

impact of the liberalisation of economic systems worldwide.

The book is part of a projected series, co-edited by Frank Kirkpatrick, author of this book, who is Professor of Religion at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, and Susan F. Parsons of the Margaret Beaufort Institute at Cambridge. Projected topics of other books are gender, sex, nature and race.

COLIN CARR OP

**TRANSCENDENT EXPERIENCE: Phenomenology and Critique** by Louis Roy OP, *University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2001. Pp. xiv + 219, £42.24 hbk.*

Louis Roy, Professor of Theology at Boston College (USA), writes that the aim of this book is to 'kindle or rekindle existential and philosophical interest in transcendent experiences' (p.185). It is difficult to imagine how anyone seeking to reawaken or indeed nurture such interests could be disappointed in reading his work, replete as it is with philosophical argument and detailed analysis of some of the major contributions to discussion of the philosophy of religious experience of the last two hundred years. Among such contributions discussed are those of Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Otto, James, Heidegger, Rahner, Lonergan, S.Katz and R.C.Zaehner. When analysing the philosophies of religious or transcendent experience which emerge from 19th-century German Idealism, Roy shows himself to be well versed in the relevant scholarly literature, and offers his own considered judgments concerning such questions as the way Schleiermacher's later thought on religious experience is to be understood in relation to his earlier writing. However, when Roy involves himself in such debates he never loses sight of his principal goal: to gain insight into the phenomenon of transcendent experience itself.

The book divides into three sections. In the first section ('A Phenomenological Approach'), Roy surveys a number of attempts which have been made to provide a comprehensive taxonomy of transcendent experiences. He explains that his interest is in those human experiences which occur in ordinary life but are in some way extraordinary in their intensity. These moments attest in a forceful way to a human orientation to an 'All', an 'Infinity', a 'Divine Dimension'. Much of the argument of the book is concerned with affirming that this orientation is to something objective and authentic, and is not to be disposed of in some merely reductionist or emotivist fashion. In the first section of the book he offers what he considers to be a more complete phenomenological account of these experiences than those offered by some other researchers in the field whose work he surveys. He identifies four types of transcendent experience: aesthetic, ontological, ethical and interpersonal. He argues that six different elements may be seen in all such experiences: preparation, occasion, feeling, discovery, interpretation and fruit. Such types and elements are illustrated with examples taken from

autobiographical narratives. The second section of the book is devoted to an historical account of the development of philosophies of religious experience, or the experience of the infinite, in late modernity. However, this section is by no means simply narrative. It is also dialectical in a way that anticipates the more overt presentation of Roy's own standpoint in the final part of the work.

Thus, while Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, James and Otto have, on Roy's view, made genuine and lasting contributions to our understanding of transcendent experience, (and in a number of ways Schleiermacher and James have overcome deficiencies evident in the others), this tradition remains trapped within the confines of Kantian epistemological agnosticism. The result is that most late modern philosophical attempts to evaluate religious experience have downplayed or denied outright the place of reason or cognition in favour of an exaltation of the emotional or non-rational (even 'irrational' on some views) experiential access to the Divine.

The pre-modern approach of St Thomas would not endorse such false dichotomies. For Aquinas the evident emotional aspect of such experience would complement its cognitive side. How could such an approach be reinstated in the light of modern philosophy? Roy's response to such a question is to argue that 20th-century Catholic thinkers like Maréchal, Rahner and Lonergan point the way beyond the Kantian impasse and allow a new and more integrated approach to analysis of transcendent experience. However Roy argues that Lonergan's thought is ultimately superior to that of Maréchal and Rahner and it is Lonergan's epistemological critical realism which Roy deploys against thinkers such as Kant and James. (The Kantian position is ultimately self-destructive as implying the profession 'It is really so that I cannot know what is really so'). In the final section ('Basic Concepts') Roy offers his own analysis of transcendent experience which makes use of other resources from Lonergan's thought, notably the latter's intentionality analysis. Such analysis of the intentional directedness of the human person, beyond subjectivity to real objects and objectives, also indicates that, while such experience is undeniably rich in affective content, it is no less cognitively significant. It manifests the orientation of both mind and heart to the Ultimate, or Divine. In a short review of a book such as Roy's, densely packed as it is with argument and analysis, one cannot hope to do justice to the many rewarding and stimulating insights which its author has to offer. However, given my own interests and preoccupations I would wish to highlight what I think are important criticisms made by Roy of some aspects of Lonergan's later thought. Like Roy I am not convinced that the later Lonergan succeeded in harmonising the emotivist position on feelings adopted from Scheler with his own critical realism (p.137). But I also agree profoundly with Roy that Lonergan's critical realism is essential if one is to remove the obstacles which modernity (and postmodernism) have placed in the way of a fuller appreciation of the significance of religious experience.

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