



---

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Religious Personality* by Donald Capps and Walter H. Capps

Review by: E. Mansell Pattison

Source: *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Measurement in Religion: Persons, Groups, Organizations (Winter, 1973), pp. 135-136

Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd.: {sage}

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3509796>

Accessed: 29-04-2024 20:52 +00:00

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*Sage Publications, Ltd.* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Review of Religious Research*

Fannon, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and Ron Karenga.

Coming down hard on white theology as presenting blacks with "a religion of contentment in the state of life in which they find themselves" and providing teachings of a white Christ which justified social ills (e.g., war, exploitation, and racism), the author counters that the essential thrust of the ministry of Jesus was liberation: "To be a Christian is to try again to introduce Christianity into Christendom and to set free again the powers of the love and liberating ministry of Jesus, the Liberator."

The volume begins with a testimonial to the black preacher who won his soul in acts of service to the black community. Most of the volume is concerned with what Jesus has done for individual man, "with the chaotic lives torn with conflicting desires," and "with our fragmentation." While there is group involvement implicit in black theology and black experience, only toward the end of the volume does the author explicitly turn to the community level. This entails each black's identifying with other blacks as well as with "the wretched non-whites of the world." While he assumes common black bonds, there is little perception of the need or possibility of concerted group social action. Through the black experience, God has given the gift of faith which has been discovered "in the depth of our suffering and [which] has given meaning and glory to our existence." The book closes upon a penetrating analysis accounting for the rise of black theology and a call for a ministry of liberation.

This volume is especially valuable in at least two respects. First, the author most eloquently presents the demands of black theology on black men of faith. Second, an unintended gift for researchers in the sociology of the black church is the fact that this volume is a chronicle of the transition of an educated clergy style from that shaped in white seminaries to one embracing the fruits of black studies, awareness, and community cohesion.

Hart M. Nelsen

*Western Kentucky University*

*The Religious Personality.* By Donald Capps and Walter H. Capps (eds.) Belmont, Calif.:

Wadsworth, 1970. 379 pp. No price; paperback.

The genre of this book is revealed in the title. The search continues for "homos religiousus," based on the assumption that he is some sub-species apart from other humans. There is the hint here that the religious personality in modern times is a somewhat superior animal: viz., "characterized by a sense of composure or equilibrium in a conflict-ridden universe" (p. 10).

Since the editors provide only a sketchy 10-page introduction, their conceptual statements about the book do not warrant a critical reprise. Basically this is a book of readings. What the editors give us is an anthology of excerpts from the autobiographical writings of men and one woman whom the editors consider religious, in that "a religious factor was conscious" in the writings of each author. Thus the religious persuasions range from ascetic to humanist to atheist. In terms of formal religious systems the 22 authors are distributed as follows: two Pre-Reformation (Augustine, Abelard); twelve Protestant (Wesley, Nietzsche, Ben Franklin, Tillich, etc.); three Jewish; two Roman Catholic; one Hindu (Gandhi); one American Indian (Black Elk); and one Black Muslim (Malcolm X). Thus we have a series of portraits drawn exclusively from the western Judeo-Christian tradition. The personalities are very main-line (as compared with Mary Baker Eddy, or Rosicrucians, or Swendenbourg). And the three cultural deviants (Gandhi, Black Elk, Malcolm X) certainly are not pure culture portraits, but grossly "contaminated" by the Judeo-Christian thought world.

Given these caveats of selection, what is the book's pedagogical value? It does contain brief biographic notes and supplemental titles about or by each author. It does provide a quick exposure to a variety of "great men" who have reacted positively or negatively to the ambient Judeo-Christian religion. It does suggest a variety of styles of "being religious." It does expose the student to "the study of lives" without the interpolation of theories or constructs.

The pedagogical problems with the book are less explicit but inherent in the structure. It perpetuates the notion of a uniquely religious person, as if some people aren't affected by religion. It focuses solely on the Judeo-Christian heritage and thereby perpetuates the religious (to say nothing of cultural) ethnocentrism of American students. And it seems

to me rather lofty, even archaic, in its attention to the "super-stars." Do students relate to this? In the current age of personalized religion the personalities seem off at a distance and *not* related to everyday "everyman" religion.

As an adjunctive set of readings this book is potentially useful. As a guide to religion and personality it fails to lead us out of darkness.

E. Mansell Pattison

*University of California at Irvine*

*The Puritan Experience: Studies in Spiritual Autobiography.* By Owen C. Watkins. New York, N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1972. 270 pp. \$12.00.

Owen C. Watkins seeks in this volume "to fill the gap in Puritan studies which has been apparent since works by Tindall and Haller drew our attention over thirty years ago to the significance of the spiritual autobiography as an expression of popular Puritanism." He has, in my estimation, done a commendable job in this effort.

He identifies the three main strands of the Puritan tradition as the "orthodox" Puritans (those somewhere within the Calvinist tradition), the vulgar prophets (the individualists), and the Quakers. The bulk of his work is directed to the first and last of these, probably because that is where the material is most plentiful.

Professor Watkins brings the tradition of Puritanism to life out of the examples of those who wrote not so much for us as for their own contemporaries. One gets a much sounder sense of the theology of Calvin in the life of the Puritan or of Fox in the life of the Quaker than from merely reading the theology of these men.

This book is not merely a catalogue of excerpts from the writings of the Puritans before 1725; it is also a systematic presentation of the nature of the Puritan experience grounded in the testimony found in the spiritual autobiographies. In the examination of the author's purposes in writing, one is prepared to find the common elements which transcend individual differences and to discover the power of basic assumptions in giving harmony to two of the three groups to which Watkins directs his attention.

The major points of the author's presentation are well illustrated and his manuscript leaves one with a sense of having shared in the lives of those who left the rich heritage about which he writes. Certainly the strengths of the book are in the excellent development of the step-by-step spiritual experience of the Calvinists and the importance they attached to this development as well as the insight we get in the early Quakers, particularly the significance that the theology of immediate perfection played in the nature of their life experience. Professor Watkins has offered perhaps the most sympathetic presentation of the early Quaker experience that I have encountered. It reopens the question as to why the Quakers did not prosper more.

This book will be especially valuable to those who are concerned with religious influence in our culture. It adds a dimension to that study of great worth.

J. Benton White

*Religious Studies Program*

*California State University at San Jose*

*The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues.* By John Kildahl. New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1972. 110 pp. \$4.95.

The phenomenon of speaking in tongues is indeed a fascinating and significant topic to both religionists and social scientists, and John Kildahl has made a noteworthy contribution to the pertinent literature in this small volume. Reporting on "ten years of concentrated study" in this area, the author provides some fine insights and directions for additional research on glossolalia and associated religious manifestations. Unfortunately when tantalized by a morsel we invariably want more; much more could have been offered. Wood, in his classic study, *Culture and Personality Aspects of Pentecostal Holiness Religion*, offers one such expository model. Possibly some of the difficulty results from the fact that it is unclear for whom this book is written. Clearly it was not designed for the searching theological or psychological scholar although it puts out feelers in both directions and must be of interest to both. The clarity and succinctness of the writing suggests a desire for a broad audience. If this were the goal, the author has succeeded admirably. However, this succinctness is