compelling case for viewing Cusa as an important dialogue partner for moderns, one who would not merely point back to a pre-modern concept of the self and its relation to the world, other selves, and its creator, but who could help to save science and preserve the massive benefits the innovations of the modern world have delivered to individual creativity and liberty.

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Fiona Ellis *God, Value, and Nature*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Pp. 240. £55.00 (Hbk). ISBN 978 019 871412 5.

In this absorbing and compelling book, Fiona Ellis argues that theism and naturalism are compatible. This claim is provocative because almost all card-carrying naturalists agree in defining their position in opposition to theism and other forms of 'supernaturalism'. Many theists also concur in defining their position in these oppositional terms (consider, e.g., the work of Alvin Plantinga). Ellis develops and defends an expanded conception of naturalism (i.e. 'theistic naturalism') which goes beyond any of the major views of naturalism currently on offer.

Ellis begins by discussing 'scientific naturalism', which circumscribes reality within the bounds of what can be validated by the natural sciences. Anything beyond these bounds is regarded as 'supernatural' and thus illusory. The problem with this kind of scientism, even for many non-theists, is that it regards as illusory certain things deemed humanly important from within our engaged or experiential standpoint on the world. For the scientific naturalist, our experience of objective values is to be explained as mere projection onto the world of our subjective states, rather than as recognizing that certain features of the world (e.g. other human beings) are *worthy* of our concern and make *demands* upon us.

However, many philosophers dissatisfied with this sort of scientific naturalism seek to articulate and defend a more expansive form of naturalism that can accommodate a realm of objective values which fall outside the purview of the natural sciences. Ellis first considers a position that she calls 'Expansive Naturalism I', or 'expansive scientific naturalism'. According to this position, naturalism can accommodate objective values if we allow for a realm of reality that is only properly accounted for by the human sciences (psychology, anthropology, sociology, etc.)

rather than the natural sciences. Peter Railton contends that 'moral inquiry is of a piece with empirical inquiry' and that 'moral facts' are reducible to natural facts (31–32). In particular, moral facts are correlated with our objective interests as human beings, i.e. the non-moral goods that are constitutive components of our individual well-being. The moral dimension comes into play when we take up the social point of view and concern ourselves with maximizing the 'aggregate well-being impartially considered'. Unlike classical utilitarianism, Railton's consequentialism affirms a variety of non-moral goods to be promoted: e.g. 'happiness, knowledge, purposeful activity, autonomy, solidarity, respect, and beauty' (35). (Ellis rightly notes that it is unclear why solidarity, respect, and even happiness should be described as 'non-moral' goods.) Railton also wants to avoid the self-alienation charge against utilitarianism and thus he maintains that taking up the impartial stance in fact makes it possible to 'feel part of a larger world in a way that is itself of great value' (36).

Drawing on the work of David Wiggins and Akeel Bilgrami, Ellis argues that the expansive scientific naturalist's appeals to the human sciences – just as with the scientific naturalist's appeals to the natural sciences – are inadequate to explain the realm of value or normativity. This realm can only be accessed from an engaged or participative perspective (i.e. from within a particular evaluative standpoint on the world), but the scientist operates in a disengaged or detached manner through reductive understanding and evaluative neutrality. Ellis writes: 'treating values as objects of detached observation in this sense involves treating them scientifically, and such treatment has the effect of removing them from the picture' (44). Moreover, to reduce moral properties to natural properties is to lose the moral properties altogether. Ellis quotes Wiggins as follows: 'To do *A* may promote well-being as naturalistically specified. But it is an open question . . . whether it is indeed obligatory' (47). As John McDowell has argued, this point also applies to the sort of neo-Aristotelian ethical naturalism endorsed by Philippa Foot and others.

All this suggests that we need to move in a non-scientific direction in order to accommodate the realm of objective values. Thus, Ellis next considers what she calls 'Expansive Naturalism II', or simply 'expansive naturalism', focusing especially on the works of Wiggins and McDowell. The expansive naturalist 'seeks to defend the idea that moral properties are *sui generis*, and to dispose any difficulty which might be thought to accompany such a position'. Against those who regard such 'irreducible moral properties' as 'intolerably odd', the expansive naturalist maintains that they are in fact 'part of the natural world – albeit a world whose limits exceed scientific parameters – and can be comprehended as such provided that we grant the possibility of non-scientific modes of comprehension' (51–52). What is required is an engaged approach and an understanding of values as properties in the world that involve 'essential reference to their effects on sentient beings' equipped with a 'moral sensibility' capable of appreciating and being concerned with these values (53–54). Such a moral sensibility is not some 'occult power',

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but rather part of what McDowell calls our 'second nature', acquired through education or training:

> The ethical is a domain of rational requirements, which are there in any case, whether or not we are responsive to them. We are alerted to these demands by acquiring appropriate conceptual capacities. When a decent upbringing initiates us into the relevant way of thinking, our eyes are opened to the very existence of this tract of the space of reasons. (61)

For instance, our acquired conceptual framework includes concepts like 'the noble' that light up the world for us such that certain things are seen as worthy of our concern and as making normative demands upon us. This transfigures the world by bringing into view 'an added richness' (64). Whereas scientific naturalism endorses a disenchanted view of nature according to which our value experiences are seen as projections onto a value-neutral world, expanded naturalism allows for at least a 'partially enchanted' view (73ff.).

Ellis's key move is to exploit this expansion of nature to include objective values for the sake of a further expansion in the direction of the divine. 'Theistic naturalism', or 'Expansive Naturalism III', allows for an even fuller kind of enchantment in which we can become responsive to God. As in the case of value, it could be claimed that the idea of responsiveness to God is 'intolerably odd' or 'spooky'. In response, Ellis develops a theistic version of McDowell's idea of second nature:

> [W]e ourselves, *qua* natural beings, are already open to God. The supernatural – which here embraces both God and His communicative action – is not a spooky superstructure, extrinsic or added on to a nature which is complete in itself. Rather, it is a quality or dimension which enriches or perfects the natural world. This grants us the right to allow that man can be inwardly transformed by God. And precisely because this transformation serves to enhance his natural being – given that we are now working with a broader conception of nature – we avoid the implication that such divine action spells the destruction of man, severing any connection he might have with ordinary human life. (91)

There are two sides here to Ellis's theistic naturalism. First, it involves a way of thinking about the transcendence and immanence of God (chapter 5). For Ellis, theistic naturalism is not a form of pantheism, which denies the transcendence of God and conflates God with the world. God is not so radically separate from the world that He 'becomes something whose existence is doubtful and, in any case, irrelevant to our humanity' (90). But

> [God] remains radically distinct from anything within the world even whilst retaining the most intimate connection with it. In one sense then, the natural world stands opposed to something supernatural, but this something is not a mere addition to the world which can be rejected whilst leaving everything else in its place. Rather, it is that without which the world would cease to be and without which we would cease to be properly human. (178)

God is seen here as the ontological source of the world and as that which gives everything its 'definitive sense' (99). In short, the world is essentially 'God-involving' such that the natural and the supernatural are intimately connected (202).

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The second side of Ellis's theistic naturalism involves a claim about our human capacities for responsiveness to God and for being thereby transformed and fulfilled. We might say that she is defending here a view of human beings as *homo religiosus*. Ellis explores Emmanuel Levinas's claim that we relate to God through our relation to value, viz. in upholding our moral responsibilities to other human beings as we encounter them in face-to-face relations (chapter 6). Such moral responsibilities open us up to an ideal, which induces a desire for the infinite, i.e. for God, which at the same time is a desire for goodness (133–134). The desire for God is thus essential to our humanity as it animates the moral life through which we achieve an elevated existence. For Ellis, Levinas articulates an important aspect of being related to God, but she maintains that it is too narrow in only allowing us to relate to God through being moral and worries that it could end up squeezing God out of the picture. Drawing on the Christian theological tradition, she puts forward the possibility of a loving communion with God, unmediated by moral relations with others, which brings with it a 'warmth and consolation' missing from Levinas's picture and also inspires love for others (chapter 7).

Ellis's overall argument for the possibility of expanding expansive naturalism in a theistic direction is ingenious and compelling. She convincingly shows that once we move beyond the strictures of scientific naturalism there is room for a theistic position, and her comparison between God and value yields an illuminating account of what a theistic naturalism looks like. However, in the spirit of adding further support, I want to suggest that Ellis could go further in arguing for the positive draw of theism.

Ellis allows that the expansive naturalist has met the explanatory requirement for making sense of the experience of normative demands that 'are there in any case, whether or not we are responsive to them' (66–68, 80, 140–145, 147, 150). While the concept of second nature is certainly a necessary condition for meeting this explanatory requirement, it can be questioned whether it is in fact sufficient. We might ask: in what kind of world would we expect to find such normative demands? One answer that readily suggests itself is a theistic world-view with its inherent moral teleology. Ellis alludes to this when she suggests that theism can add a dimension of hope, citing John Cottingham's appeal to a hope that our human world 'is not utterly sealed and closed, but that our flickering moral intimations reflect the ultimate source of all goodness'. By acting morally, Cottingham continues,

> We conform to an intelligible, rational pattern, the pattern that a being of surpassing love and benevolence intended for us. Believing this may be partly a matter of faith, but it may also reflect a more coherent and compelling conception of the nature of goodness than anything else that is on offer. (143; cf. 153)

However, Ellis notes that the expansive naturalist will deny that we are in need of hope, since the world is not utterly sealed and closed, at least with respect to value.

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Additionally, Ellis maintains that an expansive naturalist like McDowell does not have to accept that the theistic view makes for 'a more coherent and compelling conception of the nature of goodness'.

But this issue deserves more exploration. For instance, Ellis remarks that on the expansive naturalist view

> we are motivated [e.g.] by kindness, justice, and benevolence, appalled by cruelty and greed . . . It is in this sense that values make their demands on us and provide us with the relevant reasons for action, and it is in this sense that we come to find value in things, when, say, we are struck by the cruelty or kindness of a person or an act. (66–67)

However, we can still ask questions such as: why not see these responses as merely a matter of what we happen to care about in virtue of our contingent evolutionary, cultural, and personal history? What is it about human beings that makes sense of the judgement that they are *worthy* of kindness and *ought* not to be treated cruelly? Can we really make sense of the idea that the demands of kindness 'are there in any case, whether or not we are responsive to them' in a world that is at bottom devoid of any underlying moral teleology? The only way to try to answer these questions is to appeal to what seems to make the best sense of our experience. Here one might be drawn to theism given its inherent moral teleology and belief that human life is sacred in virtue of being created in the image of God. One might also defend the need for hope by developing further the idea of our being *homo religiosus* and its connection to our being meaning-seeking animals.

It is one of the great virtues of Ellis's book that even if she does not take up these issues in any great detail, she provides the philosophical framework through which these sorts of issues can be explored. Ellis's book is one that can be profitably read by anyone who works in meta-ethics, philosophy of religion, theology, and the debates surrounding naturalism. Indeed, one of its most impressive features is the author's range of interests and ability to integrate important ideas drawn from recent English-speaking philosophy, Continental philosophy, and Christian theology in an illuminating way. All this makes for a richly rewarding text that should help to shape future discussions on naturalism and its relation to theism and ethics.

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