

of a range of epistemological concepts so I would only recommend it for adoption as a text for a relevant course at the graduate level.

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Mark R. Wynn *Spiritual Traditions and the Virtues: Living Between Heaven and Earth*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020). Pp. 272. £65.00 (Hbk). ISBN: 9780198862949.

Mark Wynn's latest book is a welcome addition to what has become a very distinctive and fruitful research project concerning the nature of the spiritual life and the goods that are constitutive of it. His previous books include *Emotional Experience and Religious Understanding: Integrating Perception, Conception and Feeling* (2005), *Faith and Place: An Essay in Embodied Religious Epistemology* (2009), and *Renewing the Senses: A Study of the Philosophy and Theology of the Spiritual Life* (2013). Wynn has established himself as a key figure within a growing movement in philosophy of religion seeking to explore the lived dimensions of religious faith. Other important figures include John Cottingham, Fiona Ellis, and Eleonore Stump.

To provide a sense of what Wynn is up to in this latest book it is helpful to begin at the end. In his wonderful concluding remarks, Wynn says:

If we are to make progress in [trying to understand how our 'love of the good' may properly guide our fundamental life choices], what we need above all is a multiplicity of perspectives, concerning the ways in which a human life may count as good and even as beautiful. And for this purpose, spiritual traditions are indispensable: for here we find thought out and lived out, across times and cultures, and in dialogue with the constraints that are given with our human nature, a myriad of stories concerning the sort of significance that a human life can bear. So here is a reason for thinking that far from imposing alien values, and constricting human possibilities, as some have supposed, spiritual traditions offer, in fact, our surest way of expanding and enriching the stock of those possibilities – and our clearest vision of what it would be for a human life to be lived well. (245–246)

For Wynn, the exploration of spiritual traditions also constitutes a methodological proposal in philosophy of religion. Whereas many of those who work in philosophy of religion are engaged in metaphysical and epistemological inquiries regarding religious faith, Wynn's proposal is to begin with the spiritual life and with exploring the details of particular spiritual traditions. For those who inhabit a

particular spiritual tradition and live out a spiritual life shaped by it, Wynn says, 'their relationship to the central claims of their tradition is not one of simple intellectual assent, but grounded in their pursuit of a life that bears a certain kind of significance'. Indeed, it is the commitment to certain spiritual goods, he contends, 'that holds the more theoretical elements of a religious or spiritual conception of the world in place' (2).

In exploring how spiritual traditions can be understood as 'extended experiments in human possibilities' for living fulfilling lives, Wynn draws on the resources of his own spiritual tradition, namely, Christianity, and particularly the Catholic tradition. The guiding idea for the book is Aquinas's concept of 'infused moral virtues', which he situates between the acquired moral virtues of the sort identified by Aristotle (viz. temperance, courage, generosity, justice, etc.) and the theological virtues affirmed in the Christian tradition (viz. faith, hope, and charity). The former are acquired through habituation and relate us to our natural end of human flourishing, whereas the latter are infused through grace (though requiring our cooperation) and relate us to our supernatural end of communion with God in the beatific vision. The infused moral virtues – which also involve grace, as the name suggests – relate the moral virtues to our supernatural end. For instance, infused temperance can require practices of abstinence from food and drink that help to purify our desires so as to make us more fitted for the beatific vision. Wynn uses Aquinas's account of the infused moral virtues to explore a key type of good of the spiritual life that is 'between heaven and earth' in that it concerns our relationship to created things as properly ordered to our relationship with God and so is a 'hybrid good'.

In chapter 1, Wynn contrasts Pierre Hadot's and Aquinas's accounts of the spiritual life. For Hadot, we first identify the spiritual ideals to which we are attracted and then we try to find a believable metaphysical framework that can support the ideals. For Aquinas, on the other hand, the spiritual goods that are the object of the infused moral virtues cannot be identified without reference to our metaphysical or theological context. In chapter 2, Wynn provides more detail on the kind of spiritual good that is the object of the infused moral virtues, focusing on infused temperance and infused neighbour love (the latter is an extension of Aquinas, since he talks about neighbour love in the context of the theological virtue of charity). In both cases, the infused version of the virtue makes greater demands upon us than the non-infused version by relating the virtue to our supernatural end of communion with God in the beatific vision (for instance, we should love our neighbour as someone who may eternally share with us in communion with God). Wynn is interested to explore how this makes possible a new way of relating to the world and, with this, new types of goods (hybrid goods), and in chapter 3 he explores the new experiential dimension that is opened up here. He has a very interesting discussion of St John of the Cross's account of spiritual growth and how we can come 'to know creatures in God', i.e. 'to know effects in their cause' (i.e. to know from the divine vantage point), which contrasts with (but is not incompatible

with) Aquinas's approach of seeking to know God from His creatures (72–73). In chapter 4, Wynn explores the role of bodily demeanour in his account of the spiritual life, and he focuses on a case that can be interpreted in terms of infused neighbour love: a real-life case of a nun's love for psychiatric patients, which is expressed through her bodily demeanour towards the patients and which can be seen as fitting her theological context where human beings are seen as made for shared communion with God. Here then is another domain in which hybrid spiritual goods can be realized.

In chapter 5, Wynn explores the contribution of tradition to the spiritual life, focusing on how tradition enables us to explore the hybrid spiritual goods by testing different relations of congruence that may hold between our theological or metaphysical context and our world-directed thought, experience, and behaviour. In chapter 6, Wynn develops an account of faith where it is understood in terms of a practice-orienting commitment to a way of life and world-view taken together, and where axiological considerations about spiritual goods at least as much as epistemic considerations shape a particular spiritual way of life and a proper account of its practical reasonableness. In chapter 7, Wynn explores how his account of spiritual goods allows for an assessment of theological narratives in terms of the demands they make on our adherence. These demands are greater to the extent that the truth of the narrative would allow one to realize relations of congruence (hybrid spiritual goods) that are broad and deep.

This brief summary only scratches the surface of what an interesting and important project Wynn is engaged in with this book, but it should make clear how it is that he thinks spiritual traditions, far from constricting human possibilities for living fulfilling lives, are in fact 'our surest way of expanding and enriching the stock of those possibilities', since these traditions can be regarded as 'extended experiments in human possibilities'. One way to read Wynn's book, I think, is as an invitation: it is an invitation for those who are interested in the spiritual life to go deeper in such a life by inhabiting some particular spiritual tradition to which they are drawn. Wynn shows the great goods that can be gained by doing so, which otherwise would not be realized. I think this is a very important contribution. There are many people today who say they are 'spiritual but not religious', where not being religious means not identifying with any 'organized religion' or long-standing spiritual tradition. But insofar as we seek growth in the spiritual life, Wynn shows how we do well to avail ourselves of the time-tested wisdom of long-standing spiritual traditions, and how inhabiting and living out of a particular spiritual tradition can be an important part of how we come to discern its truth.

There are a couple of areas where I think Wynn's account of the spiritual life could be extended. First, Wynn could do more to discuss the role of specific spiritual practices of a particular spiritual tradition – for example, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, participating in Mass, worship, almsgiving, and so on – and the goods they make possible in the spiritual life. Wynn does discuss the practice of fasting in his exploration of infused temperance, but generally his focus is on Aquinas's

account of infused moral virtues and not on traditional spiritual practices. But Wynn's account of spiritual goods does provide an important framework through which one might explore the significance of these spiritual practices.

The second area of extension concerns the role of grace (i.e. given unmerited good) in the spiritual life. While he develops a novel and illuminating account of spiritual goods and their role in the spiritual life on the basis of Aquinas's account of the infused moral virtues, nevertheless, for the sake of developing this account, Wynn assumes what Aquinas has to say about the infused moral virtues. However, it seems worthwhile to explore the role of grace in the spiritual life in more detail, especially as it can help to fill out further Wynn's idea of 'living between heaven and earth'. Aquinas maintains that if the moral virtues are to be related to our ultimate end of communion with God in the beatific vision, then these moral virtues need to be infused through grace. Of course, the communion itself will require grace, but it is not as clear that infusion is needed if we are simply concerned with relating the moral virtues towards right relationship with God. In other words, it is not clear that any God-directed thoughts must involve special acts of grace on God's part. Furthermore, Aquinas's distinction between moral virtues and infused moral virtues can seem to suggest that there is a clear distinction between natural and supernatural ends for human beings. However, Aquinas's own view on this matter is more complicated, since he does recognize a natural desire for God in our desire for happiness (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 2, a. 1, ad. 1), and he believes that grace perfects nature (ST, I, q. 1, a. 8, ad. 2), and any end that is not God-involving is incomplete and points beyond itself towards our complete fulfilment in the beatific vision (see ST, I-II, qq. 1-5).

From a theistic viewpoint, we should also affirm that the natural world is itself a manifestation of grace, which God bestowed in the act of creation. Insofar as we see the natural world in these terms, it is therefore possible to realize something of the beatific vision here and now in what Josef Pieper describes as 'earthly contemplation': 'Because the world is a creation, *creatura*, God is present in it.' John Cottingham gets at something similar when he writes of having 'natural intimations of the transcendent' in our sense of natural beauty and in the experience of moral demands, which can point towards a transcendent creative source of beauty and goodness. Using Wynn's phrase, these are ways of 'living between heaven and earth'.

Overall, I think it is a mark of the fruitfulness of Wynn's account that it readily suggests ways in which it can be extended in thinking about spiritual practices and the role of grace in the spiritual life and that it provides an illuminating framework for doing so.

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