

the ways that his types of transcendence relate to the powerful dichotomies of beauty/sublimity and Apollo/Dionysus, and (ii) to analyse the ways in which a Christian legacy still leaves its traces in the subversion of these dichotomies. I should be clear: this is a call for something to be more explicitly articulated in the book; it is not a claim that it is not present at all.

We can see that it is present when, for instance, Stoker very persuasively sees in Warhol more than mere endlessly regressive irony; he discerns a genuine concern with Christ as healer (and thus a genuine hope for *bodies*). He also rewardingly reads Kiefer as insisting on the inescapability of historical circumstance and particularity, in a way that underwrites his continued interest in figural representation – as in this contrast with Mondrian: '[T]he price of Mondrian's radical immanence is the historical situation. In other words, heaven is too much separated from earth in a spiritual sense' (p. 181). Whereas: '[I]nstead of a spirituality without hope, Kiefer presents a spirituality of concrete as an open question to heaven with a spark of hope' (p. 186). Here are recognitions that transcendence is not always disruptive, irruptive, liminal, or abstract, and when this possibility is explored (as Stoker explores it in Kiefer's and in Warhol's works), we may be better served as aestheticians if we are helped to detect in such works the legacy of a Christian tradition; a tradition that does not make the sublime the enemy of the figural, but sees in the incarnation a fundamental assurance that *glory takes form*. Or, in a favoured phrase of Janet Martin Soskice, a tradition in which intimacy and ultimacy are one.

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Sarah Coakley (ed.) *Faith, Rationality, and the Passions*. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). Pp. vi+264. £19.99 (Pbk). ISBN 978 1 4443 6193 3.

The past two decades have seen a growing and well-documented interest in the relationship between reason and the emotions in moral philosophy, the philosophy of religion, and systematic theology. Significant contributions from the likes of Robert Solomon, Martha Nussbaum, and the late Peter Goldie (who features in the present volume) have reshaped debates surrounding rationality, 'the passions', and religious belief.

It is in the context of these developments that Sarah Coakley firmly locates this volume, the proceedings from a 2010 conference of the same title held at Cambridge University and subsequently published in two journals

(*Modern Theology*, 27 (2011), 217–361; *Faith and Philosophy*, 28 (2011), 3–101). Coakley gathers together a formidable group of contributions (the contents read like a ‘who’s who’ of anglophone philosophical theology), and the scope and ambition of the volume is no less impressive. As Coakley remarks in the opening words of her editor’s introduction, the aim is to examine the ‘question of the relation of passion to reason in the life of faith . . . *historically, systematically, and in interdisciplinary exchange* with relevant scientific research’ (p. 1).

Coakley herself sets out a compelling argument for the growing interest in the relationship between ‘faith, rationality, and the passions’ (discussed below), and the volume is at its strongest when the contributors follow her stated aim in exploring all three concepts *together*. However, this brief is met more clearly in some chapters than others, which undermines the volume’s internal coherence. This may simply reflect the enormity of the task Coakley has set herself in tackling such a broad and multifaceted theme (or collection of themes) systematically. Or perhaps it is an inevitable consequence of rendering a collection of conference papers on this multifaceted theme – multifaceted enough, perhaps, to encourage a disparate range of contributing papers not easily assimilated into a coherent collection – into a single edited volume.

It is to Coakley’s credit, then, that she imposes a clear interpretative framework upon the contributing essays; namely, the attempt to ‘underscore the significance . . . of the affective dimensions of religious rationality’ (p. 3). The essays are divided among four ‘clusters’, each of which addresses a particular issue or development in recent scholarship that has attracted renewed interest in the relationship between faith, rationality, and the passions.

First, there is the response to claims – chiefly associated with the ‘new atheism’ – that ‘religious commitment is precisely a manifestation of a *loss* of reason’. Such claims, argues Coakley, are founded on the conviction that to be reasonable is to be ‘scientific’, ‘overriding affective nostalgia for an outmoded “God”’ (p. 1). Responding to these claims not only requires rigorous interrogation of an understanding of ‘rationality’ that is taken to be juxtaposed to ‘faith’, but ‘also requires a historical diagnosis which can explain how and why “reason” and “religion” became rhetorically unhitched in the first place’ (pp. 1–2). Second, the hostility to ‘secularized’ Enlightenment reason that has come to characterize much post-foundationalist anglophone theology is subjected to critical scrutiny. A hermeneutic sensitivity to historical context is again required here, shifting beyond the ‘false scapegoating of “Enlightenment” or “modernity” to consider anew ‘the manifold differences and riches of thinking in a period in which “passions” and “affections” were still counted as significant and often positive forces with which reason had to do, and “emotions” were yet to be invented’ (p. 2). The third cluster explores the often-overlooked role that ‘feeling’ and the ‘passions’ play in the thought of a number of key philosophers in the modern period. The contributing chapters build on these re-readings of key figures in the

western canon to consider anew both the relationship between 'reason' and 'the passions', but also how we might be brought to a deeper understanding of this relationship by considering the role of the passions in religious belief and practice. And the fourth and final cluster considers the implications of recent developments in neuroscience and experimental psychology for philosophical and theological explorations of faith, rationality, and the passions.

Underscoring all four clusters is Coakley's plea for exegetical sensitivity, particularly in treating the important semantic distinctions (e.g. 'feeling', 'affect', 'passion', 'emotion') which of course carry different weight in different historical and philosophical contexts (cf. p. 9), but also in unpicking the various assumptions concerning the relationship between reason and emotion from the modern era beyond. As she explains:

[T]he widespread assumption that it was the modern period that produced a new and stark disjunction between feeling and rationality is, as repeatedly shown, significantly flawed. It is much more truly the case that sophisticated thinking about 'passion' and its implications (negative or otherwise) for reason was carried through from late scholasticism in one form or another into the modern period and continued to hold a position of philosophical significance into the nineteenth century. The birth of 'emotion', therefore, as a quite new and psychologized concept in the later nineteenth century, marks the point at which much stronger dualisms between reason and the affective realm start to become apparent in evolutionary, medical and philosophical thinking, and the earlier and sophisticated range of distinctions between *different* sorts of affect seemingly starts to atrophy. (p. 9)

It is when the contributing chapters follow Coakley's lead in pressing a hermeneutic engagement with the interplay of those three key terms – faith, rationality, and the passions – that the volume has real critical purchase. Contributors across all four clusters make persuasive and powerful cases for (re)examining this interplay while providing detailed and original critical readings of their particular objects of study, whether figures in the history of western philosophy or thematic issues concerning religious belief, reason, and the emotions.

Charles Taylor's chapter on 'Reason, Faith, and Meaning' is a case in point. Although his argument re-traces to a certain degree territory previously charted in *A Secular Age* (and, to a lesser extent, *Sources of the Self*), Taylor levels a persuasive challenge against the scientism rife in 'secular' conceptions of the term 'reason', specifically their claims to live up to the impossible ideal of value-neutrality. He notes that this ideal is accompanied by the wish to distance or immunize rational critique and action from the emotions, which are mistakenly viewed in such instances as 'brute, non-cognitive, uninformed by insight, whether accurate or not' (p. 20).

Similarly, William T. Cavanaugh's chapter on 'The Invention of Fanaticism' traces contemporary critiques of religious 'irrationality' to a false dichotomy between religion and reason that emerged alongside the invention of the modern

state. In the early modern struggle between ecclesiastical and civil powers in Europe, religion, argues Cavanaugh, was envisaged as 'occupying an essentially non-rational and non-public sphere to which the concerns of the church should be confined'; thence emerged the 'myth' of religion as a 'non-rational impulse that is inherently more prone to violence than so-called secular phenomena' (pp. 29–30).

The cluster of chapters devoted to exploring the affective dimensions of reason consists of contributions from Catherine Pickstock (on Plato), Columba Stewart (on Evagrius Ponticus), Paul J. Griffiths (on Augustine), and Eleonore Stump (on Aquinas). In attempting to disclose the affective dimensions of reason as a truth-seeking faculty, all four chapters offer powerful and persuasive revised readings of pivotal figures in the western canon traditionally understood variously as dismissive of the passions, wary of the passions' disruptive powers, or, at the very least, presenting the passions as firmly subordinate to reason. Especially noteworthy here is Eleonore Stump's reading of Aquinas, in which she argues that Thomas's account of the passions has entirely to do with relationship – specifically, the 'second-personal connection to God'. Contrasting Aquinas's account of the passions with that of Hume, Stump claims that what differentiates the former from the latter is not that Aquinas privileges reason while Hume privileges passion in ethical life (as it is traditionally understood): 'Rather it is that the emotions Aquinas highlights as essential to the ethical life have to do with relationship to God' (p. 103).

Similarly, chapters from John Cottingham (on Descartes), John Milbank (on Hume and Kant), John Hare (on Kant), Douglas Hedley (on Maistre), and Merold Westphal (on Kierkegaard) continue to challenge the division between reason and feeling, specifically as it has come to be associated with these key thinkers in the modern era. Cottingham and Hare in particular are eager to dispel the caricatures that have seen Descartes and Kant labelled as holding the passions at arm's length from pure, disembodied, and disembedded reason. They thereby add their names to the substantial recent literature defending both Descartes's and especially Kant's views (or a Kantian view) on the emotions as integral components of moral character. Westphal, meanwhile, offers a careful reading of Kierkegaard that demonstrates the complex and illuminating way in which faith, rationality, and the passions are interwoven throughout his pseudonymous writings. Significantly, Westphal also builds on his analysis of Kierkegaard to sketch his own account of faith as a fundamentally *rational* passion. In doing so, his chapter is probably the closest any of the contributions come to meeting Coakley's purported aim of exploring the ways in which faith, rationality, and the passions might be meaningfully explored *together*.

This more holistic approach is notably absent in the final cluster of contributions. The chapters by Thomas Dixon, Stephen Mulhall, Gerald L. Clore, Michael L. Spezio, and Peter Goldie are, in and of themselves, the most

challenging and rewarding essays in the volume. Each makes a significant contribution to particular aspects of the debate concerning faith, rationality, and the passions, but there is little in the way of a constructive attempt to integrate the three. And despite the rich and rewarding content of these chapters, they bear little relation to the rest of the volume, with the result that the fourth of Coakley's 'clusters' sits uneasily alongside the other three. Somehow, this cluster doesn't quite seem to fit into the interpretative framework outlined in her editor's introduction.

Perhaps the disparity between the final cluster and the preceding chapters accounts for the title and subject matter of Coakley's editor's postscript: 'What (if anything) can the sciences tell philosophy and theology about faith, rationality, and the passions?' The title is telling in itself. Coakley as editor begins by urging a systematic approach that is significantly *multifaceted*. This is exemplified both by the four 'clusters' delineated in her introduction, and by her wish to present a 'collaborative' approach to the topic that fits into a 'focused cumulative thesis' (p. 3. emphasis added). And yet by the time we reach her postscript, it appears this 'collaborative' approach has been suspended. Instead, Coakley's final pages focus exclusively on issues raised by the fourth cluster of contributions, to the total neglect of all that has preceded it.

All of the contributing chapters in *Faith, Rationality, and the Passions* offer fascinating insights and valuable research in their own right. But they sit uneasily alongside one another in a volume that doesn't really cohere and leaves the reader searching for a unifying thread, despite the editor's best intentions and efforts. Perhaps this is to be expected with a subject matter that hardly lends itself to unity and uniformity, as the sheer diversity among the contributing chapters indicates. As Coakley herself concedes in her concluding comments: 'It is clear from even the briefest survey of trends . . . that no consensus is in sight' (p. 254). The sheer range of literature available on Coakley's chosen theme (or range of themes) certainly supports her claim. And it is this, more than anything, that makes forging a coherent and unified collection on the topic such a challenge.

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