

leadership and the practice of ministry. I commend it to others.

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*Reappraising Durkheim for the Study and Teaching of Religion Today*, by THOMAS A. IDINOPULOS AND BRIAN C. WILSON (Eds.). Leiden: Brill, 2002, xix + 192pp; \$86.00 (cloth).

In format and general appearance, this volume (no. XCII in the Numen Book Series, *Studies in the History of Religions*), is reminiscent of a 1997 edited collection from Routledge dealing with Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Indeed a number of authors from that collection also appear here. Both volumes provide examples of new Durkheim scholarship promoted by bodies such as the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies (Oxford), among others.

The essays in this selection are of a high standard, and reflect the emphasis of this new scholarship on three things: a close, critical but sympathetic reading of the relevant Durkheimian texts, attention to the specific historical and intellectual contexts in which they were produced, and creative applications of their insights to contemporary issues in the study of religion. These contributions focus more on reappraisals of what Durkheimian sociology and anthropology of religion might offer to contemporary scholarship than on pedagogical issues *per se*. Nonetheless, this book will give anyone teaching religious studies or the sociology/anthropology of religion an excellent, if necessarily selective introduction to current Durkheimian scholar-

ship on religion. It will also arm readers against some of the more narrowly reductionist and a-historical views of Durkheim still extant in some undergraduate texts.

The editors of this volume chose — rightly, in this reviewer's mind — to stress four key elements of Durkheim's study of religion. First, Durkheim regarded religion not simply as a classification system, let alone a set of functions, but as a "distinct energy or power in human life," with both existential and objectively ascertainable manifestations. Second, his approach to religion was one of resolute "methodological atheism." While Idinopulos expresses reservations about the extent to which Durkheim pushed this atheism, the sympathy to its object which marks Durkheim's sociology of religion can — carefully read — be seen as a consequence of, rather than a departure from, that skepticism. Durkheim rejected a "vertical" approach to religion which would treat it as a human manifestation of an encounter with the transcendent. Whether or not we choose to agree with him, Durkheim had little time for such notions. And as Ivan Strenski notes, there is little real evidence of an implicit Jewishness — cultural or religious — in Durkheim's writing. (Perhaps it could be said that the most "Jewish" feature of his approach to religion was precisely his skepticism of attempts to flesh out fond notions of a deity above or beyond the present realm, through the back door of a scholarly divination reading traces of Deity in human responses.) Third, religion, for Durkheim, was best studied not as the consequence of a "reified divine object," but as a set of practices, systematically organized, that generate an "endless series of mythically and ritually-constructed worlds." Finally, Durkheim's approach to religion was philosophical: he wanted to account for it, not simply to describe or interpret it. Of necessity, this accounting entailed addressing the social nature of the human condition.

In the volume's opening essay, Thomas C. Idinopulos looks critically at Durkheim's attempt to explain religion; an attempt that Idinopulos judges to be sociologically fruitful (particularly in his relation of the totemic

principle to a "human capacity to organize socially and cosmically"), but flawed by a "streak of scientific positivism and rationalism" which leads his valid methodological skepticism into a dogmatic atheism. This inhibits a fully adequate explanation of the "energy" of the sacred, of the object of religious belief, and of religion's more individual manifestations. Idinopulos also calls for a more flexible distinction between sacred and profane.

William E. Paden, on the other hand, argues that the supposed reductionism of Durkheim's approach to religion is the result of a misunderstanding, and further, that Durkheim and Eliade, often seen as exemplars of opposed views of religion, can be brought into dialogue concerning the ways in which *homo religiosus* forms behavioural systems out of a category of sacrality which includes "objects of any kind upon which superhuman value has been placed and around which mythic and ritual worlds form."

William Watts Miller argues that a form of "secular religion" is at work in the designation of "semi-sacred" objects in contemporary culture. He uses the example of public outcry over the use of corpses in automobile crash-testing to discuss how such an analysis might apply to extensions of the sacrality of the human person, an argument that bears comparison with Durkheim's remarks on the modern "cult of the individual."

Robert Alun Jones returns to a topic on which he has already contributed much of value: the influence on Durkheim of the Scottish theologian William Robertson Smith. Jones situates that influence in Durkheim's espousal of a "dynamogenic" theory of religion, but claims that this does not appear until Durkheim's 1902 essay on totemism, where he also distinguishes, for the first time, between the utilitarianism of Tylor and Fraser and the more sociological approach of Robertson Smith. Jones makes an elegant, if brief case for the logic of Durkheim's adoption and adaptation of Smith, suggesting also that, through Smith, Durkheim gained much from the German theologian Ritschl, whose ideas also marked the work of Weber. Jones also claims that

Durkheim's emphasis on religion as a source and form of practice owes much (*via* Smith) to William James, despite Durkheim's distancing of himself from Jamesian pragmatism.

Robert A. Segal reviews the extensive literature on Durkheim's debt to Robertson Smith, treating Smith as a pioneer in the mythic-ritualist theory of religion and in theorizing the sacred-society connection. However, he argues that Durkheim's stress on the importance of ritual does not reflect a Smithian concern with on a causative or developmental relation of ritual to myth, but an attempt to think through the interrelation of belief, myth and ritual as social phenomena.

Tony Edwards, using the approach of analytic philosophy and the tools of formal logic, argues that Durkheim's sociology of knowledge, specifically its attempt at a sociological account of the Kantian categories, is "involved in a single two-part error: construing the universality of the categories as facts, then concluding that these facts can be given a sociological explanation." Edwards' critique is sharp, but his conclusions raise further questions. Are the questions analytic philosophy can raise about Durkheim's sociology of knowledge ones that he simply did not and could not answer adequately, or are they questions he attempted to transcend? One might suggest that Durkheim's sociology of knowledge rests, implicitly, on a collective and social epistemology that, from the individualistic standpoint of both analytic philosophy and Cartesian rationalism, must necessarily seem incoherent. If so, the question becomes in what sort of language this epistemology could find adequate expression, and whether Durkheim's inability or reticence to correct his "errors" might reflect a keen sense of the necessary limitations (as noted by Watts Miller) of the sociological enterprise.

John I. Brook III looks at the institutional context in which several Durkheimians worked, the fifth section of the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes*, and at the political, methodological and theological/philosophical disagreements between Durkheimians and liberal Protestants there.

These disagreements may shed light on continuing theoretical and methodological differences in religious studies; for example, between a comparative/ethnographic method, and a history-of-religions approach focussed on the Judaeo-Christian tradition; or between treatments of ritual and symbol as social phenomena, and theological and psychological approaches to the study of religious sentiment.

Ivan Strenski continues his close analytical history of Durkheim's alleged links to Judaism and Jewish culture, focussing here on Durkheim's unsentimental approach to the question of an afterlife. Strenski finds little to credit an alleged Jewish strain in Durkheim's thinking, arguing that, in the absence of other evidence, parallels or analogies cannot be credited as "influences," unconscious or otherwise. He points out several ways in which Durkheim's most credible milieu of influence can be said to be that of post-Revolutionary French secularism.

James C. Hanges applies a Durkheimian lens to the development of early Christianity, showing how fruitfully Durkheim can be applied to a topic usually treated in terms of history-of-religions or theological approaches. Hanges asks the Durkheimian question: how do societies segment or fragment, and how, in that process, does a new "principal totem" replace an older sub-totem? Hanges' specific topic is the divergence of Christianity from its Jewish matrix, and the development of the figure of Jesus as a replacement for that of Moses. Although he does not cite it, Hanges' essay could profitably be read in conjunction with Halbwach's essay on early Christianity in his volume on collective memory. Hanges, echoing some well-established traditions in historical-critical and Christological studies, refers to the "genius of Paul" in distinguishing the "Christ of faith" from the "historical Jesus." Readers familiar with recent historical Jesus debates may find this distinction a bit shopworn, but Hanges adds significantly to the literature in proposing a Durkheimian "semiotics of Jesus," the "primary identifier for the emerging social group." Hanges proposes that the *social* dimension of being "in Christ" (rather than matters of belief or confession,

strictly speaking), was crucial to the development of early Christianity.

Finally, Brian C. Wilson develops a Durkheimian analysis of "sacred space" in a discussion of New England Puritan commemorative rituals of origin and identity. Wilson, echoing a similar point in Idinopulos, claims that Durkheim ambiguously relies on two meanings of the sacred in *The Elementary Forms*: one constituted by a "functional" categorical distinction, and another characterized by an "energy" exemplified in instances of collective effervescence. Wilson makes a point of showing how Durkheim's discussion of collective effervescence can be applied to commemorative rituals in a way that draws Durkheim's usage of the sacred closer to "traditional" definitions of that term. Wilson also makes a solid case for a Durkheimian analysis of sacred spaces as features even of communities that explicitly reject them.

This volume is characterized by solid, readable scholarship. There are, of course, some points and themes which could be challenged, and others which are absent. For example, discussion of Durkheim's concept of the sacred here relates almost entirely to its "positive," functional aspect, and to the distinction between sacred and profane. Aside from some very perceptive comments by Watts Miller, there is little attention to the distinction Durkheim made between "positive" and "negative" forms of the sacred — a distinction picked up on by Hertz and Bataille, and one that I would argue is very fruitful for developing a more nuanced Durkheimian sociology of religion than functionalist interpretations of it can provide. One theme common to a number of authors in this volume is that of a disjuncture or dichotomy between a classificatory/functionalist approach to the sacred, and one that is more "dynamogenic" or attuned to the energetic aspects of religion. This distinction turns up, in different ways, in articles by Idinopulos, Jones and Wilson. One might ask if these two approaches, both of which appear in *The Elementary Forms*, are to be explained entirely as consequences of a theoretical ambiguity, or of a shift in Durkheim's thinking. Is it possible that a dichotomy

retrospectively read as central to his work was less of a problem for Durkheim himself? Perhaps Durkheim's approach to the sociology of religion is still unique enough to generate further possibilities for more nuanced interpretation. If so, this volume is a worthy start. One only hopes that the rather stiff hardback cover price will not put off prospective buyers.

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*The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, by PHILIP JENKINS. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 288 pp.; \$28.00 (cloth).

Scholars, news commentators, and politicians of the Northern nations in Europe and North America seem to have seriously underestimated the importance of religion as a world shaping force in the twenty-first century. Perhaps an unthinking commitment to rationalism and secularism blinded these Northern observers from comprehending what forces were afoot in the larger world. Conflicts of the recent past, sometimes worldwide in scope between Communist and Capitalist forces, seem to be receding into the background while religious conflicts seem to be taking a more central place in world affairs. In *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Philip Jenkins, a professor of history and religious studies, provides a glimpse of what the future may hold in regard to religious developments and their consequences for the world. Jenkins argues that Christianity will in important ways shape the future as its adherents in the Southern nations of Africa, Latin America,

and Asia grow in numbers while those in the Northern nations decline. The insights that guide this work are gleaned from examining general demographic trends plus research gathered about specific religious groups. Jenkins places this information in a broad historical framework that leads him to assert that Southern Christianity will emerge as a potent religious and political force in the twenty-first century.

Christianity is often thought of as simply a European religion that was carried to the rest of the world. Jenkins reminds his readers that Christianity was actually founded in the Near East and during its first one thousand years it was stronger in Asia and North Africa than in Europe. The center of Christendom shifted to Europe only around the fifteenth century. Europeans by the end of that century were already beginning to construct what would become a worldwide empire in the nineteenth century. Missionaries often accompanied European and later twentieth-century American empire builders, but they did not necessarily share their views and often ventured far beyond the boundaries of the colonial outposts to seek converts. Jenkins also reminds his readers that the Christians of the Northern nations never exclusively controlled the faith and even when their missionaries made great efforts to do so converts quickly adapted Christianity to their own cultural needs. The missionaries equally quickly came to realize that to try to impose their own distinctive brand of Christianity did not work and that allowing local peoples to adapt the faith to their own needs brought conversions. The historical reality is that the missionary efforts of the Northern nations, as Jenkins makes clear, only further deepened and broadened Christianity.

Just as the colonialism of the Northern nations drew to an end, Jenkins notes, Christianity in the Southern nations, especially in Africa, began as a grassroots movement a period of rapid growth that continues up through today. In Africa, European churches have incorporated local religious customs, wholly new churches have been formed that might have "horrified" Europeans, and still other churches have been