Appendix A

On the Process of the Project During the Second Year

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The chapters describing the method of the Comparative Religious Ideas Project (CRIP) in this volume and elsewhere in the series stress the importance of a group of scholarly inquirers. This group makes comparisons properly vulnerable to correction and improves comparisons as efficiently as possible. The behind-the-scenes story of the project is how the CRIP scholars came together to forge an effective working group—despite profound disagreements that were introduced by design in order to strengthen the group's ability to make persuasive comparisons through juxtaposing points of view and types of expertise. The recounting of this story began in appendix A of the first volume (The Human Condition) and continues here, in this instance focusing on the way the group and its work developed during the second year of collaboration. The third volume has a similar appendix dealing with the third and fourth years of the Project but each of the three appendices can be read as stand-alone documents. At times in what follows I quote from the unpublished meeting reports. The personnel are listed at the end of this volume and I shall refer to participants by their first names.

At the Beginning of a Second Year

When we gathered for the first meeting of the second year the smiles were broad, the greetings were loud, and laughter filled the room. Everyone
seemed genuinely glad to be together again. The first year had catalyzed serious cooperation and the result was an identity built around working together, each relying on everyone else to do their jobs to keep the project on track. For my part, while I shared everyone's concerns about the first volume, I liked this group and rated our venture's chances of solid success higher at the beginning of this second year than during the first meeting of the first year. Seeing the first volume gradually take shape helped build confidence, I think, and we diagnosed its limitations as an appropriate expression of the fact that our research depended on habits of collaboration that were still forming. Discussion about the first volume is recounted in the appendix to that volume and also in the introduction to this volume, so I shall say no more about it here, even though it was prominent in everyone's mind throughout the second year.

We met for eight days during the second year of CRIP, four times in the fall of 1996 and four more in the spring of 1997. The meetings followed the pattern established during the previous year: the first meeting introduced the theme of ultimate realities (and also discussed chapter drafts for the human condition volume); the next three focused on expository papers from the six specialists; the subsequent three shifted to discussion of synthetic and comparative papers from the specialists; and the final meeting was a review and analysis. With regard to the meeting process, there were several differences between the first and second years. There had been a change of personnel among the graduate students with Chris replacing Tina; Hugh, John, Celeste, James, and Joseph continued throughout the project—long enough for the celebration of many life events, such as John's job and Joe's baby. Sabbaticals meant that we were without some research scholars on a few occasions, though we chose meeting dates to minimize absences. One of our advisors, T.J. Weiming, was an active participant in a number of meetings. And there was time for formal discussion of the first volume's ongoing editing during several of the second year's meetings. By far the most significant difference, however, was the simple fact that we already knew something about what we were doing thanks to a year's work together.

The Delicate Balance between Specialists and Generalists

By the beginning of the second year, we had enough experience with the challenges of integrating the perspectives of the tradition specialists with those of the comparative generalists to have reached a fateful conclusion: we probably could not achieve consensus conclusions. A few of the tradition specialists, especially Frank and Paula, had so resisted characterizations of their traditions as a whole, or even large chunks of their traditions, that the comparative generalists' determination to press ahead with making such generalizations anyway was felt to make total consensus on conclusions impossible. Frank generously moved in the second and third years from the Vivekacādāmāti, a text about learning applicable only to a subset of male brāhmīns, to the study of texts that enjoyed broader representation in India. This allowed him to present larger-scale generalizations about his tradition precisely through the viewpoint of the selected text, which was an approach he could adopt in good conscience. Paula was especially intransigent on this issue, however, urging the group to recognize that any large-scale characterization across historical periods and cultures masks more than it illumines and inevitably falls prey to the anachronistic tendency to interpret the far past and the culturally remote through the distorting and often irrelevant terms of our contemporary experience. This can be seen in the present volume: her chapter on ultimate realities in Christianity is silent about the classic Christian idea of the Trinity, precisely in order to remain faithful to the earlier period of Christian origins that she focuses on. Admirable but problematic. For their part, the comparative generalists urged the equally appealing but diametrically opposed point that the very purpose of the project was to collaborate in such a way as to create comparisons (which are always generalizations) in the sort of environment in which the ever-present dangers of bias and anachronism could be kept in check and even perhaps overcome to some extent.

Under these circumstances—a quite realistic model of the conflicted state of affairs in religious studies, I think—achieving consensus conclusions was probably out of the question. The comparative generalists would have to draw conclusions as they saw fit, thoroughly informed and subject to constant critique by the tradition specialists, while the specialists would approach their traditions from the intriguing new lens ground into shape by the empirical derivation of categories during the course of our discussions. While the abandonment of consensus conclusions was disappointing to some, and a limited failure for the project, it is important to note how much further we were going in collaborative work than is customary in religious studies. Consensus remained the goal for the process of determining which comparative categories would prove most helpful for interpreting the six traditions. And conclusions still had to pass muster for accuracy and fairness with the large group. This was a lot to ask in itself. Therefore, the decision to allow the comparative generalists (especially Bob) to draw their own conclusions about the human condition, ultimate realities, and religious truth did not dissociate generalists from the specialists but rather freed both to stay closer to their native
modes of thinking and writing while keeping in place the tight constraints of serious collaboration.

My reading of this decision is that the specialists wanted it more than the generalists did. In the first volume, Bob showed his willingness and ability to confine his conclusions almost exclusively to what the specialists had said in their papers in an attempt to win consensus from the group as a whole. But most and perhaps all of the tradition specialists were too uncomfortable with the end product and could not in good conscience sign on to the results as their own conclusions. They were unwilling, or perhaps like me intellectually and constitutionally unable, to carry out the work of synthesis that Bob had attempted in the first volume’s conclusions, with its disciplined refusal to clog the already long chapters with hordes of usually obvious caveats. They were also unwilling to move into the more philosophical territory of constructing the larger-scale interpretations of the human condition or ultimate realities that full self-consciousness about vague comparative categories requires. At the beginning of the second year, this was a disappointment to Bob. The project designers had chosen several of the specialists with an eye to their interest in philosophical modes of thought within their own traditions; Newman, Frank, and David especially had important publications to their credit demonstrating this interest. The project designers had envisaged that the specialists would be interested in mastering the unfamiliar modes of thinking associated with philosophical balancing of interpretative generalizations, much as the generalists would try in good faith to move in the opposite direction by allowing vast mounds of historical and textual details to trip up any and every generalization they might have been inclined to make.

Bob’s disappointment was somewhat ameliorated during the second year, without ever disappearing completely, because most of the specialists did indeed strive to lay out in their papers what they thought could be inferred about the human condition generally from the masses of details processed in the course of their own research and in group conversations. This shift relative to the specialist papers for the first volume indicates a serious effort on the part of the specialists to make the method work, and it would get even better in the third volume on religious truth. Despite the decision to give up the goal of thoroughgoing consensus, therefore, the method was working better during the second year. The general category of ultimate realities was being specified by the comparisons permitted by means of it, which is the easy part, and the category of ultimate realities was being infused with content by means of the comparisons and inferences made by the specialists, which is the difficult part. That made possible a much more interpretative approach to drawing conclusions than was possible in the first volume; they could be drawn from the comparisons and the inferences about ultimate realities already present in the specialist papers. This was a welcome improvement over the first year, though in my view the conclusions to the first volume have their own advantages, as the appendix to that volume indicates.

Enter Philosophy

The many factors described above led to an important development in the minds of the comparative generalists. (1) If conclusions no longer needed to win unanimous agreement from the group but needed only to meet the (admittedly severe) constraints of consensus around comparative categories and demands for accuracy and fairness; (2) if the method was working well so that specialists were making vital contributions to the elaboration of the vague category of ultimate realities and its subcategories; and (3) if everyone trying to interpret religious ideas was always inevitably involved in philosophical reflection in one form or another; then (4) it was reasonable to aim at conclusions that would present a working philosophical theory of ultimate realities rather than merely a coordination of comparisons made during the year’s work. This theory could not extend very far from the data processed and the comparisons made by the group, so it could never be a highly speculative or systematic philosophical theory of ultimate realities. But it would be a generalized theory of ultimate realities nonetheless and it would lead to a relatively philosophical way of packaging the conclusions for the second volume.

This entry of philosophy into the project at the beginning of the second year might have been merely a making explicit of its presence all along. Early in the second year, for instance, Tony was memorably insistant that the philosophical moment in our work should be explicit. Moreover, he argued that its presence was inevitable and actually a good idea because it was implied already in the method’s goal of constructing interpretations of the vague comparative categories sufficiently rich to take account of the mass of details organized and related by the vague categories. However that goes, envisaging this kind of conclusion for the second volume promised to solve several pressing problems for the comparative generalists, especially Bob and myself.

First, we were unwilling to produce conclusions of the sort in the first volume on the human condition. We regretted the loss associated with abandoning the phenomenological sites of importance and the systematic presentation of numerous facets of religious ideas. That was a strength of
the first volume’s conclusions that could not be preserved in a more philosophical, interpretative approach. Moreover, just as a childhood boating trauma keeps a grown adult away from deep water, Bob’s experience of writing the first volume’s conclusions made him eager to do something else.

Second, Bob and I were having extended discussions over the question of how, precisely, vague comparative categories such as ultimate realities were supposed to be specified. Of course, a host of comparisons in which the vague category or one of its subcategories is used as the respect of comparison constitutes a vital kind of specification. But that sort of specifying multiplies details without really synthesizing the sort of interpretation we have in mind when we speak of specifying something vague, such as love or democracy or modernity. To us, at least, theory seemed inevitable, albeit fragmentary and somewhat unsystematic theory, owing to the need for fidelity to the available data. Only an inevitably somewhat philosophical theory could wring from the mass of details the synthetic interpretation of the vague category of ultimate realities that the method demands.

Third, and related to the second, there was the problem of the lurking arbitrariness of the vague comparative categories, which could only be resolved if a fuller answer to the question of what it means to justify a comparative category were forthcoming. A more openly philosophical approach to drawing conclusions would help properly to frame and answer this question, which is discussed in detail below.

Among the group more generally, reactions to this limited entry of philosophy into proceedings were difficult to read. Apart from Tony’s enthusiastic interpretation of this decision, and more muted approving remarks from Noman, the specialists seemed relatively unconcerned, if not indifferent. This was a consequence, I think, of the loosening of the constraints mutually binding generalists to specialists described above. This new situation demanded a respectful modicum of distance between the two, at least with regard to allowing the generalists to proceed with drawing conclusions in whatever way they saw fit.

**Ultimate Realities**

We began the second year using the grant proposal’s language of “ultimate reality,” a term chosen specifically to avoid theistic connotations. While interested in the idea of God, it was not our exclusive interest and we did not want our investigations to be limited by that idea. We needed to register Buddhist ideas of ultimate reality that relate more to paths of ways of life than to an ontological ultimate, for example. This vagueness about ultimates has been noted in the comparative study of religious ideas for over a century beginning with Emile Durkheim’s self-conscious use of the vague category “sacred” and continuing through Paul Tillich’s deliberate adoption of the crucially vague term “ultimate concern.” The project grant used the term “ultimate” in the category “ultimate reality” with this history in mind. But two problems with this terminology arose quickly. First, the singular “ultimate reality” was felt to prejudice ontological issues of unity and epistemological issues of intelligibility that we wanted to leave open. Everyone readily agreed to use the plural “ultimate realities” in response to these concerns. Second, some were concerned about the appearance of the term “real” in the name for the category because it seemed to bias the category in the direction of ontology. My proposal to use the awkward terms “ulimacy” or “ultimates” never garnered support but everyone was conscious of the point.

These two issues were discussed periodically through the second year. The following comment from the meeting reports illustrates the group’s awareness of the need to register both theistic and non-theistic religious perspectives within the category of ultimate realities. In this case, David’s comment is prompted by Livia’s discussion early in the year of Chinese creation stories and bears on the possibility of fair treatment of non-theistic, non-ontologically oriented ideas of ultimates when ultimate realities is the ruling category:

**David:** Tillich is a shadow for this discussion; he would have found this slicing of the conceptual and terminological pies quite congenial. He used the category of ultimate concern in part to find a way to bring Buddhism into the picture in a helpful fashion. Have we not skewered the discussion by speaking too much of ultimate realities, though? And does this not lead to too strong an emphasis on fascinating creation myths? From a Buddhist point of view, this is all very much beside the point. The Buddhist understanding of ultimate concern bears less on ultimate realities than on the ultimate norm under which reality as it affects society and people is to be understood. That approach yields very different insights.

At one level, this problem is merely a terminological one, and so is addressed easily with periodic consciousness-raising remarks such as David’s. The deeper issue raised here, however, is whether the category of ultimate realities can be given a coherent interpretation when treated so vaguely as to include both ultimate paths and ultimate realities. If no such coherent interpretation is forthcoming, then the method calls for the disposal of the category as overly vague and thus arbitrary. Yet any coherent interpretation would have to unite the “path” and “reality” sides of the
category in a natural way. At stake in the shift to the plural "realities," therefore, was the greater permissiveness of the plural, perhaps suggesting the presence of a mindset among the group that would be content merely to catalogue conceptions of ultimate realities. This would be a return to the first year's procedure in which the first and easiest half of the method was emphasized to the neglect of the second half in which the vague category is interpreted through the detailed mass of observations and comparisons made by means of it. The meeting notes record Bob's early statement of this concern, in which he makes reference both to Peter Berger's sociology-of-knowledge concept of "world-making" and to the philosophical and apologetic system of Vedanta Desika, the figure studied by Frank during the second year:

Bob: It is useful, under certain circumstances, to call "ultimate" many of the things that are decisive for the task of what Peter calls "world-making," such as ultimate origin, ultimate grounds of meaning, ultimate destiny, ultimate place, ultimate home. However, this does not lead to a systematic interpretation of ultimate reality. I contend that it is the business of a systematic philosopher (such as Vedanta Desika) to try to put together a lot of "ultimate" things that in popular religion might be thought of as separate, and so to seek a unified conception of the ultimate. I further contend that this systematic philosophical activity is sensible and without any knock-down arguments against its possibility, though it is peculiarly difficult, and so its possibility must be determined through assiduous efforts to do it.

As it turned out, expressions of concern such as David's and Bob's were sufficient. Most of the specialists did in fact try to draw inferences about ultimate realities based on the descriptions and comparisons they laid out in their essays (as I noted earlier) and all of them remained keenly aware of the tension between ultimate paths and ultimate realities.

Facing the Specter of Incommensurability

In one way, the entire project is about solving the problem of comparison in face of the specter of cross-cultural incommensurability of religious ideas and practices. Right from the beginning, we all knew from our own experience that everyone in religious studies makes comparisons and so presumes categories that are the respects of comparison, whether or not they admit to doing this. Even describing a single religious tradition or text involves comparative categories such as "ritual" or "God" or "purity." We also knew that plenty of scholars had raised the question of the arbitrariness of comparison, the most telling evidence in support of the incommensurability thesis. And we knew both that Bob's method was supposed to solve the problem somehow and that CRIP was supposed to test this methodological solution and refine it if possible even as it made a bunch of interesting and important comparisons.

At this beginning of the second year, however, all we had to go on was the theoretical talk of a "dialectic of vagueness and specificity" or, to put it more concretely, a dialectic between the vague descriptive categories used throughout the study of religions and the detailed descriptions usually found in the phenomenology of religion. This is the theme that received the most play in Bob's prior publications and in our group's methodological discussions, though there were rich subtleties in both that pointed further and in other directions. In practice, this meant the following for our group. The vague categories would make possible specific comparisons and descriptions and all those specifics would infuse the vague category with positive content. The adequacy of a comparative category would be determined by the ability of an interpretation of it to make coherent sense of the detailed comparisons and descriptions that the category facilitated. If a coherent interpretation was not forthcoming it would be for one of two reasons: (1) the category was too vague, arbitrarily lumping together too much data for which no compelling rationale could be given; or (2) the category was too specific (probably owing too much to one particular tradition), constantly running up against indigestible data. In both cases the absence of a coherent interpretation would demand the rejection of the category—and we rejected plenty of them along the way. To make all this work, the specialists had promised to try to make comparisons, even though they were reluctant at times, and the generalists had promised to theorize with reference to the manifold details presented by the specialists, even though the details greatly complicated their attempts to construct generalized interpretations of the comparative categories.

The end result of following these procedures was supposed to be the overcoming of arbitrariness in the comparison of religious ideas, at least with respect to the ideas and traditions we were examining. It would be simultaneously a realistic acceptance of the complexities involved by the term "incommensurability" and a serious demonstration that the danger of arbitrariness, distortion, bias, and anachronism could be kept in check. Such a grand plan! As Peter put it, "The outrageousness of the project should be made clear at the outset. Also, a profoundly modern form of consciousness is structuring the project, which focuses on six traditions that have very different forms of consciousness; this is one point that should be registered carefully." Or in Paula's characteristically colorful language, "The first sentence should be 'This work is the..."
result of intellectual obsession and chutzpah. Not only is comparison difficult, but we are working with materials hostile to comparison."

During the second year it seemed clear to most of us that the method we were using was capable of living up to most of its advance billing. We really were able to exclude many categories as too vague (arbitrary) or too specific (distorting). And we were also able to pull many details together into richly coherent interpretations of the vague categories, such as the human condition and ultimate realities. As I previously mentioned, however, there remained a lurking arbitrariness in the categories we were using. Bending ourselves out of shape to learn new styles of thinking in order to work through the dialectic of vagueness and specificity seemed to take us only so far. The limited distance traveled and the corresponding lurking arbitrariness can be discerned from two points.

First, when all was said and done, how could we decide whether the set of categories we adopted were better than alternative sets? For instance, could it be shown that the set of categories we used for the human condition was superior to the alternative and more narrative set proposed by David (see appendix A in The Human Condition for details)? Or could we demonstrate that the categories adopted for parsing ultimate realities were superior to the rather different sets of categories used within the perennial philosophy or within one of the many versions of religious naturalism?

At one level, our group was content to discover that our method had the capacity to force the rejection of inadequate categories and to generate at least one schema of categories that was adequate to the stringent tests imposed by the dialectic of vagueness and specificity just described. It was not obvious that we needed or even wanted to become tangled in questions about the relative merits of sets of categories. For instance, the meeting notes record the following question about assessing the adequacy of a scheme of categories versus just trying to say something relevant about the religious ideas under discussion, together with a telling reply. The context is a discussion of the first volume:

Wesley: Do the categories we choose matter for the purposes of detecting the religiously important? Or is the religiously important detected with any arbitrarily chosen categories by means of the hard work required to apply those categories to each individual tradition or text? That is, are we concerned with the superriority of the schema of categories we use in this book over competitive schemas? I think that is one of our concerns, but I don't think this point is clearly made in any of the chapters at present.

Bob: This is one of our concerns, but we also need to preserve the possibility that we must use whatever categories we come up with to detect the religiously important as best we can, delaying assessment of the adequacy of the categorial scheme until later.

In his reply we see Bob indicating his priorities first we just try to get any scheme of categories that can meet the demands of the dialectic of vagueness and specificity. That would be a difficult and important achievement in itself. After that, energy and time permitting, we can worry about the relative merits of schemes of categories.

At another level, however, the specter of incommensurability and the problems it poses for comparison of religious ideas (or anything else with a cross-cultural aspect) demands more. Not all of us were interested in the philosophical and methodological adventures of evaluating the relative merits of categorial schemes. In periodic discussions of this topic a number of voices typically dropped out, patiently awaiting the conversation's eventual return to details more directly relevant to the topic for the year. Nobody ever complained about having to suffer through the ongoing methodological debates, however, presumably because the project called for evaluating and improving the method as well as producing interesting comparisons and coherent interpretations of vague comparative categories. For those interested, a great deal seemed to hinge on the question of evaluating the relative merits of categorial schemas, including the very concept of a scientific theory of religion. If our scientific approach could only rule out certain categories and sets of categories but not produce a putative "best" schema for and interpretation of ultimate realities, then it seems to follow that a theory of religion could never be sufficiently analogous to other theories in the social or natural sciences to be fairly called "scientific." At root the reason for this would be the incapacity of the subject matter to create hypotheses about it so as to be able to determine the most adequate from among the set of worthwhile alternatives. By itself this is not a problem because there are many areas of life in which we do not demand "best" interpretations and cannot hope to get them. But the possibility and nature of theories of religion are important topics to which our project has a direct contribution to make. I will return to these issues in the appendix to the volume on religious truth because it is in that volume that we take up the question of theories of religion most formally.

Second, the lurking arbitrariness can also be detected by reflecting on the relation between our principal way of justifying comparative categories (as of the middle of the second year) and ways adopted elsewhere within the study of religion. This volume treats the issue in some detail and I will not summarize those discussions here. It appeared to those concerned with the question of categorial justification (mostly the generalists)
that we were relying too exclusively on the dialectic of vagueness and specificity, to the neglect of more conventional methods of evaluating interpretations of comparative categories. This overemphasis is not surprising, in retrospect, because making sure that interpretations of comparative categories make coherent sense of masses of details is the part of comparative method most often neglected in other approaches. But interpretations of comparative categories also need to make historical and philosophical sense. These are the perspectives from which the study of religion has usually assessed comparative categories, though rarely are both applied together. That is, while correcting the deficit of existing approaches that neglect the adequacy of comparative categories to the details those categories comprehend, we also needed to continue paying attention to the historical and philosophical analyses that formed the backbone of the two dominant approaches to the justification of comparative categories—respectively, and broadly construed, the history of religion and the philosophy of religion.

We could see no reason for keeping apart historical and philosophical considerations bearing on the adequacy of interpretations of comparative categories, a traditional division perpetuated by the professionalization and complexification of religious studies and the resulting sharp distinctions oftentimes drawn between historians and philosophers of religion. Nor did we detect any tension between the use of an empirical method for evaluating the adequacy of comparative categories (the dialectic of vagueness and specificity) and these other lines of justification for comparative categories. As Bob suggests at a few places in Normative Cultures and elsewhere, all available resources should be brought to bear on the correction of interpretations. The traditional separation of resources and the consequent neglect of their combined power need not inhibit us from insisting that the dialectic of vagueness and specificity (roughly, the phenomenology of religion understood in a particular way) should work in concert with the history of religion and the philosophy of religion.

By the end of the second year, therefore, our procedures had forced an enrichment of the method we were following. We still emphasized the adequacy of the category “ultimate realities” to the phenomena it is supposed to comprehend and we kept in place the complex collaborative procedures needed to ensure that this assessment could be made. But the justification of categories was also understood to include providing sophisticated interpretations of them that accounted for both (1) the philosophy of religion’s concerns to identify (1a) the range of possible ideas of ultimate realities and (1b) the range of possible dynamic variations in symbolic representation of the idea of ultimate realities over time, and (2) the history of religion’s concerns to identify (2a) the historical influences on the original emergence of particular ideas of ultimate realities and (2b) the historical circumstances conditioning the dynamic changes of symbolic representations of ultimate realities over time. The chapter setting out the conclusions for this volume, profiting from the limited entry of philosophy into the project, is self-conscious about this multifaceted sort of justification and even offers a few philosophical arguments and historical suggestions, despite the obvious enormity of the task. In our view, this represents a great advance on the problem of lurking arbitrariness and so in turn on the specter of incommensurability.

At the End of a Second Year

Overall, year two was a great year for CRIP. We had decided on a sliver of space between specialists and generalists by rejecting the goal of consensus conclusions. Yet the collaborative method worked smoothly and, as I have just explained, it was enhanced under the impact of our use of it, though those enhancements impacted primarily the work of the generalists. The party at the end of the final meeting of the year was, as I recall, a most enjoyable event.

At the final meeting we asked the graduate students about their reactions to the collaborative process of which they had been a part, some more active than others, most for two years. Trying to capture their responses in my notes was difficult but here is how the meeting reports express the gist of their comments. Even in written form, it is not hard to detect the wry smiles we sometimes saw as these mini-reports were given.

HUGH (Hinduism): I have learned especially that comparison is difficult and risky. I have also learned that there are some topics and some approaches that are best avoided.

CELESTE (Islam): I have found it helpful to see scholars hard at work—we don’t see that very often—and the more so because the topics are complicated.

CHRIS (Christianity): This has been of real practical value for me in terms of my goal of Christian ministry because it will help me help others come to terms with the religiously plural settings of contemporary churches. It will also prove helpful in communicating with clergy colleagues for whom religious pluralism might be intimidating and confusing.

JAMES (Chinese Religion): Being taught by more than one person at a time is very useful, in part because it draws attention to what is debatable and how to broach those debates.
John JT (Buddhism): I am fortunate to have all three of my dissertation advisors in this group and so I am enjoying learning with my professors all at once. It is also informative to watch professors write and rewrite.

Joe (Judaism): Graduate students are not much trained or encouraged to enjoy themselves, but I am having fun and learning a lot at the same time. Being involved makes my thinking more fluid and malleable, and helps my writing and my teaching.

The experience of the graduate students is not the most prominent topic within these appendices, but reporting on it in closing this appendix is most apt. After all, the project from the beginning was designed to train these young scholars in collaborative modes of research and its success is to be measured in part through its impact on a new generation of comparativists, beginning with these six.

Appendix B

Suggestions for Further Reading

The Comparative Religious Ideas Project was designed to involve students both as participants in the seminar meetings and in background tasks. One of the more adventurous student projects has been the development of a set of twelve annotated bibliographies on a number of topics relevant to the project. These bibliographies are suggestions for further reading in each topic covered. I am grateful to the students involved in the annotation project: Marylu Bunting, John Darling, Greg Farr, Andrew Irvine, He Xiang, Mark Mann, Matt McLaughlin, David McMahon, Glen Messer, James Miller, and Kirk Wulf. I am also grateful for the suggestions of books to annotate that we received from Profs. Jensine Andresen, John Berthrong, Frank Clooney, Jonathan Klawans, and Frank Korom. The first bibliography in this volume contains suggestions for further reading on the topic of the volume, ultimate realities. Subsequently there are tradition-specific bibliographies on Chinese Religion, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Each contains annotations on reference works, primary texts in English translation, and secondary sources that discuss various aspects of the tradition. The final bibliography contains annotated suggestions for further reading in the area of comparative method, which is intended to help those wanting to evaluate the method used in this project against other approaches to the comparison of religious ideas.

—Wesley J. Wildman