulated in modern natural law theories and rationalist universalism, and “antifoundational” skepticism and/or relativism (from Jeremy Bentham to Richard Rorty), the author tries to steer a middle course which will situate rights claims in a contextualized prudential judgment. He considers Henry Rosemont’s notion of “concept clusters” which reflect different modes of human flourishing—clusters that are not completely incommensurable on the one hand, nor uniformly exchangeable on the other. The author concludes that this analysis suggests that globalism or universalism of human rights is not so much a starting premise as a challenging practical task which will require intensive inter-human and cross-cultural learning—what Tu Wei-ming has called the ongoing “humanization” of humankind.


The penultimate chapter of a fascinating study of cultural clash between a Hmong family dealing with a young daughter with severe epilepsy and the doctors who treated her over several years. This chapter outlines some of the key points on cultural communication and miscommunication.

Argues that “religion” is an inadequate analytic concept for cross-cultural analysis due to its vagueness and the imprecision in which the term has been used in religious studies texts. Rather than using religion as an analytic concept Fitzgerald suggests it would be better understood “as a form of mystification generated by its disguised ideological function” (p. 91).


Constructs a model integrating Kohlberg's philosophy of moral reasoning, which is then applied to several case studies.


Discusses conceptions and approaches to human rights in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea (which he calls a consensual model), and contrasts this to North Korea and mainland China (which he calls the Communist model). In turn these models are contrasted with a Western liberal model which Hsiung terms as being essentially "adversarial" in its conception and practice.


LaFleur is professor of Japanese in the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.


This article is devoted to an examination of Jeffrey Stout's holistic approach to comparative religious ethics. The author briefly explains what he takes the purpose of comparative ethics to be. He also sets out to show that how one understands the task of comparative religious ethics, and the way one undertakes comparative work in general, cannot be divorced from the type of concern with method and theory (e.g., a theory of religion) that Stout surprisingly sees as detrimental to comparative study.


Reflections on his attempts to teach cross-cultural ethics in a Baptist university. He articulates some helpful concepts about “moral grammar” and “moral culture” which can be used cross-culturally, but largely sidesteps the deeper issues of an objective moral order which might have valid cross-cultural, universalist claims. Instead, he suggests walking a line between “absolutism” and “relativism,” though without explaining or describing what these terms might mean in the concrete.

Revised response to a 1987 lecture given at Arizona State University by Robert Bellah, entitled "Religion and Technological Revolution in Japan and the United States."


Short essay (pp. 1-9), followed by endnotes (pp. 9-16), and a long bibliography (pp. 17-30).


The authors contend that the New Zealand Maori ethics is essentially a virtue ethics.
Perrett and Patterson are members of the philosophy department of Massey University, New Zealand.


Ranly originally delivered this paper at Wadhams Hall Seminary College in Ogdensburg, New York on 8 March 1989. He has worked for the past sixteen years in Peru.


Essay on the results of a cross-cultural study involving children from India and Illinois, and aimed at assessing the separate theories of moral development proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg and E. Turiel. Also contains a basic reference bibliography.


A response by David Little to Stout's earlier criticism of the former's *Comparative Religious Ethics*.


One of several essays presented at the Sixth East-West Philosophers' Conference held in August 1989 in Honolulu.


Thampu critiques secular Western culture which he asserts has imposed biases which must be counteracted by the prophetic dimension of the Gospel, and which also neglect the cultural backgrounds of non-Western societies in developing strategies for confronting a global problem such as AIDS.

Thampu is a member of the TRACI community and lecturer and Chaplain of St. Stephen's College in Delhi, India.


Consider contributions of Jeffrey Stout’s Democracy and Tradition to the field of comparative ethics.


Article done for the Festschrift for James M. Gustafson made up of contributions from his former students.


Wilred, an Indian theologian, argues that the supposedly "universal" Western concept of "human rights" is a sterile ethical esperanto which is derived from an abstraction of the lowest common denominator, and which offers "no ethical panacea for the problems of conflict-ridden societies of the Third World." (p. 214). Instead, many Third World perspectives on human rights would find the "universal" only in terms of the particular context which can then express the fullness of the universal.

Paper originally presented at a symposium organized by the Theologie Interkulturelle of the University of Frankfurt-am-Main.


Williams is Houghton Professor Theology and Contemporary Change at the Harvard Divinity School.


Yearley is professor of Religious Studies at Stanford University.


Books on Comparative and/or Cross-Cultural Ethics


Discussion of cross-cultural perceptions and how they may inform and misinform Christian ethics. Adeney grew up in Asia as a child of missionary parents, and currently teaches in Indonesia.


This volume contains essays by a range of distinguished philosophers on the problem of self-deception or, rather, self and deception. The work proceeds from the assumption that changing constructions of self within Western cultures, and alternative notions of self in other cultures requires that we rethink traditional strategies for explaining the phenomenon of self-deception.


Eleven essays on cross-cultural studies from visiting scholars in 1994 at the Center for Cultural Research at Aarhus University, Denmark.


    Essays on a variety of topics and from a variety of religious and historical points of view (Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Taoist, Islamic, etc.)


    Intended as an undergraduate textbook, the work is organized into two major sections, Western Religious Ethics and Eastern Religious Ethics. The former considers Jewish, Christian, and Islamic ethics, while the latter takes up Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, and Japanese ethics.


    Contributions on the liberation theme from a Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and an African-American.

Argues that a discussion of moral relativism needs to investigate both the philosophical and anthropological aspects. Cook argues that both sides of the debate fail to prove their respective positions because their views of “morality” are artificial and unrealistic.


Also considers Kohlberg.


Includes treatment of South and East Asia, Near East, Africa, and Western ethics.


Explores the diversity of religious rituals and mythologies pertaining to sexuality as a way of examining conventional notions of what is normative in our sexual lives.


Two years of field research on six continents yielded data for eight case studies which illustrate issues of human rights in an international perspective.


Classic of contemporary cultural anthropology.


Traces the development of cultural relativism in American anthropology and then considers a philosophical approach to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of relativism, while concluding with a suggestion as to how both Western and non-Western cultures can be viewed.


Includes an essay by Tu Wei Ming on the Confucian sage, plus essays on Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu conceptions of sainthood.


Designed as an undergraduate text, treats Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Australian Aboriginal Religions.


Geographical, historical and cross-cultural study of various family and kinship systems.


Argues for a middle position of legitimate plurality of moral and nonmoral values which would fall between absolute moral dogmatism on the one hand, and total moral relativism on the other.


Discusses sainthood in the various religious traditions: Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.


Is an issue of *Concilium* devoted to this theme.


Contains five chapters on "Method" and three chapters on "Application." The latter chapters include treatment of Religion and Morality of the Navajo, in the Gospel of Matthew, and in Theravada Buddhism.


15 essays on the relation of cosmogonical and ethical beliefs. 13 of these originated as papers presented at conferences at the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1981 and 1982.


Essays around a common theme that argues that alternative views of the world’s religions do in fact allow for both contraception and abortion.


Multicultural and international in emphasis, this text/anthology on applied ethics contains essays representing the global theoretical perspectives, including selections from Third World and American Indian women.  A general introduction discusses the nature of morality and surveys the major global perspectives on ethics.


Anthropological approach using case studies to illustrate the connection between universal human sexuality and its local manifestations in cultural contexts.


12 papers from sociologists of religions from around the world, using the basic concept of identity, as rooted in social interaction and manifested in role performance, to analyse various aspects of religion in contemporary culture. Each paper is introduced by a brief critical abstract by Hans Mol.


Papers from the Thirteenth Building Bridges Seminar hosted by Georgetown University April 27-30, 2014. The book is divided five parts: I Overviews from a Christian and Muslim Perspective; II Sin; III Forgiveness; IV Reconciliation; V Reflection by Lucinda Mosher on the process of the Seminar. The sections on Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation each have two essays and then these are followed by selections from Christian and Muslim scriptures that aim at creating a series of inter-religious “dialogues” on these topics.


Essays by contemporary male representatives from a variety of religious traditions.


Study of the psychology of modern Indians and Japanese as they come to grips with Western values.


Joseph Butler lived from 1692-1752.


Examines the prospects for a reconciliation of rationality and relativism, and investigates cross-cultural similarities and differences in mind, self, emotion, and morality.


Essays focus on issues concerning the human person in comparative and cross-cultural perspectives, including Indian, Chinese and Western thought.


Argues that ethics has not yet addressed adequately the reality that problems are ethically “resolved” in manners which favorably bias humans, men, and Western culture.


Product of two symposia held at the University of Chicago in 1986 and 1987 and sponsored by the University's Committee on Human Development. See especially Chapter 3, "Culture and moral development."


Includes a number of essays which consider the Orient.


Argues that we can have meaningful cross-cultural dialogues on morality. Uses and critiques Alasdair MacIntyre and also looks at Mahayana Buddhism.


Presents a variety of case studies using a moral quandary and then gives responses by two or three authors who represent a variety of different religious and/or cultural backgrounds.


*******