

The last five chapters concentrate on current issues. In addition to a study of the religion of ancient Israel, and an examination of whether an Old Testament theological reading is possible, Coggins looks at the way the Old Testament can be read as liberation literature and the way it has been read by feminist interpreters. Coggins recognizes that much of the impetus for these studies has come from religious and theological reflection, but prefers not to offer a personal value judgement of their importance.

*Introducing the Old Testament* is a well-written and concise survey. Although the bibliography directs those who wish to a fuller study of specific areas, the addition of critical notes would also have been a source of potential help to readers. For those who come to the study of the Old Testament for the first time, this book provides a valuable background and direction for further scholarly study and research.

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*Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views.* By David M. Wulff. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1991. ISBN 0-471-50236-7. Pp. xxvi + 640.

A book is often worth reading when it breaks through one of our presuppositions about an important topic and offers a fresh perspective, one which explains an aspect of the problem hitherto ignored. Given this criterion, David Wulff's innovative *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views* is an exciting book as it breaks through so many of the hidden barriers and presuppositions of this field.

Traditionally, scholars in the psychology of religion have pursued one of two allegedly irreconcilable strategies. Either they claimed to measure religious behaviour in a scientific and value-free manner or they took a phenomenological approach to religion, hoping to give the reader an understanding of the religious participant's worldview. Observers have noted that the first approach tends to dominate psychology departments and the latter religious studies departments. While most textbooks favour one of these two approaches and ignore the other, Wulff manages to describe, appreciate and critique both of these strategies. His chapters on the biological explanations for religious behaviour (which include the be-

haviourism of B.F. Skinner, studies on cerebral asymmetry, and E.O. Wilson's sociobiology), his discussion of laboratory studies of meditation and the sections on statistical correlations of religion are well researched, clearly written and fair. He then moves on with remarkable facility to depth psychology (Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung), the phenomenological approaches of William James and the German descriptive tradition (Rudolph Otto and the Dorpat School), and American humanistic psychology (Fromm, Allport and Maslow); throughout he retains his appreciative, and simultaneously critical, perspective. Wulff balances his enthusiasm for the empirical and interpretive approaches with a scientifically grounded protest against the facile reduction of all religion to either physical or purely psychological phenomena.

Wulff also breaks out of the natural tendency of North American psychology of religion to limit itself to the Christian and Jewish traditions. When Freud described religion as the social equivalent of an obsessional neurosis, for example, he drew his data from the dominant European Jewish and Christian religions of his day. He dismissed the religions of Asians, Africans and aboriginal peoples as ancestor worship or totemism. While less polemical, many modern studies exhibit this same narrow focus on Christian and Jewish data. Eschewing this parochial attitude, Wulff argues convincingly that scientific explanations which might apply to American fundamentalists, for example, are inappropriate when applied to Buddhism. His wider perspective arises out of his respect for the work of historians of religion who have documented the richness and complexity of humanity's traditions.

If historical context has shaped the choice of data in the psychology of religion, it has also been an important influence on the theories by which those data are organized. Recognizing this, Wulff situates the writings of his authors in their historical context, introducing the difficult, but often ignored, issues of perspective and agenda. For example, he offers substantial biographies of G. Stanley Hall, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and William James to show how their theories of religion were linked to their personal lives and their wider life's work. Through this contextual study, Wulff shows that this field has long been dominated by the debate between those who would like to debunk religion using psychological categories and those who would like to legitimate religion in general, or one form of religion over another, using those same categories. (Wulff takes neither side of this debate and shows the weaknesses of both sides.) His agenda in contextualizing the work of scholars offers a better understanding of their work and

does not dismiss or relativize their scientific theories (a strategy pursued by some religionists). Whatever the inspiration for a scientific theory of religion, its usefulness and scientific validity are his final concerns.

In his epilogue, Wulff writes that he hopes to promote understanding between people in an age of crisis. Whatever my disagreements with some of Wulff's judgments (such as his optimistic evaluation of Jung), they are outweighed by my delight in his balanced and open-minded approach. He takes both the powers and limitations of the psychology of religion seriously out of a deep respect for both human religious traditions and for the ambitious agenda science has set for itself. With an approach that reflects caution and humility, Wulff shows us that the psychology of religion can produce real understanding of religious people and their practices. It would be a great advance for this field if this book were to become the standard text in courses on the psychology of religion. It is clearly written and avoids jargon. Its index and bibliography are both substantial making it an excellent reference book. I recommend it highly for everyone interested enough in pastoral psychology to learn about its roots and underlying principles.

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*Over the Rainbow: The Wizard of Oz as a Secular Myth of America.* By Paul Nathanson. New York: State University of New York Press, 1991. ISBN 0-7914-0710-1. Pp. xx+432.

*Over the Rainbow* succeeds brilliantly in establishing a vital link between the fields of religious studies and popular culture. By exploring the many reasons which account for the enduring popularity of the *Wizard of Oz*, Paul Nathanson exposes various powerful and important religious currents that operate at the root of secular or "pop" culture.

Nathanson argues that in modern society, the delineation between the sacred and the profane has become increasingly difficult to discern. He suggests that "religion is no longer 'contained' by formal institutions; that a variety of symbol systems may function to create identity and meaning just as traditional religious systems do" (14). One way these symbol