

Crane, Tim, *The Meaning of Belief: Religion from an Atheist's Point of View*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2017, pp. xiv + 207.

So-called New Atheists<sup>1</sup> say that religion is an irrationally held proto-scientific cosmological hypothesis, a primitive theory, supplemented by an equally irrational moral code, that led to the worst evil in the history of the human kind, so that religion itself should be completely eradicated—rational arguments and scientific evidence being the apt instruments to this end. In *The Meaning of Belief*, Tim Crane rejects all these ideas from an atheist's point of view.

Crane, of course, is best known as a leading philosopher of mind. And yet, as this nice little book clearly shows, his intellectual horizon and curiosity are refreshingly wider than the narrow scholastic specialization into which too many contemporary analytic philosophers, willingly or not, are confined.

The book, a non-academic contribution to the public debate about religion (xii), comprises five chapters: the first one outlines some basic and introductory ideas, chapter 2 and 3 present a picture of religion which is very different from that offered by the New Atheists, while chapters 4 and 5 are about practical matters such as religious violence and toleration.

So, what is religion, if not a proto-cosmological theory plus a moral code? According to Crane, in order to understand what religion is, two fundamental elements need to be considered: *religious impulse* and *belonging*,<sup>2</sup> the two elements being connected by *the sacred*.

Religious impulse, to which chapter 2 is devoted, is a belief whose content is (more or less) the following: there is an unseen order, transcendent and at bottom mysterious, that gives meaning to the whole reality we observe, and our supreme good consists in living in accord with it. This belief, variously specified by different religious traditions, has a factual/cosmological component, but one has to note that what is believed is an *ultimately mysterious* cosmic (and normative) order, and this explains many things about religion. It explains, as Crane emphasizes (57), why believers are happy to utter words they do not fully understand, and explains why they are not usually moved by rational objections (the most prominent ones based on the existence of evil). It also helps explain why religions cannot be viewed as proto-scientific explanations of the world. Scientific hypotheses predict and account for complex observable regularities in terms of simpler and unseen things (62). Religious belief, instead, is not primarily intended to allow predictions (what the hidden order has in store for us is in fact mysterious), and certainly is not primarily intended to allow predictions of observable regularities. Moreover, religious belief makes sense of the world in terms of meaning (including a normative aspect unknown to science), and not by offering a simpler hidden *explanans*: the ultimately mysterious order is not simpler than the world it renders meaningful. While science tries to minimize the mysteries, religion does not: it accepts mystery, and this acceptance (an often troubling and painful one) is central to what in some traditions is called 'faith' (72, 76).

<sup>1</sup> Dawkins, R. 2006, *The God Delusion*, London: Bantam; Dennett, D.C. 2006, *Breaking the Spell*, London: Allen Lane; Grayling, A.C. 2007, *Against All Gods*, London: Oberon Books; Harris, S. 2004, *The End of Faith*, New York: Norton; Hitchens, C. 2007, *God Is Not Great*, New York: Twelve.

<sup>2</sup> Or *identification*, as Crane 'officially' says.

Even from this very brief presentation, I think one can have a sense of how Crane's proposed account is far more adequate to the reality of religious belief than the naive caricatures New Atheists usually offer. And the adequacy of Crane's view is even more evident when considering *belonging*, the second element of his picture of the nature of religion, dealt with in chapter 3.

One does not only believe, one also *belongs to* a religion, Crane says (89). Belonging to a religion is very similar to belonging to a nation or an ethnicity. One is born into a religion, Crane writes (97)—or into a non-religion, I would say. One inherits her or his (non-)religion like other things one inherits when growing up in a family: “how to eat together, how to behave with guests and strangers, how to talk to your elders, whom to obey and when, and all the other norms and values that govern how we live together as families” (97).

Despite their seeming simplicity, these are insightful remarks that show how misguided is the familiar (new) atheist criticism according to which religion is an especially perverse form of indoctrination of children: religion, or non-religion, comes from belonging to a social group, and is part, as Crane underlines (95-96), of what Heidegger called our “thrownness” into a world that is not of our own making.

Belonging to a religion, Crane further stresses, usually expresses itself in following ancient and socially shared *religious practices*. These are well-known things such as pilgrimages, ritual fasting, prayers, baptism, giving alms, observing the Sabbath and so on and so forth. These kinds of things, despite being absolutely central components of a religious life, are systematically overlooked by the New Atheists because many of the practices at issue do not fit into the (simplistic) cosmology-plus-morality picture of religion New Atheists themselves favour.

A crucial aspect of religious practices, Crane then notes, is that they essentially involve *sacred things*: sacred words, sacred places, sacred objects, sacred acts... And sacred things, according to Crane, have a double role: they unify the members of a religion in the same community, powerfully connecting them to each other and to past believers (115-16), and point—as intentional items—toward the transcendent order members believe in (111-15). So it is the sacred, Crane maintains, that connects belonging and religious impulse, the two central elements of religious belief.

The individuation of these two elements, and their treatment, is of course not completely new. In particular, the religious-impulse side of Crane's account is clearly indebted to James' 1902 masterpiece *The Varieties of Religious Experience*,<sup>3</sup> while the belonging/sacred side is more than inspired by Durkheim's 1912 classic *Les Formes Élémentaire de la Vie Religieuse*.<sup>4</sup> These observations, however, are not put forward as a criticism: the book does not aim at presenting completely new and original theories on the nature of religion, and Crane himself—as is obvious—always recognizes his intellectual debts. The fact I want to highlight, instead, is that the layman, to whom Crane addresses his book, is not likely to be a fervent reader of James, let alone Durkheim. So, presenting in a subtle and succinct way, as Crane does with his usual panache, some of the most insightful

<sup>3</sup> James, W. 1902, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York: Longmans, Green and Co.

<sup>4</sup> Durkheim, É. 1912, *Les Formes Élémentaire de la Vie Religieuse*, Paris: Alcan.

ideas on the nature of religion the general reader may not be aware of is a very significant contribution to one of the most important public debates of our age.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, Crane's contribution to this debate is not just confined to questions concerning the nature of religious belief. As I said earlier, he also offers some very interesting, and in some cases wise, reflections on two thorny practical issues involving religions: violence and toleration.

According to the New Atheists, religion is in some way uniquely responsible for the worst violence, evils, and horrors in human history. This is, quite obviously, a great exaggeration (124) and Crane easily dismisses it. The boring truth is that religion is responsible for *some* of the bad things that happen, and have happened, in the world. And this being the case, some questions naturally arise: what exactly is the role of religion in human conflict? What does it mean for violence to be religious? What is it about religion that gives rise to violence? The bulk of chapter 4 is devoted to exploring such questions, and, in doing so, Crane offers what to my mind is an original brief contribution to these hotly debated topics. Leaving to readers of the book the examination of the three possible sources of religious violence Crane identifies, I merely note that he convincingly—and quite easily—argues for not including theological ideas among these sources, *contra*, as usual, some crude New Atheists' pronouncements to the contrary.

Another not-so-difficult, and yet publicly useful, refutation of a New Atheists' line of reasoning, can be found in the last paragraph of chapter 4. The New Atheists' argument can be presented this way:

- 1) Religious beliefs are irrational by their very nature (they cannot be held for good reasons).
  - 2) Irrational beliefs lead to atrocities of all sorts.
- Therefore, religions lead to atrocities of all sorts.

Crane notes that premise 1 is so strong that refuting it may well appear too easy a task (152): indeed, trying to come up with a belief that in *any* epistemic situation cannot be rationally held is very hard work. And yet, premise 1 is what New Atheists often seem to have in mind, so their argument is very weak.

Still, I see some tension in what Crane himself says about the (ir)rationality of religious belief. It is quite clear from what he writes that he thinks even contemporary people knowledgeable in science can rationally hold religious beliefs. Moreover, he says he is an atheist because of a consideration of what modern science reveals to us (46). Therefore, he seems to think that modern science offers stronger reasons for atheism than for religious belief. But if so, contemporary religious people knowledgeable in science do appear epistemically deficient, and perhaps irrational. I wonder how Crane would respond to this concern.

Be that as it may, there is no question that premise 2 of the New Atheists' argument is highly implausible to say the least. As Crane sensibly emphasizes: "The obvious facts are that reasonable, rational, educated, and knowledgeable people can be wicked and vicious; ignorant, irrational people can be good and kind" (157). So even though, in the light of my previous remarks, one wanted to propose a more cautious formulation of premise 1, the falsity of premise 2 suffices to reject the New Atheists' argument.

<sup>5</sup> It goes without saying: I am *not* suggesting that the book does not contain anything original in presenting the nature of religious phenomena.

In the fifth and last chapter of the book, Crane rightly says that religions will not decline: they are here to stay and they are probably an ineliminable aspect of human society (127). (Again, this is in conflict with some New Atheists' ideas, according to which religion is in decline worldwide, and can be eradicated by rational arguments.) How should non-religious people react to these facts? Crane recommends personal and political toleration "whose goal is not truth but peace", as Gray, approvingly quoted, writes.<sup>6</sup>

Setting aside the issue of political toleration—how secular states should make room for religious believers—too large a task for the book (164), Crane focuses on the not so wide-ranging question of personal toleration toward religious belief.

He clearly shows that adopting this personal attitude does not imply either relativism—one can tolerate opinions and behaviours one deems objectively mistaken—or respect for religious beliefs—one does not tolerate opinions and behaviours one likes. So, a tolerant atheist is not a relativist because of her/his toleration, and does not respect the tolerated religious beliefs, even though, Crane suggests, s/he should respect the believers (179). Moreover, and importantly, personal toleration, according to Crane, does not require that one should silently endure those views or behaviours one finds unacceptable (187).

I think here Crane is again quite right. Toleration is what is minimally required for a peaceful coexistence, and recommending higher goals may well be unrealistic. Yet, at least some non-religious people might try to go beyond mere toleration. As Crane himself points out *en passant*, one can appreciate the enormous positive value religions give to many people's lives (158), or can admire how religions often lead to morally remarkable behaviours or exceptional artistic achievements (177). Or, I would add, one can, and should, value the many subtle, insightful and sometimes moving ideas religions can offer to better understand our common condition. New Atheism is completely blind to these and other positive aspects of religion, and rejecting it might usefully have involved a consideration of these. To be sure, Crane hints at some of these themes, as I have just said, but one would have preferred less fleeting attention.

Even so, Crane's is a crystal clear, nuanced, and perceptive book, an important contribution to a vital public debate, and one that atheists and believers alike can read without being misrepresented or misjudged.

University School for Advanced Studies IUSS Pavia

ALFREDO TOMASETTA

<sup>6</sup> Gray, J. 2007, *Black Mass*, London: Allen Lane, 7.

Marmodoro, Anna and Mayr, Erasmus, *Metaphysics: An Introduction to Contemporary Debates and Their History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. xii + 221.

What are the ultimate constituents of reality? Might things in the world be different from the way they actually are? How do they interact causally? Is there any chance for human beings to have free will and moral responsibility? These are among the more fundamental questions metaphysicians have been consider-

ing from antiquity to the present time. In their book *Metaphysics*,<sup>1</sup> Anna Marmodoro and Erasmus Mayr present an interesting and accessible reconstruction of the debates on these and related issues; and aim to show that the metaphysics of powers offers a unified framework for answering these different questions. The proposal is attractive and definitely worth a close examination.

The metaphysics of powers has a long history, its origin goes back to Aristotle, and the authors' proposal is explicitly neo-Aristotelian. They acknowledge the origin of the conceptual apparatus they embrace and propose an interpretation of it, which is not a scholarly reconstruction of what Aristotle may have thought, but rather a development of his ideas into a theory sound and suitable to serve as an alternative within the philosophical debates of today, and the problems they raise.

What are powers? Powers are dispositional properties, i.e. properties characterizing what the objects would do or how they would behave in certain circumstances. Examples of powers are fragility or water-solubility, i.e. properties which may never be manifested, but whose existence as properties of objects 'conditions' the interaction of such objects with other objects with other powers. For example, we handle a fragile object with care even if its fragility is not manifested (usually, we handle it with care in order to avoid the manifestation of fragility); or we put sugar in the coffee only if we want it to be sweetened by the manifestation of the sugar's powers.

Now, powers have been suffering a widespread philosophical rejection from the eighteenth century onward, especially because of empiricist worries about them, as powers cannot be observed directly in the objects having them, while categorical properties (as for example 'being white' or 'being square') may be. These considerations made powers seem mysterious, and philosophers have been suspicious about their reality for a long time.

But—and this is one main tenet of the book—there are good reasons for rehabilitating them. First of all, the main strategies adopted in order to reduce powers to other properties or relations (the conditional analysis and the causal analysis) are subject to many problems that are difficult to overcome and, second, there are reasons to doubt the correctness of arguments against the thesis that powers are the fundamental constituents of reality, such that everything else is derived from them. These considerations may be found in chapter 2 of the book where the ontology of powers is examined and defended.

In chapter 1 the notion of substance is considered. In an Aristotelian perspective, substances are individual objects without which there would be no properties in the world. Hylomorphism, the view according to which a substance is a compound of matter and form, is defended; the interpretation of it being that the 'substantial form' is a principle of unity (or power) without which a substance cannot exist. It is moreover argued that the hylomorphic notion is better suited than others to define the identity and persistence through change of any substance. It is therefore claimed that while properties/powers cannot exist without substances, substances themselves cannot exist without properties/powers. Even if it is not already clear when the reader comes across it in the first chapter, it is quite evident by the end of the second that powers are consid-

<sup>1</sup> The Italian reader may be interested to know that this book is an expanded and developed version of a previous book in Italian: Marmodoro, A. and Mayr, E. 2017, *Breve introduzione alla metafisica*, Roma: Carocci.

ered to be constitutive of substances and therefore that the metaphysics of powers is already present in the first chapter.

The last three chapters are devoted to the application of the metaphysics of powers to philosophical concerns such as modality, causality and free will. It is in them, the authors argue, that the metaphysics of powers may offer new and promising ways to address some of the more pressing metaphysical questions. Their approach is balanced: they clearly draw attention to the advantages of the metaphysics of powers, but they are also aware of the difficulties and problems still open, which they do not hide. This is a reasonable attitude, adopted in the spirit of “critiquing existing views and developing better ones” (209).

Chapter 3 is dedicated to modality and essence. The philosophical problem addressed in this chapter is how to explain that certain objects might have been different from the way they are now in certain respects (for example I might have had a different hair color) and why they might not be different in other respects (for example, I might not be a cat). The authors present the arguments offered by Quine in order to discredit the notions of essence and modality, and the possible world semantics introduced by Kripke, which rehabilitates them.

The authors themselves incline towards a different characterization from the one proposed by Kripke, a more Aristotelian one, which anchors essence and modalities in the way existing ordinary objects are (in the style of Barbara Vetter),<sup>2</sup> without adopting possible world semantics. The idea is that if we allow objects to have essential powers, their modal properties may be explained in such terms. As the authors acknowledge, not every modality may easily be accounted for in such a way; for example in order to justify the truth of “The laws of nature could have been very different”, it is difficult to suppose that the modal property (i.e. ‘to be possibly very different’) is anchored in a power characterizing something in our world. This observation may be used either in support of a restricted range of applications for modality anchored in powers or for a new and yet-to-come analysis of modality.

The metaphysics of powers is adopted to account for causality in chapter 4. As is well known, causality is not only subject to different philosophical analyses, but has also undergone skeptical considerations from the eighteenth century onward (of a particularly influential sort by David Hume). After a critical examination of Hume’s and Lewis’s reductive accounts of causality, the authors present Aristotle’s theory of causation. According to this theory, “all causes are (related to) powers, and causation, of all kinds, is the exercise or manifestation of mutually dependent causal powers” (147), the idea being that in a causal interaction there is an agent that transmits a form and a patient that receives it. This analysis allows for the cause to occur simultaneously with the effect (for example sounding and hearing may happen at the same time) and for the actual causing to be one and the same with the effect (for example there is a single activity grounding both teaching and learning, but there are two different powers involved: the power of the agent to teach and the power of the patient to learn).

An interesting claim is that power-based causality may offer a useful solution for the problem of mental causation. The philosophical problem is to explain how a mental event (as for example entertaining a question as ‘what is 246+874?’) may cause another mental event (as for example ‘ah, it’s 1120!’) or

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vetter, B. 2015, *Potentiality: From Dispositions to Modality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

how a mental event (as for example the desire to drink a glass of water) may cause an action (as for example bringing a glass of water to the mouth). This is a problem both for substance dualists, who have to explain how the non-physical mind interacts with itself or with the physical world, and for physicalists, according to whom the only causation is between physical substances and any mental event is superfluous in order to explain the physical reality.

The authors observe that physicalists have reasons to revise their assumption of causal closure (i.e. the assumption that all causation is only among physical substances) for two reasons: first, physical reductionism which characterized science in the twentieth century may be revised because science is nowadays more pluralistic, and second, as Yablo<sup>3</sup> argued, in a causal interaction the factor that “makes the difference” is not always the micro-physical one (for example, the bull’s anger may depend on the red color of the T-shirt instead of its micro-physical structure). This shows that macro-physical properties may sometimes have a better role in a causal explanation and that mental powers, as they involve intentionality (and being not necessarily physical), may be an option in order to account for mental causation.

The problem of free will is considered in the last chapter (i.e. chapter 5). The main problem of free will is to combine it with the deterministic laws of nature. It is well known that philosophers are divided between compatibilists (i.e. philosophers who argue that free will is compatible with the laws of nature) and incompatibilists (i.e. philosophers who argue that free will is incompatible with the laws of nature and therefore that one of the two is to be sacrificed).

Marmorodoro and Mayr claim that the new realism about powers “has had a notable impact on the free-will debate in the last twenty years” (199) in support of both compatibilism and incompatibilism. In support of compatibilism, it may be argued that freedom is connected to the power to do otherwise, even if the power is not manifested; for example, I may be free to go out for a walk because I have the power to do so, even if I do not manifest it. This compatibilist solution may leave the incompatibilist unsatisfied because, according to her, freedom requires the responsibility of the agent and not simple the ability to behave differently. And the incompatibilist has therefore to give a different account of the powers involved in free will.

As is probably evident even from this short report, the metaphysics of powers is a highly pervasive issue and an important trend in current metaphysical debate. For this reason, I strongly recommend reading the book, which is written with competence, clarity and depth.

*University of Milan*

ELISA PAGANINI

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Yablo, S. 1992, “Mental Causation”, *Philosophical Review*, 101, 245-80.

Morag, Talia, *Emotion, Imagination, and the Limits of Reason*. Abingdon, Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 288.

Talia Morag’s *Emotion, Imagination and the Limits of Reason* is a lush and ambitious book that pursues two main aims, one negative and the other positive. The *pars destruens* is aimed at challenging some of the orthodoxies in contemporary

philosophical emotions theory held liable for having over-intellectualized emotions. The *pars construens* aims to develop a different theory according to which the aetiology of complex emotional episodes proceeds by imaginative association of ideas. Since Sigmund Freud is thought to be the theorist who most fully appreciated the role of imaginative association in the aetiology of emotion, Morag's methodology consists in making the philosophy of emotion interact with Freud's insights about imaginative capacities distilled from an original analysis of his work on dreams, jokes, the psychopathology of everyday life, and his papers on the unconscious and repression (154).

The first part of the book pursues the negative aim by offering a sustained critique of what Morag calls "the tracking dogma" within contemporary philosophy of emotions (264).<sup>1</sup> According to this "dogma", emotion types such as fear or anger function to track and alert us to "core relational themes",<sup>2</sup> namely features of our natural or social environments that relate to or bear on certain typical aspects of our well-being (e.g. fear tracks dangers, anger tracks wrongs, etc.).

Within this "dogmatic" framework, emotions can be identified with states of mind that track environmental features at a *personal* or *sub-personal* level. At the personal level, the so-called "judgmentalist" theory—developed *inter alia* by Robert Solomon, Jerome Neu and Martha Nussbaum—identifies emotions with *evaluative judgments*, i.e. judgments about the significance of a situation for an individual.<sup>3</sup> As Nussbaum puts it, emotions "involve judgments about important things, judgments in which, appraising an external object as salient for our own well-being, we acknowledge our own neediness and incompleteness before parts of the world that we do not fully control."<sup>4</sup> In Nussbaum's judgmentalist theory, therefore, emotions are always in relation to something, i.e. they are not blind but have always an object; and this object is "intentional", in the sense that "it figures in the emotion as it is seen or interpreted by the person whose emotion it is."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, emotions involve *bona fide* beliefs about the objects, and not mere ways of seeing the objects. Finally, the beliefs involved in the emotions are relative to *value*, a value that is captured in the object, which therefore appears to be important by virtue of a role that it plays in the life of a person. In this neo-stoic cognitive-evaluative perspective, thus, emotions are attitudes to propositions construed as representations of states of affairs—an agent is angry if she has the attitude of belief to the proposition that she has been wronged. Emotions are thus subject to "norms of fittingness": they can be appropriate or inappropriate, rea-

<sup>1</sup> See also Morag, T. 2017, "The Tracking Dogma in the Philosophy of Emotion", *Argumenta*, 2, 2, 343-64.

<sup>2</sup> Lazarus, R.S. 1991, *Emotion and Adaptation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 22.

<sup>3</sup> See Solomon, R. 1980, "Emotions and Choice", in Rorty, A.O. (ed.), 1980a, *Explaining Emotions*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 251-81; Neu, J. 2000, *A Tear is an Intellectual Thing: The Meanings of Emotion*, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press; Nussbaum, M.C. 2001, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Note that the label "judgmentalism" is "potentially misleading, because it suggests that for the theory's proponents an emotion is nothing but a judgment, understood as an assent to a proposition" (Scarantino, A. and de Sousa, R. 2018, "Emotion", in E.N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/emotion/>>, §5)—which is why the label has been rejected by Nussbaum and Neu.

<sup>4</sup> Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

sonable or unreasonable—e.g. it is inappropriate and unreasonable to fear things that are not dangerous because fear represents the world as dangerous.<sup>6</sup>

At the sub-personal level, by contrast, emotions construed as states of mind that track environmental features are identified in behavioural, neurological or neurocomputational terms, and their aetiology is analyzed as a causal process rather than an inferential one.<sup>7</sup>

Morag notes that both judgmentalists and sub-personalists cite with approval Lazarus's core relational themes for emotion.<sup>8</sup> Anger, for example, can be either the judgment that the agent has suffered "a demeaning offense against me and mine",<sup>9</sup> or, in Prinz's neo-Jamesian view of emotions, the perceptual image of an aroused state of the body (or "gut reaction") whose function is to occur when a demeaning offense to me or mine has been committed.<sup>10</sup> According to Morag, however, both personal and sub-personal versions of the tracking view come up against two main problems: the *reason-sensitivity* question and the *singularity* question.

The reason-sensitivity question arises from the failure of the tracking view to explain the "recalcitrance to reason" of some emotions, which exist "despite the agent's making a judgment that is in tension with it."<sup>11</sup> A picturesque example of recalcitrance is offered by David Hume: "consider the case of a man who being hung out of a high tower in a cage of iron cannot forbear trembling, when he surveys the precipice below him, tho' he knows himself to be perfectly secure from falling, by his experience of the solidity of the iron, which supports him".<sup>12</sup> Thus the agent holds the belief that he is not in danger, and hence he can judge his trembling with fear to be inappropriate; yet he fails to adjust the emotion accordingly—he fails to control his emotional reaction through rational criticism. And since the judgmentalist theory conceptualizes the agent's fear as constituted by the belief that he is in danger, they will be forced to ascribe to the agent contradictory beliefs—a claim that many reject because it "ascribes to agents the wrong kind of irrationality."<sup>13</sup>

The causal-mechanistic framework of the sub-personalists would appear to be better equipped to address the phenomenon of recalcitrance. Whereas the judgmentalist evaluative system is governed by rational and linguistic processes,

<sup>6</sup> See Kenny, A. 1963, *Action, Emotion and Will*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; cit. in Griffiths, P.E. 2013, "Current Emotion Research in Philosophy", *Emotion Review*, 5, 2, 216.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Griffiths, P.E. 1997, *What Emotions Really Are: The Problem of Psychological Categories*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Prinz, J. 2004, *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of Emotion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Nussbaum who considers Lazarus's theory as "in all essentials the view of emotions I have defended in Chapter 1" (*Upheavals of Thought*, 109).

<sup>9</sup> Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 222.

<sup>10</sup> In Prinz's 2004 teleosemantic terminology, the *nominal content* of anger is an aroused body, but its *real content* is the proposition that a demeaning offense has been committed against me or mine. But see Prinz's second thought about teleosemantics in Shargel, D. and Prinz, J. 2018, "An enactivist theory of emotional content", in H. Naar and F. Teroni (eds.), *The Ontology of Emotions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 110-29; cit. in Scarantino and de Sousa, "Emotion", §9.2.

<sup>11</sup> D'Arms, J. and Jacobson, D. 2003, "The Significance of Recalcitrant Emotion (or, Anti-quasi-judgmentalism)", *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 52, 129.

<sup>12</sup> Hume, D. 1973, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 148.

<sup>13</sup> Scarantino and de Sousa, "Emotion", §5.

the sub-personalist affective appraisal system is a causal mechanism; since the two systems are governed by different kinds of principles—one normative and the other causal-mechanistic—the evaluative judgment will not alter the affective appraisal (77). Yet, insofar as the sub-personalist causal mechanism works “in a way that maps onto rational processes”, it gives rise to “the very same problems that judgmentalism faces at the person level” (152). As is in the case of evaluative judgement, taking away an appraisal is sometimes coupled with taking away an emotion and sometimes not; and if evaluative judgements, or low-level appraisals, and emotions can come apart, then they cannot be constitutively related.

Morag concludes that all current philosophical accounts of emotion face the problem of reason-sensitivity, namely “how is it that our emotions sometimes alter and align with our normative judgments about them and sometimes not?” (3); or the requirement “to allow for the commonly known feature of emotions as sometimes dimming down in response to reasoning against them and sometimes not” (270). This emphasis on the variability inherent to the attempts to rationally control emotions makes Morag’s criticism of the tracking view in relation to the question of reason-sensitivity part of a second, broader criticism,<sup>14</sup> the *singularity* question:

The very same situation or circumstances may arouse a certain emotion-type in one person and a different emotion-type in another person and leave yet another person emotionally indifferent. [...] Indeed, the very same person may emotionally react in different ways or remain emotionally indifferent to the same circumstances on different occasions. Today the rude waiter “pushed my buttons”, as we say, and irritated me, yesterday I was amused by his rudeness, and tomorrow his rudeness may leave me completely indifferent. What changes from one day to the next? What makes me emote while you stay indifferent? (1).

According to Morag, any account of emotion also fails to provide a framework that would explicate the singularity question. Accordingly, as anticipated, in the second part of the book she develops an account of the emotions inspired by a creative reading of Freud’s works, which tries to provide an answer to the singularity and reason-sensitivity questions. More specifically, it seeks to provide a psychological explanation of the causal pathways that give rise to specific occurrent emotional episodes. This is supposed to be a *non-scientific, personal level* explanation, whilst building on a psychoevolutionary approach to the most elemental emotions (202, 267). In agreement with the Darwin-Tomkins-Ekman tradition, Morag thinks that “at the core of our emotional lives is a small class of highly predictable and universal emotional reactions that are inherited from our evolutionary history”.<sup>15</sup> Infants begin their lives with a fixed repertoire of *basic emotions* (anger, surprise, joy, sadness, fear, disgust, etc.), which are biologically based and pancultural packages of short-term, coordinated and automated responses to events in the environment, which include typical physiological and behavioral expressions. However, Morag’s main focus is on a much larger class of emotions, what Griffiths called “complex emotions”: “the complex emotion episodes that figure in folk-psychological narratives about mental life, episodes

<sup>14</sup> See Griffiths, P.E. 2017, “Mechanisms Can Be Complex”, *Metascience*, 26, 388.

<sup>15</sup> Morag, T. 2017, “Author’s Response”, *Metascience*, 26, 403.

such as the evolving jealousy and anger of a person in an unraveling sexual relationship.”<sup>16</sup> These complex emotion episodes, which develop over the course of our history of affective experience, are often not predictable and are unreliably responsive to reason because they are caused by *nonrational, non-inferential associative processes of the imagination*, operating below the level of awareness.

According to the associative account, the unconscious imaginative processes are forms of imagistic “seeing as”, whereby the person sees here-and-now people and things in terms of other people and things that triggered previous infantile basic emotions or other later emotions. In other words, when the person imaginatively connects a here-and-now “object” (through similarity, inversion or part-whole relations) to past “objects” or remembered emotional experiences, the here-and-now “object” becomes emotionally salient. Thus, what triggers an episode of anger is not the event in the immediate environment that seems to be the focus of that anger (e.g. the waiter’s rudeness), although this may be one among many casually relevant factors that explain why we emote as we do in that situation. It is rather the accumulation and condensation of imaginative associations that connect elements of the here-and-now situation with “latent nodal emotions” (i.e., common themes in one’s emotional life, like dangers, mothers, authority figures, public embarrassments, etc.) in the individual’s emotional-imaginative network (189).<sup>17</sup> The affective-associative processes enliven nodal emotions, which are then transferred or “displaced” upon the here-and-now situation. At that stage, elements of nodal emotions are the terms in which the here-and-now elements of the situation are seen as *emotionally salient*: “These nodal emotions get enlivened frequently and function as the terms in which situations are seen as emotionally salient exactly because many associative routes lead there” (189).

As an example let us consider Morag’s interpretation of Amelie Rorty’s story about Jonah, a newspaper journalist, who finds himself resenting his female boss Esther, even when he knows he shouldn’t from a rational point of view (96).<sup>18</sup> Jonah’s recalcitrant resentment is unpacked in terms of regression to latent emotions, which are enlivened and displaced upon the current situation by virtue of an imaginative-emotional network of associations that connect Esther with Jonah’s ambivalent emotions towards his mother, his colleagues with jealousy towards his brother, and feeling suffocated by the assignments Esther is giving him with the scarf-tying episodes.<sup>19</sup> In this way, the singularity question can be answered. The specific associations that a person connects to the here-and-now situation causally explain which emotions she has in the present.

Within this psychoanalytic framework, all complex emotional episodes are regarded as “mini-symptoms” which can only be undone and transformed

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Griffiths, P. 2003, “Basic Emotions, Complex Emotions, Machiavellian Emotions”, in A. Hatzimoysis (ed.), *Philosophy and the Emotions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 39.

<sup>17</sup> “The unconscious nodal emotions [...] imaginatively capture the subject’s diverse and complex plurality of emotional difficulties, a variety of issues the subject has not acknowledged properly and has not dealt with. This is the source of their curious affective importance; this is why they stand out from the rest of one’s latent emotions” (189).

<sup>18</sup> Rorty, A. 1980, “Explaining Emotions”, in Id. (ed.), *Explaining Emotions*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 103-26.

<sup>19</sup> Jonah suffers from a peculiar aversion to scarves, which his mother used to tie tightly around his neck when he was a child.

through psychotherapy (200). The aim of psychoanalytic therapy is then to undo the affective overemphasis of the nodal emotions.

On the associative account, analysis is not just about undoing the condensation and displacement of the symptom and recognizing and expressing hitherto repressed emotions. The repressed emotions themselves are understood to be nodal synthesized emotions. These emotions are “nodal” since they heavily condense many other emotions; they imaginatively synthesize everything that is emotionally conflictual in the patient’s life and provide the patient with a dominant model through which she sees the world as emotionally salient. According to the associative account, therapy’s aim is to break or loosen the grip of this picture, to undo the affective overemphasis of the nodal emotions by undoing the condensations and displacements that render these emotions so significant in the first place (243).

Building on a “de-mystified conception of repression” (243; cf. ch. 5.i.4), and a reinterpretation of the Freudian unconscious in terms of patterns of inattention and patterns of imaginative association, Morag develops “a demystified and spelled-out understanding of how unconscious emotions may be rendered available to verbal expression and description” (ibid.). This kind of verbal expression and description involves “internal changes” that can gradually undo the condensations and displacements that grant certain nodal emotions a dominant role in the patient’s present emotional patterns. Thus, Morag concludes, “the associative account provides the conceptual foundations for a new defense of psychoanalysis as a therapeutic practice” (274).

To the extent that Morag’s book daringly presents a new and highly unorthodox theory of emotion, it cannot but arise questions, doubts and disagreements. In what follows I will make a few critical remarks on the fruitfulness of Morag’s meta-philosophical framework (“liberal naturalism”) for the construction of a psychoanalytic theory of complex (as opposed to basic) emotions.

As already said, Morag develops a *non-scientific, personal-level* psychological explanation of the causal pathways that give rise to specific occurrent emotional episodes. In fact, according to the author,

imaginative associations and the emotions they cause are *person-level* phenomena, and as such they cannot be accounted for scientifically, unless a reduction of person-level psychological phenomena is anticipated to be found in some indeterminate future. To describe causation at the person level, to allow for the category I recover in the book of the non-scientific empirical, one requires Liberal Naturalism, the only framework that acknowledges the existence of objects and causes that are neither scientific nor supernatural posits (Morag, “Author’s Response”, 406-407).

Morag is careful to stress that she fully appreciates the importance of scientific and social studies of emotions: “[q]uestions about the sources of the repertoire of emotion-types of a typical human adult in a certain social and linguistic niche are asked and may be researched at the biological, evolutionary, neurological and social levels of explanation” (ibid., 402). But none of these questions concerns her in the book because singular spontaneous emotional reactions are phenomena that cannot be accounted for scientifically, but only investigated through an inquiry in our *ordinary* experiences and explanatory practices of emotions.

When it comes to human emotional life, the singular occurrences that we can and do explain in our ordinary social practices are too subjective, too idiosyncratic, too dependent on the particular subject's biography and self-image—to be generalizable across many people in a law-like manner. As said above, even the same person may emotionally react differently to similar circumstances at various points in time. This is not to deny that many of us emotionally respond similarly in various circumstances. Science may be able to explain or even predict statistical distributions of emotional reactions across certain classes of people, but it cannot answer the question that is the focus of this book, namely, *what makes this particular individual emote in a certain way in a certain specific situation* (13).

In order to define the singular nature of what causes a specific person to emotionally react, Morag appropriates James Woodward's counterfactual difference-making approach to causal explanation since it "makes allowance for causal pluralism and singular causation" (12). Woodward's interventionist account of singular causation suits scientific explanations but—Morag's book is supposed to show—it can also be applied to "psychological explanation at the level of commonsense everyday language" (13). Within this framework, psychoanalysis is offered as the best tool for *empirically* (rather than scientifically) investigating emotions. In the footsteps of a number of philosophers, Morag thinks that "the psychoanalytic explanation for certain behaviors consists in or rather has the potential to consist in an extension of commonsense psychology" (6).<sup>20</sup> This position on psychoanalysis has been strongly influenced by Donald Davidson, who famously claims that the personal level is autonomous from the subpersonal level, and is to be studied by means of different methods—some form of hermeneutics ("interpretivism") takes the place of the quest for strict causal laws.

This attempt to abandon Freud's positivistic naturalism and reconstruct psychoanalysis on hermeneutic grounds has a very long story. In the 1970s an influential version of this project was initiated by a number of psychoanalysts of David Rapaport's school: especially George Klein and, close to his ideas, Merton Gill and Roy Schafer. According to these psychoanalysts the "biologistic" Freud is no longer defensible, and the whole Freudian metapsychology (what Morag characterizes as Freud's recourse to "biological-cum-metaphysical drives") is to be declared obsolete, owing to its association to the drive-discharge theory. By contrast, the psychoanalytic clinical theory must be reevaluated insofar as it rests on the intentionality of the interpretive process.

The problem with the Davidsonian philosophy of psychoanalysis, as well as with the "clinical theory versus metapsychology" argument, is that it cuts the link between commonsense explanation and scientific explanation, making the ordinary mind autonomous from science. And it can be argued that this autonomy thesis paves the way for the revisionary metaphysics of those philosophers

<sup>20</sup> From this viewpoint, "psychoanalysis does not, contra Grünbaum, repose logically on therapeutic claims, and the specific inductive canons of the natural sciences are inappropriate to its evaluation; the grounds for psychoanalysis lie instead in its offering a unified explanation for phenomena (dreaming, psychopathology, mental conflict, sexuality, and so on) that commonsense psychology is unable, or poorly equipped, to explain" (Gardner, S. 1999, "Psychoanalysis: Contemporary Views", in R.A. Wilson and F.C. Keil, eds., *The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 684).

who claim that the deliverance from folk-psychological concepts is the condition of psychology's being reducible to neuroscience, and hence having a scientific nature.<sup>21</sup> In this eliminativist perspective, the fate of the Freudian personal-level unconscious is to be superseded by the unconscious of a dynamic psychology firmly rooted in the subpersonal level of behavioral sciences.

Nevertheless, we should try to traverse the waters between the Scylla of the autonomist insulation of philosophy from science and the Charybdis of a naturalized metaphysics that rejects any attempt to domesticate scientific discoveries to make them congruent with intuitive, folk world-views. Rethinking psychoanalysis in an information-processing framework does not need to bring with it an elimination of personal level psychological phenomena—in practice, eliminative as well as reductive approaches are at risk of losing the mental as their own object of study, replacing it with objects that belong to different levels of analysis. Unlike the approaches that drop the link between personal and sub-personal levels, we should place them in dialectical relationship, working our way back and forth between the manifest and the scientific images of ourselves, by revising these two images wherever necessary so as to pursue the Sellarsian ideal of a coherent self-conception. A fine example is attachment theory. On the one hand, the concept of attachment allowed rethinking psychoanalysis in an ethological and evolutionary framework in which human minds are shaped by early interactions with others; the main explanatory concept of psychoanalysis has been here reconstructed as “a cognitive unconscious of beliefs, self, object and interactional representations, and implicit assumptions and expectations regarding how significant others will behave toward oneself”.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, attachment is a concept very close to the personal level, taking shape in the context of a practical operative psychology rather than in systematic research.

The ethological and evolutionary framework of attachment theory is the same framework within which Paul Griffiths tries to show—in a symposium on Morag's book contained in *Metascience*—that “sub-personal accounts of the aetiology of emotions have more resources to address the singularity question than Morag supposes”.<sup>23</sup> Griffiths criticises Morag for not appreciating the fact that a blossoming literature in philosophy and history of science shows that biologists, neuroscientists, physiologists, psychologists avoid the term ‘law’ and conceive of their work instead in terms of the discovery of mechanisms. Moreover, he mentions Jennifer Greenwood's work on the ontogeny of emotions which emphasizes the unique history of interaction between mother and child (what Donald Winnicott called “the mother-infant dyad”) and the fact that the emotions emerge from this interaction without being pre-specified on either side.<sup>24</sup> A strongly developmental, epigenetic model of emotional development such as that offered by Greenwood will supplement classical forms of mechanistic explanation with dynamical explanations, which seems to have the resources to come to deal with Morag's problem of *idiosyncrasy*—“an emotion is not caused

<sup>21</sup> “Belief in the autonomy of personal level explanation can make eliminativism about personal level psychological states very appealing” (Bermúdez, J.L. 2000, “Personal and Sub-personal: A Difference Without a Distinction”, *Philosophical Explorations*, 3, 1, 81).

<sup>22</sup> Eagle, M.N. 2011, *From Classical to Contemporary Psychoanalysis: A Critique and Integration*, New York: Routledge, 130.

<sup>23</sup> Griffiths, “Mechanisms Can Be Complex”, 388.

<sup>24</sup> Greenwood, J. 2015, *Becoming Human: The Ontogenesis, Metaphysics, and Expression of Human Emotionality*, Cambridge (MA): The MIT Press.

just by the here-and-now circumstances but also by the emoter's singular emotional or (more accurately) affective experiential history".<sup>25</sup>

In her reply Morag says that the associative processes proposed in the book are mechanistic in the manner indicated in Griffiths' review, i.e., they are mechanisms which are "plastic rather than law-like, at times producing new reactions to otherwise familiar situations".<sup>26</sup> Moreover, she claims that Griffiths' current view concurs with hers in that both views accept that at the core of our emotional lives are basic emotions; that "core then gets 'complexified' with causes from other levels of description, namely a person's particular emotional history and social niche, to yield, through a highly complex and plastic mechanism, the singular causation of emotional reactions".<sup>27</sup> Yet, inasmuch as Morag's autonomist approach confines itself to the explanatory resources of the personal level, her psychoanalytic theory of emotion cannot make allowance for any kind of sub-personalist contribution. But then, how can Morag provide an account of how the neurocomputational mechanism underlying basic emotions is related to a "mechanism"—the associative imagination—which is the outcome of an exercise in psychoanalysis conceived as an extension of commonsense psychology? The coming together of sub-personal explanation in terms of affect programs and personal level explanation in terms of imaginative associations results in a mixed bag. An upshot all the more unjustified given that Morag undermined the main argument for an autonomist approach, namely that subpersonal-level explanations cannot provide a grounding or implementation for personal-level explanations, since there is no equivalent at the subpersonal level of the various constraints of rationality and normativity that govern explanation at the personal level.

Despite these disagreements, *Emotion, Imagination and the Limits of Reason* is well worth reading for anyone interested in emotions in philosophy, psychology and psychoanalysis. Morag's book effectively challenges some of the orthodoxies in contemporary philosophical emotions theory, reintroduces the faculty of imagination to a literature that has been monopolised by the opposition/integration between emotion and reason, and breathes new life into philosophy of psychoanalysis.

University Roma Tre

MASSIMO MARRAFFA

<sup>25</sup> Morag, "Author's Response", 402.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 403.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*