

why Bouyer wished them to be posthumous. By way of counter-balance he also admits his debt to the Oratorians, not least in the extraordinary liberty they gave him in terms of his later career (houses in delectable spots in the French countryside, the second with its own separate chapel complete with personally commissioned neo-Byzantine *Deesis*).

Globe-trotting as a lecturer dominate the next two chapters which take the reader to the eve of the Second Vatican Council. A large element of name-dropping from among the Great and the Good of immediately pre-Conciliar Catholicism and Anglicanism indicates the persistent networker as well as the lover of holy Church. Yet Bouyer's hard work as a writer and professor and his well-conceived contribution to the Ecumenical and Liturgical Movements quite justified his appointment to various pre-Conciliar, Conciliar, and post-Conciliar commissions. Paul VI intended to make him a cardinal, he tells us, but the appointment was blocked by the opposition of a progressive-leaning French episcopate.

The information fits with other indiscreet references, in the closing three chapters, to the work of the commissions and the author's critical animadversions on both the Council itself and the subsequent papal revision of the Roman Liturgy. Those references explain the eager awaiting of an English translation of this book in the Catholic blogosphere – and perhaps the publisher's own interest therein. The American translator, it may be added, has not only produced a readable text. She has also annotated it with notes many of which are essential to its understanding, at any rate by a reader from outside both the popular and the high culture of modern France.

Some light is thrown on Bouyer's own theology in these pages, notably in the combined inspiration from mathematics and the English Romantics in his cosmology. But what Ignatius Press must now do, if they have not already done so, is to commission a companion translation, this time of *Le Métier du théologien* (1979, 2nd edition, 2005) from which much can be learned and not only about the subject of the present review.

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THE SLAIN GOD: ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH by Timothy Larsen, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, pp. 256, £22.50, hbk*

Unremarked in the mass media, both anthropology and sociology have taken introspective turns where the genesis of both disciplines is being subject to archival and biographical exploration. The outcome of these exercises is to deepen the roots of identity of both disciplines but also to reveal unexpected influences which do much to explain the contours and presuppositions of their classical works. For instance, in the case of Weber, far from being indifferent to religion, a recent and enormously

detailed biography has revealed a founding father of sociology as being obsessed with salvation, mysticism and one afflicted with inner turmoil arising from wrestling with God. Such unexpected revelations unsettle the curators of these disciplines who seek to cultivate a God-free universe where secularity takes on quasi-religious properties. Exceptions are treated as transgressive. In much of anthropology, going into religion and believing in it is deemed as bad as going native on a tribe being studied. Against this background, Larsen has produced an unexpected affirmation of the compatibility of religious belief with anthropology, as illustrated by four main figures who did so much to establish the contemporary shape of the discipline. Three of the four Catholics explored in the study were converts.

This assiduous study by Larsen is the first to really document this most peculiar facet of social anthropology. It might seem that social anthropology is a discipline of marginal interest in English academic life, being concerned with the abstruse and the marginal of what pertains outside civilisation. But this would be to ignore the discipline's singular recognition in the humanities in the United Kingdom where no less than seven anthropologists have been knighted or given damehoods – sociology receiving none. Perhaps best treated as an exercise in the history of ideas, Larsen is well qualified to reflect on the six figures of his study: Frazer, Tyler, Evans-Pritchard, Douglas, and the Turners, Victor and Edith. An American, not a Catholic, a Fellow of both the Royal Historical Society and the Royal Anthropological Institute and the author of two works on faith in the nineteenth century and the Bible and the Victorians, Larsen provides a most satisfying study. Converting rumour on the role of Catholicism into forensic scholarship has produced a meticulous account of a hidden era of the history of social anthropology, which hitherto has been received with what Goffman would term 'civil inattention'. Beautifully written and carrying lightly an immense amount of historical and literary research well placed in the extensive footnotes to each chapter, one is impressed with the fullness of Larsen's explorations, both of the works of his anthropologists, their reputations, careers, and their theological dispositions as related to the four Catholics of the study. As to be expected, given his academic career, the accounts of Frazer and Tyler are peculiarly well documented.

The god slain in the title of the work refers to one who is central to Frazer's famous work, *The Golden Bough* (p. 40). The god so slain emerges as a stalking deity for the God of Christianity, one also to be destroyed in a proxy war fought in primitive societies. As with the museums of atheism in Russia founded in the 1930s, the power to render Christianity incredible could be accomplished by comparisons with the superstitions of primitive societies, both being designated as offensive to reason and ideas of progress because of their fixations on blood and sacrifice. The outcome is the received notion that Christianity and anthropology are wholly incompatible.

In the study, Tyler emerges as of importance, having the title reader in anthropology at Oxford conferred in 1884 and gaining a chair there in 1895 (p. 27). Although raised a Quaker, Tyler chose an Anglican rite for his burial in Somerset. Such a choice needs to be placed against his treatment of Paganism and Catholicism, which he hated, regarding both as interchangeable (p. 18). Larsen is scathing about Frazer (1854-1941) whose great work, *The Golden Bough* he claims is now virtually unread. A lapsed member of the Free Church of Scotland, Frazer sought to advance the hegemony of science and reason on the basis of a demolition job on religion which was characterised by savagery and corrupted by deference to myth and discredited forms of magic (p. 48). Given their well-documented anti-Christian prejudices, each would have been shocked by the way some of their more prominent successors embraced Catholicism as the belief system to shape their social anthropology.

There is little doubt that three of the Catholic social anthropologists are worthy of scrutiny. Douglas's work on natural symbols and purity and danger has been of seminal importance in social anthropology and outside it. Victor Turner's notion of the liminal and *communitas* has had a profound impact on the understanding of ritual. By linking ritual with drama, he stands unusually as an anthropologist who did much to shape the imagination of Brian Friel, the Irish playwright. The sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman regarded Victor Turner's work as singularly underrated. But it is really Evans-Pritchard who has had the most lasting influence in contextualising fieldwork accounts and in pointing to the complexities governing their translation to other cultures, notably those of visiting anthropologists. He anticipated the concerns of Bourdieu with the field of culture, but in a fuller way, by treating as logical non-rational forms of thought. The properties of relativism which so pervade current understandings of postmodernity can be traced back to Evans-Pritchard's pioneering accounts of the Nuer and the Azande. The questions these studies generated still endure. Larsen draws attention well to the honours, recognition and scholarly production of all four, but that is not the direct concern of his study. It deals with the inexplicable Catholicism that shaped their work.

Larsen is especially good at filling out the degree to which Catholic theology and Biblical studies shaped their thoughts. These are dimensions which the secularisation of social anthropology has sought to contract. Something more than a repository for metaphors lies in their deployment of Catholicism. The influences of *Leviticus* on Douglas and her concern with the structuring of hierarchy are well drawn out. Likewise in the case of Victor Turner, his approach to *communitas* led him to pioneer the study of pilgrimage in social anthropology. To a degree, Larsen's treatment of Victor Turner becomes diffuse as he seeks to have the anthropological gifts of his wife Edith recognised. That concern to affirm her reputation as an anthropologist of the spiritual slightly blurs the appraisal of Victor Turner's contributions to the shaping of social

anthropology. In a sense, the meat of the study lies in Larsen's treatment of Douglas, but especially of Evans-Pritchard.

None of the four 'had to be' Catholics; they affiliated because it meant an enormous amount to each. They suffered suspicion, if not rejection, by those who felt that being a Catholic and an anthropologist was a sort of betrayal. A similar anger emerged when the Jewish philosopher, Gillian Rose was baptised as a Christian near her death. At the University of Manchester, their colleagues in social anthropology treated the conversion in 1958 of the Turners from Marxism to Catholicism as a form of treachery deeply damaging to their department, hence why they went to the U.S.A. Larsen indicates that Douglas was warned of the incongruity of adhering both to anthropology and Catholicism. Being a doughty and formidable soul, she ignored the advice and made her own distinguished career in social anthropology. Having been educated at Winchester and Oxford, and being formidably clever, Evans-Pritchard seemed to have been resilient to any imputations that Catholicism impaired his social anthropology. Indeed, the strong point of Larsen's work is that far from lapsing, the Catholicism of all four enriched their formidable contributions to social anthropology and indeed, was indispensable to their achievements.

Larsen brings out well the steadfast nature of the Catholicism of all four. While Evans-Pritchard famously regarded himself as a 'bad Catholic', Douglas and Turner were exemplary in their Catholicism. As a fingerprint, their positions were conservative, if not perverse to liberal theologians, though Edith Turner became rather radical and eclectic in her Catholicism in later life. Douglas, Evans-Pritchard and the Victor Turner could be said to have had critical if not equivocal attitudes to Vatican II, stances shared with Berger and Bourdieu, to name a few. Victor Turner wrote a famous defence of the Tridentine mass and, famously, Douglas affirmed the utility of the Friday fast. Later, she emerged as a vehement critic of the ordination of women.

In his conclusion, Larsen notes that his study was not about a linear evolution, but about a ring or circle at whose centre lies the work of Evans-Pritchard (p. 221). In the study, Evans-Pritchard emerges as a sort of Catholic apologist in the clothing of social anthropology. He was an uncommonly deep thinker whose writings on religion bear continued scrutiny. His Catholicism ran deep and Larsen movingly writes of his tragedies, getting near why Evans-Pritchard became a Catholic. As evidence of how much it meant to him, Larsen found a remarkable religious poem written on Evans-Pritchard's 42nd birthday and eight days after his conversion to Catholicism (p. 118). A combination of guilt over his war service and the aesthetics of Catholicism might account for his steadfast affiliation. His wife committed suicide in 1959, and Evans-Pritchard was left to bring up five children. In many respects, Evans-Pritchard emerges as all too human in Larsen's account.

An intriguing aspect of the study relates to the influence of the Dominicans on Evans-Pritchard and Douglas. *New Blackfriars* and the Aquinas lectures provided outlets for their views on religion which the Benedictines and Jesuits could not, or did not supply. Likewise, as well facilitated by the late John Orme Mills O.P., at Oxford in the late 1970s, the prospects of better understandings between sociology and theology were given scope for expansion. Sadly, those moments of dialogue with both disciplines have gone into abeyance.

This study of Larsen will endure as a chronicle of a prophetic moment when Catholicism made an incongruous contribution to the shaping of modern social anthropology. It is the unexpected theological lineage of the four figures as explored in this work that gives to it a lasting value. By bringing so many strands together in a remarkably complete documentation of all sources, Larsen's work stands as difficult to refute by those intoxicated with the fable that anthropology is of its nature secular, that all religion is illogical and beyond analytical remit, save to destroy it and that faith is incompatible with the good works of the discipline.

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