

RELIGIOUS EXPLANATIONS: A MODEL FROM THE SCIENCES BY EDWARD L. SCHOEN

Ernan McMullin

The author of a forthright recent book¹ tells us that he is engaged "in the struggle to show not only that religious truth claims can be patterned along strictly scientific lines, but also that such claims are capable of meeting rigorously scientific standards for theoretical adequacy" (p. viii). Edward Schoen's aim is the "cognitive rehabilitation of religious discourse" in the face of modern skeptical attack (p. ix). The "cognitive integrity" of religion is to be secured by showing that religious discourse "may be used successfully to provide explanations strictly parallel with those offered in the sciences" (p. 23). This, he insists over and over, is what is required to "salvage effectively the cognitive respectability of religious discourse" (p. 127).

Schoen is well aware that he travels a lonely road. Even those "religious theorists" (his label for the audience he is addressing) who are most sympathetic to analogies between science and religion, he suggests, always suffer in the end from failure of nerve. He chides Basil Mitchell, Fred Ferré and Ian Ramsey, for example, because they are "convinced that any attempt to provide religious explanations of a rigorously scientific type must be abandoned as a hopelessly impossible task" (p. 79). It is just this task that he considers essential; religion must be shown "capable of the same kinds of explanations as can be offered by the sciences," if it is to survive the potent challenge of critics like Huxley, Freud or Kai Nielsen (p. 22).

Ian Barbour is the author who comes closest to drawing the desired parallel between the modes of explanation in religion and science (p. 25). But Schoen argues that the notion of metaphor to which Barbour constantly returns is too weak. It leads Barbour to deny that theories and their associated models can be a "literal picture of the world" (p. 27). Whereas for Schoen, (partially) literal pictures are just what successful theories are. Though theory relies on analogy, the analogy can function properly only if it rests ultimately on univocal predication of at least some features. Still, Schoen affirms that his "general strategy for rehabilitating the cognitive integrity of religious discourse" will be exactly the same as Barbour's (p. 34), except that vague notions like *metaphor* and *symbolic construct* will be avoided because they permit the desired parallel between religious and scientific explanation to become too hazy.



Religious Explanations A Model From The Sciences

D. Jason Slone



Religious Explanations A Model From The Sciences:

Scientific Models for Religious Knowledge Andrew Ralls Woodward, 2018-08-14 Most comparisons of science and religion are really comparisons of science and Christianity or science and Islam and so forth In *Scientific Models for Religious Knowledge* the author aims to get outside typical polarized debates between traditional a priori theism and radical scientific naturalism Instead a new science and religion compatibility system between a scientific study of religion and a religious epistemology is our new elusive problem Moreover we shall look at a comparison and contrast of modern science with the simple deference of the human mind to the actions of culturally postulated superhuman agents This book pays critical attention to the contributions of scholars in the philosophy of religion the philosophy of science and the scientific study of religion *Scientific Models for Religious Knowledge* is useful for readers looking to expand their learning in the philosophies of science and religion as these subjects are taught and analyzed in modern research universities Conjunctive Explanations

in Science and Religion Diarmid A. Finnegan, David H. Glass, Mikael Leidenhag, David N. Livingstone, 2023-02-28 This book investigates the nature and relevance of conjunctive explanations in the context of science and religion It explores questions concerning how scientific and religious explanations for features of the world or phenomena within it relate to each other and whether they might work together in mutually enriching ways The chapters address topics including the relationship between Darwinian and teleological explanations non reductive explanations of mind and consciousness and explanations of Christian faith and religious experience while others explore theological and philosophical issues concerning the nature and feasibility of conjunctive explanations Overall the contributions help to provide conceptual clarity on how scientific and religious explanations might or might not work together conjunctively as well as exploring how these ideas relate to specific topics in science and religion more generally *Scientific Explanation and Religious Belief* Michael G. Parker, Thomas M.

Schmidt, 2005 Contributions from an international conference held December 11 13 2002 at the Institute for Philosophy of Religion at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt *Religion and the Natural Sciences* James E. Huchingson, 2005-02-07 The first half of *Religion and the Natural Sciences* is an introduction to the discussion of science and religion Here the reader learns why there is any debate at all and what resources exist for responding to it The second half deals with specific issues that arise in the individual sciences from astronomy and physics to biology and ecology Any project hoping to connect science and religion must supply the categories of connection which are found primarily although not exclusively in philosophy The simplicity of the arrangement and the nature of the selections are intended to make *Religion and the Natural Sciences* available to as wide an audience as possible including students from the sciences and technology the professions the humanities and liberal studies and theology **The Science of Religion: A Defence** Donald

Wiebe, 2018-10-16 Donald Wiebe Professor of Philosophy of Religion at Trinity College University of Toronto has spent much of his academic career arguing for a clear demarcation between Theology and Religious Studies *The Science of Religion A*

Defence offers a brilliant overview of Professor Wiebe's contributions on methodology in the academic study of religion of the development of his thinking over time and of his intellectual commitment to a science of religion. The work is divided into three parts. The first part identifies pertinent connections between religion, religious studies and science and why reductionism in the academic study of religion when properly applied can bridge the explanatory gap between the sceptic and the devotee. The second part treats conceptual debates in the academic study of religion with particular reference to the place of belief, understanding and meaning in the modern study of religion. The third part addresses the theological resistance to the scientific study of religion and how that resistance can be overcome. Finally, two new essays are included: a critique on 'The Preconceptions of a Science of Religion' by Anthony J. Palma and an accompanying reply by Donald Wiebe. *The Science of Religion: A Defence* is an essential resource for both scholarly and non-scholarly audiences alike and will be of particular interest to both defenders and critics of a scientific study of religion. Religion and Cognition D. Jason Slone, 2016-04-01

The cognitive science of religion examines the mental processes that govern religious belief and behaviour. It offers a fresh and exciting approach to the scientific study of religion. *Religion and Cognition* brings together key essays which outline the theory and illustrate this with experimental case material. The central topics in this new critical field of research are all addressed: meta-theoretical arguments for cognitive explanations of religion; theoretical models of cognition employed in the cognitive science of religion; prominent cognitive theories of religion; methods used to gather data and test theories; and experimental findings by cognitive scientists of religion. *Naturalism, Theism and the Cognitive Study of Religion* Dr Aku Visala, 2013-06-28

This book provides a critical philosophical analysis of the claim that contemporary cognitive approaches to religion undermine theistic beliefs. Recent scientific work into the evolution and cognition of religion has been driven by and interpreted in terms of a certain kind of philosophical and methodological naturalism. The book argues that such naturalism is not necessary for the cognitive study of religion and develops an alternative philosophical and methodological framework. This alternative framework opens the cognitive study of religion to theological and philosophical considerations and clarifies its relationship to other approaches to religious phenomena. This unique contribution to discussions regarding the philosophical and theological implications of the cognitive study of religion summarizes the so far fragmentary discussion, exposes its underlying assumptions and develops a novel framework for further discussion. **Naturalism, Theism and the Cognitive Study of Religion** Aku Visala, 2016-04-22

This book provides a critical philosophical analysis of the claim that contemporary cognitive approaches to religion undermine theistic beliefs. Recent scientific work into the evolution and cognition of religion has been driven by and interpreted in terms of a certain kind of philosophical and methodological naturalism. The book argues that such naturalism is not necessary for the cognitive study of religion and develops an alternative philosophical and methodological framework. This alternative framework opens the cognitive study of religion to theological and philosophical considerations and clarifies its relationship to other approaches to religious phenomena. This

unique contribution to discussions regarding the philosophical and theological implications of the cognitive study of religion summarizes the so far fragmentary discussion exposes its underlying assumptions and develops a novel framework for further discussion

Evaluating Models of Christian Counseling George R. Ross, 2011-03-14 Initially developed as a classroom resource Evaluating Models of Christian Counseling serves as a primary example of the complexities involved in integrating psychology theology and spirituality into the counseling process The would be counselor and the experienced professional are each introduced to a systematic evaluation model for determining how effectively a specific Christian Counseling Program incorporates psychological spiritual and theological constructs into their milieu After presenting a working definition of the counseling process and its relationship to psychology theology and spirituality an application of the evaluation model to four Christian Counseling programs is demonstrated

Rethinking Religion E. Thomas Lawson, Robert N. McCauley, 1993-01-14 This book is an ambitious attempt to develop a cognitive approach to religion Focusing particularly on ritual action it borrows analytical methods from linguistics and other cognitive sciences The authors a philosopher of science and a scholar of comparative religion provide a lucid critical review of established approaches to religion and make a strong plea for the combination of interpretation and explanation Often represented as competitive approaches they are rather complementary equally vital to the study of symbolic systems

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