

Guy Axtell: Problems of Religious Luck. Assessing the Limits of Reasonable Religious Disagreement. Lanham: Lexington Books 2019, 290 pages, \$95.00 (Hardback), ISBN 978-1-4985-5017-8

Guy Axtell's new book, as the title suggests, is an attempt to assess the limits of reasonable religious disagreement. In trying to delineate those limits Axtell thinks that it is useful to employ the notions of luck and risk in examining how reasonable a particular religious (or atheistic) stance is. A central concern of the book is with religious groups which exclude others in some way and which ascribe traits to those other groups that are very unlike the traits the group ascribes to themselves. For example, a group might describe its own members as being *saved* but describe members of other similar groups as *lost*. Axtell thinks that the groups making these kinds of asymmetrical trait ascriptions are subject to a great deal of inductive risk (and so it seems as though the privileged group is *lucky* to be in the situation it is in, if it is correct about being saved or about being in possession of the truth). Inductive risk is the risk of 'getting it wrong' in an inductive context of inquiry. In the introduction to *Problems of Religious Luck* Axtell cites Heather Douglas's definition of inductive risk which says that it is "... the risk of error in accepting or rejecting hypotheses" (3). Axtell says that he is primarily concerned with building a *de jure* case against the reasonableness of these kinds of extreme positions in religion and so his arguments are meant to cast doubt on the doxastic responsibility of the people who hold such (risky) positions rather than to cast doubt on the truth of what the person in question asserts (a *de facto* objection) (6, 214). He thinks that exclusivist responses to religious multiplicity "lie beyond the pale of reasonable disagreement" (132).

Problems of Religious Luck takes a fresh look at the kinds of problems raised by the contingency of people's beliefs on their location (the time they live in, the place they live in, the family they grow up in, the groups they happen to be exposed to, and so on). These are not new problems. In *On Liberty* John Stuart Mill wrote that, "[t]he world, to each individual, means the part of it with which he comes in contact; his party, his sect, his church, his class of society ... It never troubles him that mere accident has decided which of these numerous worlds is the object of his reliance, and that the same causes which make him a Churchman in London, would have made him a Buddhist or a Confucian in Peking ... nor is his faith in this collective authority at all shaken by his being aware that other ages, countries, sects, churches, classes, and parties have thought,