

Despite his project not being successful, Timpe's book is still worth reading. There is no other source that so expansively catalogues a wide variety of literature in both free will and philosophical theology.

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Aaron Rizzieri: *Pragmatic Encroachment, Religious Belief and Practice*. Palgrave 2013.

Consider a person with strongly held religious convictions. Suppose these convictions are based, to a large extent, on religious experiences that this person has undergone — experiences that he finds difficult to articulate or explain, but in which he took himself to be in direct contact with God. Suppose this person puts these convictions into action — stridently expressing them, urging others away from alternative religious views, acting in ways that seem intolerant, judgmental, self-righteous, etc. While we might condemn such actions as immoral, we may also criticise them for being *epistemically* irresponsible or negligent; this person doesn't know that his religious experiences are genuine, or even have any evidence for thinking so. As such, he ought to be less *presumptuous* — perhaps in his beliefs, certainly in his actions.

When we criticise such actions as epistemically negligent, though, we typically take it for granted that the believer's experiences are not genuine or, at the very least, are unlikely to be genuine. Now suppose, for a moment, that there really *is* a God, that this person really *has* been in direct contact with God and that his religious beliefs are all *true*. In a world like this — which may be very different from how we take the actual world to be — would it still be negligent for this person to act as he does? Or, to ask this in another way, are this person's actions negligent *even by his own lights*? The answer, I think, is not straightforward. This is one of the questions that Aaron Rizzieri addresses in *Pragmatic Encroachment, Religious Belief and Practice*. He answers with an emphatic 'yes'.

'Pragmatic encroachment' in epistemology is the idea that whether a belief counts as knowledge or as justified can depend on pragmatic factors

such as what is at stake for the believer, even if all other factors are held constant. Despite having pride of place in the title, what is central to Rizzieri's book is not this idea *per se*, but another that is closely related to it: That there are intimate links between justified belief and rational, non-negligent action. Rizzieri dubs the following principles EA and ENA (for 'epistemic action' and 'epistemically negligent action' I think):

- If S justifiably believes P then S is rational to act as if P is true.
- If S justifiably believes P then S is not negligent in acting as if P is true.

(they are introduced on pages 18 and 63 respectively and mentioned in the introduction on page 2).

Rizzieri attempts to wring various consequences from these kinds of principles, both for epistemology in general and for the epistemology of religion in particular. In the first chapter, Rizzieri sets out a case for EA and for other principles linking justification to action. In chapter 2, EA is used to furnish a new argument against the possibility of justifiably believing in the occurrence of miracles. In chapter 3 Rizzieri uses EA and ENA to criticise externalist approaches to justification. These criticisms, along with others, are turned against Plantinga's generous, externalist epistemology of religion in chapter 4. In chapter 5, Rizzieri sets out the kind of internalist approach to justification that he takes EA and ENA to mandate. In the final chapter, he argues against the permissive, pragmatist epistemology of religion associated with William James. As this summary suggests, the general lesson that emerges is somewhat discouraging for the epistemology of religion — for Rizzieri, these justification-action principles ultimately make it more difficult to maintain that religious beliefs are justified. But there is a more positive message here too — even if we lack justification for believing religious propositions, Rizzieri suggests that *hope* may be a reasonable attitude to adopt towards them, and may form the basis for a more open, less prepossessed, kind of religious faith.

I will focus here on Rizzieri's arguments against externalist approaches to justification, and to the justification of religious beliefs in particular. Consider a very simple externalist theory — a version of process reliabilism according to which a belief is justified iff it is formed by a process that reli-

ably leads to true beliefs. According this theory, in order for a belief to be justified, one doesn't need to *know* that the process by which it was formed is reliable or to have *verified* that it is reliable etc. — it is enough that it actually *be* reliable. One standard complaint against theories of this kind is that, even if a belief is formed by a process that is actually reliable, it seems irresponsible or negligent to hold on to the belief if one has not gone to the trouble of verifying that the process is reliable. One standard response to this complaint is to insist that notions of responsibility or negligence cannot be legitimately applied to beliefs, since beliefs lie beyond our voluntary control. It is here that Rizzieri's justification-action principles come into play. Whether or not beliefs can be described as negligent, actions certainly can. According to Rizzieri, even if a belief is formed by a reliable process, it may be negligent to act upon it if one has not gone to the trouble of verifying that the process is reliable. It then follows, via ENA, that the belief is not justified, contrary to the reliabilist theory under consideration (see chapter 3, partic. sections II and IVA, chapter 5, section IID). This is an intriguing way of arguing against externalism — and it does, I think, succeed in circumventing one kind of externalist comeback.

As I noted, the externalist theory I'm considering here is a very simple one and most externalists would wish to defend theories that are a good deal more complicated and nuanced. In a way, though, the precise externalist conditions that are placed on justification are of little consequence for present purposes — provided it is sufficient that these externalist conditions simply are met, and one need not know or verify that they are met, the dialectic plays out in much the same way.

How does this bear on questions about the justification of religious beliefs? If a person's religious experiences are genuine, and they do reliably reveal truths about God then, according to externalists, religious beliefs based on these experiences could be justified. For Rizzieri, though, this cannot be right — unless a person has evidence that his religious experiences are genuine and reliably reveal truths about God, it would be negligent for him to act on his religious beliefs in which case, by ENA, they are not justified. It's not difficult to think of situations in which we would condemn, as epistemically negligent, actions resulting from religious beliefs based upon religious experiences. But, in order for Rizzieri's argument to work, this

condemnation must survive even the supposition that these religious experiences are genuine and do reliably reveal truths about God — otherwise there is no conflict with what externalist theories predict. This brings us back to the question with which I opened: If we suppose, for a moment, that this religious believer really has been in contact with God, and his religious beliefs are true, would it *still* be right to condemn him as negligent when he acts upon these beliefs?

While principles like ENA clearly do have significance for debates over externalist approaches to justification and to the justification of religious beliefs in particular, Rizzieri may, in the end, overplay his hand here. Contrary to what he suggests, ENA does not force us to give up on externalism about justification — it merely forces us to be consistent in our treatment of justification and of epistemic negligence. More precisely, it forces us to adopt a picture on which facts about whether religious beliefs are justified and facts about whether it is negligent to act on religious beliefs are tethered to the same underlying factors, be they internal or external.

While I am not convinced that justification-action principles have quite the significance that Rizzieri finds in them, it is clear that exploring the epistemic and religious consequences of these principles is an intriguing and worthwhile project. There is much in this book that deserves careful thought and discussion. It should be of considerable interest to those working in the epistemology of religion and to many working in mainstream epistemology.

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Brian Leiter: *Why Tolerate Religion?*. Princeton University Press 2013.

Reasons for tolerating religion are not specific to religion but apply to all claims of conscience. Such is the central thesis that underlies Brian Leiter's book. The practical conclusion that he draws from that principle is that individuals with claims of religious conscience have no special right to request exemptions from generally applicable laws. In fact, unless their claims are