

Book reviews

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Paul Helm *John Calvin's Ideas*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
Pp. viii + 438. £60.00 (Hbk). ISBN 0 19 925569 5.

Calvin's thought has a philosophical dimension, philosophical implications, and has had a philosophical influence. But how do his ideas stand up to a philosophical adumbration of their nature? Paul Helm is as well qualified as anyone to find out, given his well-known dual competence in scholarship, both in philosophy and Calvin. His answer is offered in a substantial volume on 'Calvin as a receiver, user, and transmitter of theological ideas, and particularly of those theological ideas that have philosophical aspects and histories to them' (1).

The first chapters conduct us through the terrain of Calvin's core metaphysical commitments re God and humanity. Calvin works steadily and foundationally with a distinction between God as He is in himself and God as He is towards us, the latter being the object of divine revelation, the former blocked out of our sight by a barrier which includes the inscription: 'Forbidden: Speculation', an inscription posted in many other places and given a high profile in Paul Helm's account. But we do not find a Kantian noumenon on the far side. God's revelation genuinely signifies God's nature within the straitened conditions under which we apprehend Him; God's Trinitarian reality, and the specific metaphysical claim that the Word incarnate in Christ remains universally omnipresent outside the incarnation, both hold as truths whose expression is properly and rigorously regulated by attending to biblical language.

This established, Helm explores not only the areas mentioned, but also divine providence and theological anthropology. Discussion of providence is largely directed to rebutting the idea that it is a thematic axiom which governs Calvin's whole theological scheme, but it is also argued, particularly in connection with the question of evil, that Calvin's thought can be said to tend towards determinism only if we qualify that term very specifically and deploy it tentatively. What Calvin says about the soul and the will confirms that conclusion.

How does philosophy fare here? Two general conclusions emerge. The first is that Calvin is more prepared to make instrumental use of it than a superficial reading of his work, including the *Institutes*, suggests. He knows and makes use of

scholastic distinctions. Secondly, attending to that fact, along with metaphysical comparison, reveals that Calvin is substantively closer to the medieval tradition than some standard analyses maintain. Throughout the work, Helm indicates the agreements between Calvin and Aquinas in theology and philosophy, though the divergences are also indicated.

Proceeding from metaphysics to epistemology, it is argued both that there is in Calvin significant, if limited, room for natural theology, grounded in the *sensus divinitatis*, and that his thought is not readily assimilated into those celebrated structures of 'Reformed epistemology' that pivot on proper basicity. Bridging the metaphysical and epistemological features of Calvin's thought is the theme of 'divine accommodation', the studied insistence that God accommodates to our capacities the language about Himself that He speaks in Scripture. Helm analyses this activity into its varied constituents to achieve the conclusion that accommodation is particularly couched in terms of our necessarily temporal nature and doings.

Returning to metaphysics, the author examines Calvin's angelology, which again advertises his subject's medieval affinities, and which moves us along to consider moral theology and philosophy. The interesting conclusion of the discussion of Calvin on divine power is that Calvin is, if anything, closer to Thomistic than to Scotist thought, but at all events not a pure voluntarist. Further, the study of 'Equity, natural law and common grace' (chapter 12) sustains the conviction that all these phenomena are treated by Calvin consistently with this conclusion, and that he propounds a form of belief in the natural knowledge of right and wrong. The volume is rounded off with an attempt to explain how Calvin deploys the principle of accommodation in order to resolve perplexities in relation to atonement and time, and with a final sally against Barth's alternative (to Calvin's) treatment of faith in relation to justification. The exposition runs out in a measure or mood of triumph and vindication for Calvin in the face of a none-too-worthy theological successor.

Paul Helm has produced a fine piece of work, meticulously attentive to Calvin and to philosophy. Considerable care is exercised in stating exactly what is being claimed. Because the author is occasionally critical of Calvin, some readers may be tempted to suppose that where he does not explicitly challenge, he implicitly endorses. But this is not necessarily so. While (frequently philosophical) treatments of Calvin's positions are offered which tend in the direction of establishing their coherence, categorical judgements to that effect are typically avoided, still more a pronounced judgement that Calvin is actually right, even if we can surmise where the author's sympathy lies. Accounts of this and that are regularly couched in terms of what we might more or less plausibly suppose or infer.

So if we ask of the volume the two questions that it logically demands: (a) is the account true to Calvin?; and (b) if so, does Calvin's thought contain plausible philosophical substance?, the author is careful to elude capture. This is not to

deny that the main contours of the exposition are limned in a positive and constructive fashion; this is not a tentative and uncommitted exercise. What we have is a conscientiously *in meliorem partem* reading of Calvin, wherever such is appropriate, that does not stretch the point. It is a display of the philosophical armour and resources available to Calvin in the adumbration of his theological ideas.

Given the tens of historical, theological, and philosophical claims that we encounter in this lengthy book, it may seem perverse to veer away from their selective consideration to remark on what is omitted. Yet the omissions are striking. Comprehensive as the treatment is in many respects, it is somewhat steered by the author's own interests. The reason given for skipping systematic discussion of predestination is that it has frequently been regarded as a dominant and axiomatic idea, a notion of which we shall be dispossessed by the author's treatment of Calvin's many particular ideas. This lacuna, however, places us at a disadvantage. Paul Helm rightly makes much of Calvin's insistence that he abhors the notion of God as absolute lawless power: God is good and just in all His ways. In his discussion of predestination, Calvin affirms that God from eternity ordained some to everlasting perdition. It is natural, then, that we should ask in special connection with Calvin's discussion: what do the ascriptions 'good', 'just', or 'wise' mean? And, as far as Calvin or the logic of his thought is concerned, what is the relation between 'God ordained *x*' and 'God caused *x*'? These are non-peripheral questions to which it is hard to glean the answers from this volume.

We also find that where a theme is touched on, pertinent questions are sometimes not. There is an examination of Calvin's distinction between scriptural statements about God that can be taken 'literally', such as when God is said to foreknow, and that cannot, such as when God is said to repent (192f: 'foreknowledge' is literal in a qualified sense, since God is timeless, but the language does not represent God by way of accommodation in the way done by 'repentance' language). So how and by what criterion does Calvin distinguish between biblical statements that are and those that are not accommodations?

Calvin operates with a set of core metaphysical claims, grounded in divine simplicity and including immutability and timeless eternity. But where do the claims come from? Suppose that, instructed by Calvin, we rivet our speech about and knowledge of God to the normative content of an authoritative scripture. Suppose that we are then confronted by rival claims: (1) scripture teaches or implies that God is simple and immutable; (2) scripture teaches a form of divine immutability, but one that permits the belief that the second person of the Trinity has the modal property of being able to divest Himself of omnipresence and omniscience under specific conditions of incarnation. How exactly does Calvin arrive at (1) rather than (2)? If from scripture, how and by what rule? If not from scripture, is it by philosophical reasoning, or on account of a philosophical

axiom, or because of tradition, or what? We are speaking here of core metaphysical claims that have a governing role in Paul Helm's account and yet these questions appear not to be addressed.

Does not the combination of divine simplicity (under the aspects of immutability and eternity) and divine accommodation occasionally spell more trouble for Calvin than Helm appears to allow? The issue that Calvin faces on the relation of the atonement to time is this: if God from eternity loves those for whom Christ died, how can they be presented as objects of a wrath to be propitiated on the cross in time? He answers in terms of accommodation: talk of God as angry or wrathful does not represent God as He is, but represents Him as we should conceive Him prior to embracing Christ by faith, for the language informs us of our Christless misery. But God never changed from being wrathful to being gracious; He eternally loved His own.

Now I am not persuaded by Helm's argument that this is the whole answer, as far as Calvin is concerned. Even though, in this connection, Calvin glosses the statement that God loves and hates us at the same time, in terms that detract from the paradox in that formulation, what is the force of such a statement if pure accommodation explains the language of wrath, i.e. if there is in fact no time at which He both loves and hates us? (Helm uses terminology loosely in this discussion from 392ff: where Calvin, in the translation that he quotes, speaks of the appearance of contradiction to eternal love entailed in the talk of God's being our enemy, Helm speaks of the contradiction arising from talk of our enmity to God, which is not quite the same thing. As a matter of fact, the standard translation is strong anyway: Calvin actually speaks of God as *inimicus*, which can be taken grammatically as adjectival, 'hostile' rather than 'an enemy', and there is a similar possibility in the original French.) But – reverting to accommodation – is it not problematic if God's loving disposition towards the elect is presented in an accommodating language that appears to convey the opposite? I have no doubt that Helm (and Calvin) have their replies, but I doubt whether the twentieth-century theologians whom Helm sharply criticizes would have been allowed to get away without addressing themselves to the problem more fully.

There is occasionally some internal philosophical squeezing alongside a squeezing out of subject matter. 'The view that all language about God is non-literal courts self-refutation. For if all language about God is non-literal then that claim itself, being a claim about God, is likewise non-literal' (192). This remark invites the question of why the claim about language about God is immediately understood as a claim about God. Anticipating it, Paul Helm continues: 'Perhaps such an unwelcome consequence could be avoided by distinguishing between first- and second-order language about God, though it is not easy to see why, if some second-order language about God is literal, no first-order language can be.' But, even if we gloss a claim about language about God as a second-order claim about God, the averment that 'all language about God is non-literal'

might not just be an instance of second-order language about God, of which there are 'some' others. It might be a *sui generis* remark about language about God.

Self-respecting reviewers do not consider their job properly done unless they have conveyed the idea that a book lacks the property of absolute flawlessness. The principal fact here is that we are deeply indebted to Paul Helm for this contribution, not only because of the patient research and reflection, but also because he provides Calvin's thought with a clearly drawn philosophical profile and provides a stimulus for further detailed effort. In addition, we are alerted to the fact that, when we read the *Institutes* in terms of theological output rather than philosophical input, we miss the possibility of connecting Calvin rather strongly with his medieval forbears, Aquinas in particular. Finally, we are left with an edifying worry about the lack of historical and philosophical discipline which certainly seems to attend a great deal in the approach taken to Calvin by the likes of Barth and Torrance, theologically influential figures as they are.

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Nancy Levene *Spinoza's Revelation: Religion, Democracy, and Reason*.
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There is not much unanimity about Spinoza's intentions: was he an atheist, as his contemporaries believed, or was he concerned with a new type of religion, as the Romantics believed? From a strictly historical point of view the question seems almost futile: it would be an anachronism to ascribe to Spinoza the ideas of, say, Schleiermacher, or Schelling, or Novalis, and to believe that for him, as for them, religion was above all a peculiar feeling. According to Spinoza's contemporaries, on the contrary, religion was at least three things: (1) knowledge, that is a set of true beliefs; (2) moral behaviour, insofar as it is based on a divine command; (3) ceremonies and rituals (like prayer or the sanctification of the Sabbath) which must be performed according to a fixed pattern. The necessity and truth of all this are 'revealed', that is, they are based, not on natural knowledge and the use of our natural faculties, but on an interpretation of scripture, possibly combined with some form of divine grace.

It is quite clear, however, not only that, according to Spinoza, ceremonies and rituals are mainly a political tool (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* [hereafter *TTP*],

ch. 5), but also that morality ('piety') is a form of rational behaviour, which does not require divine command. Moreover, as a cognitive or epistemological category revelation is completely irrelevant because nothing can be against or above reason (which is one of the points of the *TTP* chapter on miracles). Finally, given the fact that, according to Spinoza, God can be neither a lawgiver nor a creator, it must be said that on the level of speculative truth the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) are radically false. However, given the social and political role of 'revealed' religion, Spinoza faced two formidable tasks: (1) to show that, despite its alleged 'atheism,' his philosophy is not a threat to public order ('peace'); (2) to indicate the way in which (traditional) religion could be made compatible with civic values. It is to those tasks that *Theologico-Political Treatise* (1670) is consecrated.

In her book, *Spinoza's Revelation*, Nancy Levene prefers a different approach. Indeed, according to her, 'revelation' refers on one hand 'to what Spinoza incisively reveals, which is the connection of religion, democracy and reason', and on the other 'to the substance of this connection between religion, democracy and reason, and between the divine and the human as Spinoza understands them' (1). After reading the book – and rereading some crucial pages – I am still not sure that I know what this means. Why on earth would one describe Spinoza's philosophy as 'revelation' and himself as someone who 'reveals', that is, as a prophet? Admittedly, Spinoza concedes that, if revelation *were* knowledge of things divine, philosophy could be termed 'revelation' as well (*TTP* 1, III, 15–16) – but to see this as a straightforward claim is naïve; indeed, all it means is that the notion of God is central to Spinoza's philosophy. Actually, the fact that Spinoza uses arguments rather than 'interpretation', and relies on reason rather than 'authority' turns his philosophy into something completely different from prophecy (Notes on *TTP*, 2, III, 251) – a prophet does not explain, but 'communicates' things his audience cannot understand and therefore has to accept on trust.

Nor can I follow the author where she claims: 'While prophecy is commonly conceived as special access to something ordinary ... , Spinoza is claiming the opposite, namely, that it is an ordinary apprehension of something extraordinary' (111–112). Apart from the fact that the view that prophecy 'gives access to something ordinary' is absolutely new to me, Spinoza's real claim is just the reverse of what is attributed to him: the relevant content of 'revelation' is something as ordinary as that we should not kill or rob our neighbour, but it is conveyed in an extraordinary way, namely by someone who, lacking all intellectual capacities, can give free rein to his imagination.

Moreover, that there is a connection between religion, democracy, and reason which Spinoza wants to 'reveal' is far from obvious. Although I agree that, in his account of the Hebrew state, Spinoza describes a certain number of 'democratic' experiments, it is by no means clear that there is a connection

between democracy and reason – what strikes me, on the contrary, about those experiments is not only that they ultimately result in failure, but that they situate democracy in a theocratic context. Apparently, people can be free and at the same time virtuous only if they believe that the law under which they live is divine. But the fact, in turn, that this law is divine and revealed is, of course, ‘notional’ or ‘a matter of opinion’, since in fact there is neither a divine law nor a divine lawgiver. If the people obeyed anyone at all, it was Moses (who ruled as an absolute monarch, *TTP* 17, III, 207) or, after Moses’ death, themselves (*TTP* 18, III, 224) – after all, nobody forced them to adopt the Law.

It is pure fancy to claim that ‘what is notional in this pact (of the Hebrews with God) is the idea that God’s law ... can ever belong to only one people’ (204). Indeed, not only was it vital to the particular pact of Israel that it was concluded with a national god (that the god of Israel was not the same as the god of the Philistines), no ‘divine law’ can ever be envisaged apart from its ‘interpretation’ by a sovereign (unless one takes ‘divine law’ in a purely metaphorical sense as the injunction to cultivate one’s intellectual faculties – *TTP* 4, III, 59–61). Indeed, God ‘has no special kingdom over men save through those who hold sovereignty’ (*TTP* 19, III, 231). The strength of Israel was that the ‘interpretation’ – that is, the transformation of a general principle (which might be called ‘civic peace’) into a particular set of rules called ‘laws’ – had been done once and for all by Moses.

Finally, that Spinoza sees democracy as a rational ideal is, I believe, a projection of present-day political values (quite apart from the fact that for Spinoza ‘democracy’ is not our present-day representative democracy but direct democracy) – if anything, Spinoza sees democratic government as a nostalgic ideal, which in any case cannot be revived in the Christian world. The problem of the Christian religion is that (unlike the Jewish religion which in its original form is, according to Spinoza, hardly theological), it does not have the form of a law (*TTP* 18, III, 221), is universal instead of national, and moreover is hopelessly divisive, given the great number of Christian sects and denominations (the only viable state according to Spinoza is a peculiar form of aristocratic government, instantiated so far only in Holland – *Tractatus Politicus* 9, §15; against the author, 141).

All this is part of a general interpretation of Spinoza which I do not share and in fact hardly understand. According to the preface of the book, what is ‘most at stake’ in Spinoza’s philosophy is human freedom, which ‘can only be understood as the labour of human beings to become increasingly like God’ (xi) – ‘man is god to man’, which according to the author means that ‘God is between men’. Elsewhere in the book, it is said that what is mainly at stake is ‘inauguration, beginning: again, revelation’ (235). It could be, although personally I am not sure that ‘freedom’ is always the main thing (sometimes it is God, sometimes it is power, sometimes it is love), nor that Spinoza’s philosophy is about ‘inauguration’ or ‘beginning’ (according to Spinoza there is, nor ever was, a beginning, given the fact that even the first cause is not first in time).

But the way this is further elaborated raises many questions which do not receive an answer. Thus, quite a lot is made of Spinoza's utterance that 'man is god to man' (Eth. IV, prop. 35, schol – fully quoted on 68), a dictum to which the author reverts several times (17, 25, 78, etc). According to the author, this demonstrates that 'God is neither internal nor external to human striving, neither transcendent of, nor immanent in, human existence but ... the continually revealed difference between human beings in bonding and human beings in freedom' (xi). But apart from the fact that I do not understand what it means for something to be 'neither internal nor external to human striving', and that conceptually nothing is gained by saying of something that it is 'neither transcendent of, nor immanent in, human existence', the expression as it is explained by Spinoza himself means 'men are most useful to each other, when each seeks his own advantage' – in other words, something like 'God helps those that help themselves'. The author is right to call this a 'key statement' – the basis of Spinoza's moral philosophy is indeed enlightened self-interest – but not for the reason she mentions.

In her view, indeed, Spinoza's claim associates the ordinary ('as both mistaken and enlightened') with the extraordinary ('as both enlightened and mistaken'), meaning 'that the ordinary is the most elite thing of all, something the philosophers and theologians would do well to attain alongside the "common people" they like to revile' (75). Again, I am at a loss to understand this – in itself, but also as a statement about Spinoza. For not only are, according to Spinoza, 'the lower orders (*vulgus*) terrifying if they have nothing to fear' (Eth. IV, prop. 54, schol) – so presumably not enlightened and entirely mistaken; 'ordinary morality' is something quite easy – what can be difficult is to see what our interests actually are.

Again, it can be granted that Spinoza's philosophy raises problems which many people would solve by having recourse to 'revelation'. Spinoza's moral philosophy is problematic because of its rationalism (*TTP* 16, III, 191–192) – for how does it explain the fact that sometimes we know the good without doing it (Eth IV, prop. 17, schol)? And it is also problematic insofar as, like Hobbes, it tends to identify particular moral rules with the laws issued by a sovereign – so what should we do if the sovereign turns out to be a tyrant? But neither problem can be solved with an appeal to 'revelation' – on the contrary, according to Spinoza, nobody can be so certain of his faith that it gives him the right to dissent, let alone to revolt (*TTP* 16, III, 199). The only relevance of revealed religion is that it has social and political impact – and the only way to solve the problems raised by that fact is to insist on a total separation of philosophy (knowledge of truth) and theology (as it is reformulated by Spinoza, that is, as private morality). That Spinoza's concern is to show the 'continuity' of revelation and natural knowledge, as the author contends (114), can be maintained therefore only if one ignores all the distinctions made by Spinoza, particularly that between the imagination

and the intellect. Revelation (prophecy) is (like dreams and madness) a product of the imagination alone (*TTP* 1–2), whereas true philosophy is produced by the intellect. And these are as much opposed to each other as truth and falsehood (see *Treatise on the Improvement of the Intellect*).

At best, there is pragmatic equivalence between revelation and philosophy insofar as both can be a motive for moral behaviour (a motive does not have to be true to give rise to a moral act). But nothing is to be gained by interpreting this pragmatic equivalence in terms of ‘epistemological continuity’ – as if the God of any ‘revealed’ religion could ever be the same as Spinoza’s. Indeed, He cannot, if only because the alleged ‘knowledge’ of Him is based on prophetic ‘interpretation’ and ‘authority’. Accordingly, whatever people say about a revealed God is meaningless: ‘when people merely repeat what they have heard [about things invisible] this is no more relevant to or indicative of their mind than the mind and meaningless words of a parrot or a machine’ (*TTP* 13, III, 170).

The main problem I have with this book, though, is perhaps not primarily its thesis (I disagree with most of what I can understand but I can live with a lot of disagreement), but its tendency to ignore intellectual distinctions; for example, where the author vainly struggles to attribute to Spinoza a notion of ‘creation’ (56–68); its dialectical mannerisms (‘the sacred is uniquely true only if it is available to all; it will be available to all only if it is uniquely true’, 131); its meaningless verbalisms (‘what will move human beings from bondage to freedom – *conatus* – is always already in the world because – as the *causa sui* – it has come into the world’, 235); its irritating truisms (‘manmade laws are relative to the mind, relative to human interest’, 161); and its shocking absurdities (‘for Spinoza the Bible separates philosophy and theology, minds and books, keeping both sovereign’, 78).

Note: references are to the standard edition of Spinoza’s works, *Opera*, Carl Gebhardt (ed.), 5 vols (Heidelberg: Winter, 1925–1938).

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Mark R. Wynn *Emotional Experience and Religious Understanding: Integrating Perception, Conception, and Feeling*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Pp. xiv + 202. £40.00 (Hbk); £16.99 (Pbk). ISBN 0521840562 (Hbk); 0521549892 (Pbk).

This is a brave, interesting and thought-provoking book which shows Mark Wynn’s authorial voice to be possessed of a sensitive moral sensibility. Amongst

other things, the book clearly has as one of its key aims the desire to recover for philosophy of religion a deep sense of the human importance of religious thought and experience – of, so to speak, the *humanity* of the religious outlook. I read the book with much gratitude for its having been written, and I am sure that many others will do so too. This does not mean, of course, that there is nothing with which one can disagree in this work, but it does mean that one can always learn from one's disagreements.

In chapter 1 Wynn expresses support for John McDowell's moral realism, according to which emotions are not simply non-representational concomitants of cognitive states but are themselves cognitive and thus epistemically indispensable for coming to moral knowledge – they are themselves forms of thought. He then wishes to say (principally in chapter 5) that this model can be applied to the experience of God so that we can think of such experience as vouchsafed in the having of certain emotional experiences.

Wynn is surely right that the emotions, or, at any rate, many of them, are forms of thought, but whether they can be attached to moral cognitivism in the way he wants, and thence to the experience of God, is a moot point. Wynn briefly discusses Simon Blackburn's projectivist criticisms of McDowell but does not, in the end, try to decide the issue between them, contenting himself with remarking that on either account the issue of correcting one's moral beliefs is a matter of being sensitive, imaginative, sympathetic, and so on. Realism will add that there are moral *facts* in virtue of which one's moral beliefs are true or false, whilst projectivism will claim there is nothing more to say once one has rid oneself of insensitivities and so on (25). Yet Wynn claims that something like the McDowell position is needed for genuine experience of, e.g. the goodness of God: what explains one's experience of God is the *fact* that God is present under this form (25–26).

But if Blackburn may be right that the best construal of our moral understanding is projectivist, then surely this will leave Wynn's invocation of McDowell hanging in the air as far as the central point is concerned, since we could then say that, if a projectivist account of moral value is correct, then so is a projectivist account of, again, the experience of God's goodness. And for many theists that would mean that God was not really being experienced after all. In other words, as I see it, and if I have understood him correctly, Wynn needs to press home his point *pro* McDowell and *contra* Blackburn in a way he thinks he does not have to.

In chapter 2 Wynn draws on the work of Raimond Gaita in an attempt to deepen his key idea that patterns of emotional response are central to a proper understanding of Christian faith and commitment. Most importantly, he draws on Gaita's discussion of the case of a nun whose behaviour he, Gaita, witnessed when he was working in a psychiatric hospital in the 1960s. The patients were incurably ill and seemed to have lost everything that could give meaning to their

lives. One day, a nun came to the hospital and, in her manner towards the patients, displayed a pure love that allowed Gaita, and allows us, to see the full humanity of the afflicted.

In this context Gaita speaks more generally of the love of the saints, which extends to all humanity. Yet there can be no independent justification of such love, or of the sense of humanity it reveals. Wynn takes this not to matter – indeed, I assume he takes this as a strength of Gaita’s argument – since he appeals, as does Gaita, to ‘our’ sense of humanity: the idea is that Gaita’s thought uncovers explicitly something ‘we’ hold to in our understanding of our humanity (e.g. 46), or what ‘our sense of the moral reality of other people’ is (36), which is the preciousness of human beings. Wynn, however, wants to go further than Gaita and claim that the latter’s thinking amounts to a *prima facie* case for making a religious (specifically, Christian) commitment (46), or that it ‘invites completion in religious commitment’ (49), since it is Christianity which has most sustainedly explored the sense of humanity under consideration through its idea that we are all children of God and loved as such.

There are, then, two central issues here, namely, Gaita’s own thinking, and the use it is put to by Wynn. I consider them in this order. In my view, whilst there is no doubt that many of us will be moved by Gaita’s vision, Wynn is not nearly suspicious enough of Gaita’s work. Part of the problem is buried in that ‘we’ or ‘our’ in what ‘we think our humanity to be’ or in ‘our sense of the humanity of the afflicted’. There are two ways of seeing this.

Firstly, it is not at all clear what priority Gaita’s way of putting things has, morally speaking, over other ways of looking at human beings. I am reasonably confident, for example, that Aristotle would have been disgusted by the nun’s behaviour, as he would have been by Christ’s ignominious death on the cross. And, in general, Greek and Roman thought would not have been sympathetic to either. Well, so much the worse for Greek and Roman thought, one might say. And to get to that conclusion one might invoke some kind of moral realism or cognitivist moral epistemology which shows the superiority of ‘our’ way of thinking of these things. But Gaita himself eschews such a route, and Wynn, as we have already seen, is half-hearted in his defence of (moral) realism.

Secondly, that ‘we’ presents each of us as being more of a piece than we are. Look at it this way: in some moods, or in some contexts, one might think that human beings are precious. But what would it be to believe this all the time? Speaking for myself – and I suppose I am fairly average in this – I can be, at times, deeply moved by such a thought. At other times, or in other moods, it seems to me absurd and sentimental, an inability to face the harsh facts of human life. Or again, Gaita wants to say that even Adolf Eichmann is precious, yet even he sees that this thought looks sentimental or sickly. How is one to identify what one really thinks or believes? Do I really believe that human beings are precious?

Do you? The answer for most of us is probably: sometimes, sometimes not, for that belief is at war with others in any complex person.

Suppose a philosopher to sit and write a piece in which he argues, as Gaita does, that human beings are precious. But suppose that most of his life he does not behave or talk as if he really thinks this; (I do not mean that he is nasty or anything like that the rest of the time). What does he really believe? It seems to me that it would be misleading to say that he really believes what he writes in his philosophy and does not believe things in him that conflict with that the rest of the time. Life, and philosophy, are more complicated than that. 'Who am I when I am doing philosophy?' is a question to which philosophers have given too little attention, but Gaita's work raises it in a particularly pressing manner – though he himself does not raise this question explicitly for himself, and neither does Wynn.

But leave all that aside. Is Wynn right to think that Gaita's thought invites completion by Christianity? It depends in part on what exactly one is to make of the idea of invitation here. If it means that Gaita's work *could* be completed by Christianity, then surely Wynn is right. But if it means that Gaita's work is incomplete (morally or conceptually?) without Christianity, then the issues are more complicated. This is because, from one perspective, what one has in Gaita's work is an attempt to conceptualize Christian morality without the metaphysics, so no wonder it is incomplete. It just is a moral outlook that refuses to acknowledge its provenance and what it needs to support it. But then, if one has seen that, that might give one reason to reject the whole thing as disingenuous if one cannot accept a Christian metaphysical scheme. One could evade this by starting back again with the idea of human preciousness, as Wynn does, as a point of entry into the whole complex of ideas, but then this will return us to difficulties of the kind we have already discussed.

In chapter 3, Wynn argues that, just as it is possible to come to a sense of the preciousness of all human beings through reflection on the example of the saint, so too it is possible to have an affectively toned sense of the world as being good. He cites St Francis. I would not wish to disagree at all with such a possibility, but I think Wynn misses something here, namely, how it is possible to hold together a sense of the world's goodness with the fact that for many others it is awful. And we surely need some understanding of that possibility if one's sense of the goodness of the world is not to open to the charge of complacency.

In chapter 4 Wynn deepens his claim that emotions or feelings can have what he calls 'intrinsic intentionality': they 'may be about something, may have some content, intrinsically, that is, in their own right, and not simply because of their association with some thought or evaluation, which represents the world as having a certain character' (90) – a content that cannot be fully articulated in purely discursive terms (e.g., 133). Wynn draws on various models of the emotions in the current philosophical literature to support this claim, and, in chapter 5,

applies this to the issue of the experience of God. In doing so, he expands the idea, suggesting that there can be affectively toned existential apprehensions of the world which then can be elaborated in metaphysical terms. He wishes to undercut the idea that there can be a neutral starting point for natural theology, claiming instead that arguments in philosophy of religion need to appeal to any given individual's existential attitude – to the individual in the specificity of his particular psychology.

I agree with Wynn's general argument here – though many philosophers would not, I suppose – but I think, sadly, that he is mistaken in following William James in claiming that a philosophy's 'ultimate principle must not be one that essentially baffles and disappoints our dearest desires and our most cherished powers' (138). There is no guarantee that an existential attitude to the world must allow things to make sense to us. For sure, it is arguable that not everyone could live by such an attitude. But then the same is surely true of all such attitudes. And there surely are reasons to think that we deceive ourselves if we suppose that the world must make sense to us – the truth about the world is rather the contrary, I should have thought (that claim, and the others I am making about our existential predicament, reflect my own psychology and experience of life, of course, but Wynn licenses such an approach). In any case, there are degrees of things making sense, or failing to make sense – between, as it were, Nietzsche and Christianity there lie many possibilities in this regard (Nietzsche is infinitely more pessimistic than Schopenhauer, despite what the former, and his commentators, say).

In chapter 6 Wynn explores the possibility that certain works of art – and not just explicitly religious works – have religious significance in that they are in some way symbolic of, and body forth a sense of, a religious understanding of parts of the world (say, the sea) or the world as a whole. They can do this because they engender feelings that provide for a sense of the human significance of some part of the world or the world itself – they project an 'affective world'. And this form of feeling, as we have already seen, Wynn argues, possesses 'intrinsic intentionality'. Again, I am sympathetic to Wynn's argument here, but what he says is, I think, somewhat weakened by his aligning what he says about art with the tradition that sees the key to our response to art in the notion of disinterested contemplation (174; though he does not use this term). This is because this notion sits uneasily with the kinds of art which precisely have religious content: the idea that our response to, say, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* is helpfully understood in terms of disinterested contemplation seems all mistaken, since this music clearly has aims to change the listener, and fill his soul with longings, in ways that make, I think, disinterest the wrong kind of concept to invoke here.

In any case, Wynn suggests that philosophy of religion has failed properly to address the ways in which there can be a kind of epistemic failure in a given

person in his inability to respond affectively to the art of a given religious tradition – it has, instead, focused too narrowly on the (in)ability to respond to the evidential force of certain arguments in natural theology (177). Wynn is surely right about that, and it would have been nice if he had pursued this thought further. Instead, he refers in a footnote (178) to a paper of his – it is a shame, I think, that this further material did not find its way into his book.

The final, short chapter of the book rehearses some of the possible problems with appealing to the emotions as Wynn does, such as the tendency they might have towards being indulged for their own sake. Wynn rightly says that the fact that our emotional life is often self-indulgent and narcissistic is not a reason to say, after all, that emotion is not important in the (moral and) religious life. Moreover, Wynn argues that a large element of the good life involves relinquishing the idea of ourselves as ultimately in control of our own fate through the operations of a faculty of reason whose job is to order our emotional life since it is this reason that most truly defines what we are. All of this again is plausible, but, once more, one wishes for more detail – it would have been good to see Wynn deal in greater detail with the fascinating topics he raises.

Overall, then, a thoroughly thought-provoking book, which can be recommended to all who are concerned with the epistemology of the religious life, as well as to those who sense a lack in much contemporary philosophy of religion of a properly human sense of why religion might matter in the first place.

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Fred Berthold, Jr *God, Evil, and Human Learning: A Critique and Revision of the Free Will Defense in Theodicy*. (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2004). Pp. viii + 108. \$32.00 (Hbk). ISBN 0 7914 6041 X.

Fred Berthold believes that traditional attempts to reconcile the existence of an all-good, omnipotent God with the existence of evil, especially evil at the level it is found in the world, fail. A major weak point in traditional theodicies is found in the doctrine of omnipotence. Berthold states, 'the traditional strict omnipotence line not only has unacceptable implications, but is, theologically dispensable; not only dispensable, but dispensable with good riddance' (89). Though Berthold thinks that the ultimate truth about God's power

may be unknowable, he prefers a 'Whiteheadian process view'. Process theology is said to hold that:

... God's power is the power of persuasion. God offers to each emerging actual occasion a range of possibilities ordered in such a way as to make most attractive the option that will lead to the greatest satisfaction. But alas, the choice of the best option is not forced, and the best option is often not chosen. Genuine autonomy is possible for all events, and is a necessary component of any action that is fully an act of free will. (83)

Berthold acknowledges that on such a conception,

... God's power is limited to such an extent that he cannot guarantee the ultimate establishment of an eternal Kingdom of God, certainly not in this world ... One cannot even say that the process God has sufficient power to make such a happy outcome likely in the long run. (87)

Nonetheless, the God of process theology is always and everywhere working for the fullest possible satisfaction of all of his creatures, and this, Berthold thinks, is sufficient to make such a God worthy of worship. Berthold suggests that we can account for the presence of the kind of evil found in our world if we allow that God may be so limited.

Berthold's book is very short (the text and notes amount to only 100 pages), rather too short for an adequate treatment of its topics. The philosophical discussion tends to be confused, the assessment of other views too cursory, and Berthold's own position underdeveloped. The book can perhaps best be seen as just a sketch of Berthold's take on the problem of free will and evil, one which sympathetic readers may wish to pursue on their own.

After sketching the problem of evil and surveying traditional attempts to answer the problem in the first two chapters, Berthold turns in chapter 3 to what he regards as 'the most devastating argument that can be brought against the traditional free will defence' (18), the challenge raised by J. L. Mackie ('Evil and omnipotence', *Mind*, 64 (1955), 200–212) and Antony Flew ('Divine omnipotence and human freedom', in Flew and Alastair MacIntyre (eds), *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (New York NY: Macmillan, 1955), 144–169). It will help to review the lines of argument developed by Mackie and Flew.

Mackie argued that the following set of propositions, which he took to be part of traditional theology, are mutually inconsistent: (1) 'God is omnipotent'; (2) 'God is wholly good'; (3) 'evil exists'; (4) 'good is opposed to evil, in such a way that a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can'; and (5) 'there are no limits to what an omnipotent thing can do' (Mackie, 200–201). Mackie states that an 'adequate solution' to the problem of evil can be given by denying one of these propositions, e.g. by holding that God is 'not quite omnipotent' (*ibid.*). Since Mackie holds propositions (4) and (5) to be 'quasi-logical rules', he would presumably hold that it is one of (1)–(3) that must be abandoned. It is of course common for theists to use a version of the free-will defence to attack (5); e.g. a simple version of the free-will defence holds that even an omnipotent God cannot

exclude the possibility of all evil while allowing creatures to have free will. Berthold quotes Mackie's answer to this approach:

If God has made men such that in their free choices they sometimes prefer what is good and sometimes what is evil, why could he not have made men such that they would always freely choose the good? If there is no logical impossibility in a man's choosing the good on one, or on several occasions, there cannot be a logical impossibility in his freely choosing the good on every occasion. (Berthold 21, Mackie 209)

Flew also attacks the free-will defence. He argues that free choice is compatible with determinism, and that an omnipotent being could determine that free creatures never choose wrongly. Thus, Mackie and Flew contend that if there were an omnipotent God, then God would have the power to ensure that creatures exercise free will but evil never occurs, thus the existence of free will does not account for why God would allow evil. Berthold's solution to the problem of evil involves the rejection of both Mackie's propositions (1) and (5). By rejecting (1) Berthold satisfies Mackie's criterion for an adequate solution to the problem of evil. If Berthold is correct in rejecting (5) he will also have undercut the primary arguments of Mackie and Flew.

Though it is common nowadays for philosophers to reject (1) and (5), Berthold has little discussion of the contemporary literature on the topic. Berthold points to difficulties many traditional theists would have in trying to fashion a reply to Mackie and Flew; for instance, he argues that '[t]hat part of the tradition which is illustrated by the theologies of Luther and Calvin exhibits the sort of divine determinism that fits well with Mackie's and Flew's compatibilism and, therefore, cannot refute the attack of the latter upon traditional theology' (34). Berthold also discusses related difficulties confronting, for example, Augustine, Aquinas, and Molinists.

After discussing why traditional accounts have difficulty answering the problem of evil, Berthold develops his own version of the free-will defence. Free will is a 'complex and learned ability' (47) which comes in degrees. Whereas Flew and Mackie have in mind a concept of free will that Berthold calls 'moral free will' (23), '[w]e must also take note of another aspect or level, if we are to characterize the concept of free will in the most developed sense requisite for citizenship in the Kingdom of God' (48); this aspect of the higher form of free will is autonomy. In an autonomous act the 'agent reacts to antecedent causes in a selective, novel, and unpredictable way, and the principle of selectivity is internal to the psyche of the agent in the very moment of choice and no antecedent cause or cases [*sic*] function as sufficient cause for the choice' (48). While the capacity to have free will is present at birth, free will itself can only come about through a 'long and complex learning process' (49). This learning process requires the actual experience of evil (69).

But why is there so much evil? Here Berthold thinks the mainline theodicies come in for heavy criticism. If God were omnipotent (in the sense of being

capable of doing whatever can be conceived without logical contradiction), then God could make it the case that much less evil exists, and yet enough exists for the development of beings with the sort of free will 'requisite for citizenship in heaven'. 'The evils due to human wrongdoing are devilishly grievous and far beyond any measure of what is required for the learning of the abilities of moral free will' (70), and '[i]t is surely not necessary that natural evils be so many and so grievous as they are in the actual world' (71).

Berthold ends the book with a 'speculative chapter' (73) in which he proposes an account of God, inspired by process theology, ecological theology, and feminist theology. As we saw above, the picture of God that emerges on this account is much less powerful than God as traditionally conceived. Apparently, the reason why God does not prevent the world from being far more evil than it needs to be in order to accomplish God's purpose is because God lacks the power to do so.

Earlier, I said that the philosophical discussion in the text tends to be confused. One case that may illustrate the point involves a confusion over the relation between compatibilism and determinism, and the role of the doctrine of determinism in the Mackie/Flew argument. Berthold holds that the 'validity of the Mackie and Flew argument ... depends upon the validity of the determinist doctrine' (22), and at one point he says that the 'attack mounted by Professors Mackie and Flew cannot be positively refuted unless one can refute their doctrine of compatibilism and the causal determinism upon which it is based' (33). Berthold believes that the doctrine of determinism cannot be decided and therefore cannot be refuted. There is no need to go into Berthold's reason for saying this (23–24), since in fact the Mackie/Flew argument does not require that determinism holds. Their argument only requires that the freedom of creatures is compatible (in some appropriate sense) with God's determining how creatures choose, for if such a compatibilism holds, then (if there were an omnipotent God) God could bring it about that a world exists with free creatures that never choose wrongly.

Rather strangely, at one point (between assertions that the Mackie/Flew argument depends on the doctrine of determinism) Berthold acknowledges that Mackie and Flew do not need to prove that determinism is the correct doctrine; he says that they only need to show that there is 'no logical impossibility involved in the claims of determinism', and that 'there is no logical contradiction in affirming both determinism and free will (in the sense required in order to impute moral responsibility to agents)' (24). Why then did he say that Mackie's and Flew's arguments depend on the doctrine of determinism? The discussion is muddled. On the whole the book lacks philosophical clarity. It seems to have been published before it was ready.

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Wayne Proudfoot (ed.) *William James and the Science of Religions: Reexperiencing The Varieties of Religious Experience*. (New York NY: Columbia University Press, 2004). Pp. vii + 138. £22.50 (Hbk). ISBN 0 23 1132 042.

If there is one thing that can be said about him across a broad spectrum of interests and disciplines, it is that William James inspires. Not to say that he is without detractors, for these are legion, but his admirers are always inspired when they read him, publishers continue to be inspired by the sales of his work even after 100 years, and scholars who write about him, and therefore have their name associated with his legacy, always seem inspired, as James described it in his *Pragmatism* (1907), to do their level best to contribute to the larger whole by putting their highest, most original, and most profound thoughts forward. No better example of this trend can be found than in Wayne Proudfoot's edited volume of papers, one of many symposia delivered in 2002 commemorating the centenary of James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). The theme was 'William James and the science of religions'.

The papers were delivered at Columbia University, one of the premier institutions of higher learning in the US, sponsored by the Center for the Study of Religion and Science, and underwritten by the Templeton Foundation, the largest single source of funding that defines the dialogue between science and religion in the West. The speakers were a cast representing history, philosophy of religion, psychology, and comparative literature. As such, much was to be expected, and they did not disappoint.

Proudfoot opens the volume with a general introduction to James, and gives a definition of the science of religions as we would understand how that enterprise is conducted today; namely, as the application of reductionistic empiricism to the claims of organized religion. Lauding Richard Rorty's recent mostly successful efforts to revive interest in James among contemporary analytic philosophers, Proudfoot then goes on to a brief analysis of James's pragmatism, interpreted through the lens of Peirce and Dewey, before introducing the other authors.

David Hollinger leads with the first chapter, where he wants to show James's vindication of Protestant religion from a scientific standpoint. Wayne Proudfoot then weighs in with a chapter on scientific naturalism and the ways in which James needs to be modified to fit that version of reality. He takes aim particularly at James's discussion of an 'unseen order', which Proudfoot takes to refer not to the unfathomable vagaries of a transcendent mystical consciousness, but to an internalized moral order predetermined by history, reason, and authority.

His criticism of James comes primarily from a comparison of *The Varieties* with James's *Will to Believe* (1897) and his *Pragmatism* (1907).

Ann Taves attempts to review James's emphasis on a dynamic psychology of the subconscious in *The Varieties*. She builds her argument around my own work reconstructing James's 1896 unpublished Lowell 'Lectures on exceptional mental states', in which I indicated the link between James's dynamic theory of the subconscious in 1896 and *The Varieties* in 1902. See E. I. Taylor *William James on Exceptional Mental States: Reconstruction of the Unpublished 1896 Lowell Lectures* (New York NY: Scribner, 1983). See also *idem William James on Consciousness Beyond the Margin* (Princeton NJ: Princeton U. Press, 1996). She also draws on my work with Sonu Shamdasani, Jung scholar at the University of London, reconstructing the so-called French, Swiss, English, and American psychotherapeutic axis that flourished between 1880 and 1920, before the advent of psychoanalysis. Only through these materials can we understand James's emphasis on the psychology of transcendence in *The Varieties* and what he actually meant by a science of religions.

In his chapter, Richard Rorty wants to point out some inconsistencies in *The Varieties*. James, he declares, is not precise when defining 'religion' or 'experience'. Nor does James commit himself to a definite belief in God. He then invokes Dewey, Clifford, and Freud in service of his critique that James ignores completely the social aspects of religion, and concludes in the end that, while James's pragmatism is useful, his other doctrines of radical empiricism and pluralism are 'utterly vacuous' and can be ignored. In his chapter, Jerome Bruner gives wonderful first-person accounts of the Jamesian ethos at Harvard in the 1940s, while making the case for James as the first constructivist. Philip Kitcher, whose chapter is the longest by far in the book, takes up the interpretation most often avoided by philosophers of religion today: namely, that the awakening of mystical consciousness is the central theme of James's *Varieties*, around which all other themes in the work constellate. He questions this interpretation, however, preferring instead to review James and Clifford and their debate on belief.

Each chapter shows the author at his or her best. James is always the touchstone for the expression of their own ideas, which they have been invited by the Jamesian ambience to showcase. Sometimes it is a spark thrown off from their reading of a particular idea, sometimes it is the attempt to reflect issues relevant to scholars in a specific discipline; and sometimes they wish to assess James in the larger picture of contemporary thought in general. The impression we get overall is that James, while parochial in his overemphasis on Protestantism, not quite clean enough in his logic, forgetful of the great institutions of religion that shape people's lives, and, indeed, oblivious to entire communities of religious discourse, nevertheless produced a work that remains a profound living document, in which something generic in the spiritual life of the person is

enlivened upon reading, and also catalysed in the scholar reaching to understand religion.

That being the case, we must also be allowed to inquire about the contributors' knowledge of James and what he actually said. For, while it is true that James's thought was so broad and all-encompassing that it seems that everyone can find a place to stand under his vast umbrella, his meliorism must be tempered with a critical evaluation of what he actually said and what he actually stood for. And when we ask these questions, we find that James actually did have a specific platform that simultaneously united his views in psychology, philosophy, and religion, and that at the same time acted as a critique of the direction in which these disciplines were going, even in his own time.

His platform was a tripartite metaphysics of pragmatism, pluralism, and radical empiricism, the scope of which made him so all-inclusive. He grasped a picture both wider and deeper than views cut by disciplinary boundaries are capable of seeing. But, he urged, ultimate reality deserves a much bigger canvas. We may take but two examples germane to the Proudfoot volume: James's understanding of pragmatism, and what James meant by a science of religions.

First, I would like to offer the observation that philosophers of religion as a class generally misunderstand James's understanding of pragmatism. We know this because they most often come to the subject of pragmatism through the writings of John Dewey and Charles Sanders Peirce and interpret James through that lens. They do not read James across his entire oeuvre, preferring instead to confine themselves mainly to the *The Will To Believe, Pragmatism*, and the later more overtly philosophical essays. As is the case with most analytic philosophers, philosophers of religion also ignore James's psychology, but when they do recognize it, they generally confine themselves only to the positivist epistemology of his *Principles of Psychology* (1890). They only read selectively in the corpus of scholarship on James, preferring those authors who have made James over into a quasi-analytic philosopher, such as Gerald Myers's *William James: His Life and Thought* (1985), which interprets James from the standpoint of Wittgenstein and Russell. And they still believe Bertrand Russell when he declared James's philosophy a 'neutral monism', when, even in his own lifetime, James got Russell to admit that he did not know anything about pragmatism.

Philosophers of religion also tend to remain inveterate theists in the monistic tradition, always enquiring about whether or not James believed in God in the context of the Christian scheme of salvation, when his true focus as a pluralist was the generic capacity for the immediate experience of divinity within. Moreover, most philosophers of religion fail the major litmus test; namely, recognizing that the Swedenborgian and transcendentalist interpretation of the doctrine of use is possibly the single most important source for James's version of pragmatism. They prefer instead to declare that Swedenborg, Emerson, and Henry James Sr are not properly to be called philosophers, when, in fact, they constitute the

epistemological lineage from which James's own philosophy springs and only through which his understanding of pragmatism can be understood.

Philosophers further espouse pragmatism without reference to pluralism or radical empiricism. However, radical empiricism, the core of James's tripartite metaphysics, refers to pure experience in the immediate moment before the differentiation between subject and object. Elsewhere, I have equated it with James's attempt to understand the experience of the ultimate in the midst of the mystical experience. See E. I. Taylor 'Metaphysics and consciousness in James's *Varieties*: origins, meaning, and effects', in J. Cerrette (ed.) *William James and The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Centenary Celebration* (London: Routledge, 2005). Such experiences, James believed, are universal within all people, but unique and idiosyncratic from person to person. This is his doctrine of noetic pluralism.

His pragmatism, then, is the means by which two apparently contradictory statements about the nature of ultimate reality can be judged as equal in their outcomes, while remaining radically different with regard to their source and content. Failure to account for this dynamic relationship, either because of the limits of one's inherent capacity or because of the pressure of community consensus, is to misunderstand Jamesian pragmatism, particularly in the religious sphere.

Second, we should be allowed to ask, just what did James actually mean by a science of religions? Extant historical scholarship suggests four major sources: the literary psychology of self-realization propounded by the transcendentalists and by Henry James, Sr's emphasis on a 'physics of creation'; a variety of different psychotherapeutic regimes that flourished around a French, Swiss, English, and American axis that James not only had intensively studied but contributed to mightily; developments in the burgeoning field of comparative religions at Harvard, and also the science of religions movement around Paul Carus, editor of *The Open Court* Press; and James's own understanding of the differences between Vedanta and Samkhya philosophy in classical Hinduism, which involved his contact with meditation practitioners such as Wincenty Lutoslawski, Anagarika Dharmapala, and Swami Vivekananda.

From these sources, James concluded in *The Varieties* that the true locus of religion is within the interior life of the person, that the road to the awakening of ultimately transforming mystical states lies through an exploration of the subconscious, and that mystical experiences are to be tested not by where they come from, but by their effect on enhancing the moral and aesthetic quality of daily life. His call for a science of religions, then, was the development of a cross-cultural comparative psychology of subconscious states, especially of the mystical variety, and how people took such experiences from culture to culture.

But Western philosophers who have had no contact with non-Western epistemologies either deny these influences to be important or else claim that the

only story worth telling is the Western analytic one. They then proceed to confuse today's dialogue between science and religion, which marries the reductionistic realism of physics to a covert Christian theism, with the more cross-cultural and comparative model of consciousness which James promoted 100 years ago. While it gives us the best and the highest of the Western professoriate, Proudfoot's edited volume appears to be a case in point, except that in the end it is rescued by a single lifeline, the perceptive scholarship of Professor Taves.

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