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A phenomenological challenge to 'enlightened secularism'

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Abstract: This article challenges Philip Kitcher's recent proposals for an 'enlightened secularism'. I use William James's theory of the emotions and his related discussion of 'temperaments' to argue that religious and naturalistic commitments are grounded in tacit, inarticulate ways that one finds oneself in a world. This indicates that, in many cases, religiosity and naturalism are grounded not in rational and evidential considerations, but in a tacit and implicit sense of reality which is disclosed through phenomenological enquiry. Once the foundational role of these temperaments is appreciated, it emerges that enlightened secularism relies upon a facile conception of the nature of religious belief – one that lessens its chances for success. The article ends with some positive proposals for incorporating phenomenological insights into debates about science, religion, and secularism.

Introduction

Debates about the conflict between science and religion often turn on the related questions of what the basis of religious belief is, and how, if at all, those beliefs can be challenged. Many modern secularists propose a variety of different psychosocial bases and propose a corresponding set of measures which, they maintain, can successfully challenge a person's religious beliefs. An especially influential set of proposed diagnoses of and solutions to disputes between science and religion are those proposed by the eminent philosopher of science Philip Kitcher. Throughout his recent works, Kitcher defends a modified version of what he calls 'the Enlightenment case against religion', a central claim of which is that disputes between science and religion are, in principle, capable of rational and evidential solution. Like many naturalists and secularists, Kitcher maintains that religious persons persist in their beliefs partly because of their lack of exposure to,

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and understanding of, the evidential and rational deliverances of the natural sciences. Once religious persons attain a proper and informed understanding grounded in our superlative epistemic authority – the sciences – religious belief can be safely dissolved. Let us call this the *solubility thesis*.

My aim in this article is to demonstrate that the solubility thesis is untenable because it relies upon a facile conception of the basis of religious belief. I begin by presenting an account of the sophisticated form of the solubility thesis, which Kitcher calls 'enlightened secularism'. With that account in place, I then go on to use William James's theory of the emotions, and his related discussion of 'temperaments', to argue that religious and naturalistic commitments are grounded in tacit, inarticulate ways that one finds oneself in a world. The temperamental nature of religious and naturalistic commitments renders the solubility thesis untenable because it entails that those commitments are prior to rational and evidentiary considerations. The article then concludes by considering the prospects for the solubility thesis – and for debates about science, religion, and secularism – in the light of an appeal to phenomenology.

Kitcher's enlightened secularism

One of the most sophisticated statements of the solubility thesis is Kitcher's 'enlightened secularism' (Kitcher (2008), (2011a), (2011b)). Like other secular projects, it relies upon the claim that religious belief can be subjected to evidential and rational disputation; that, for instance, improvements in public education and ongoing scientific enquiry will gradually dissolve religious belief. Although secularists need not maintain that religious belief is, as one vociferous critic puts it, 'the root of all evil', they do consider, on a variety of grounds, that it can and should be dissolved and a 'secular humanism' established in its place. In this section, I will outline Kitcher's enlightened secularism, before going on to reject its four main component theses.

For much of his career, Kitcher has focused on the problem of identifying effective means of enabling informed public involvement in science policy without compromising the integrity of the scientific enterprise. This takes the form of 'well-ordered science', a state in which scientific enquiry aims for 'significant truths' about the world (Kitcher (2001), (2011b)). A truth is judged to be significant when it reflects a range of epistemic and non-epistemic values; so, for instance, the Human Genome Project offers significant truths because of its promised capacity to fulfil a range of cognitive, practical, social, and medical interests. Scientific projects should, argues Kitcher, be selected and assessed according to their likely capacity to yield 'significant truths' about the world (see further Longino (2002)).

The tenability of well-ordered science depends upon the capacity of citizens to engage in productive debate about significant truths. This requires the existence of

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common epistemic standards amongst the public, policymakers, and the relevant scientific communities, upon which basis debates about the capacity of various scientific projects to deliver significant truths can be had. Kitcher notes an obvious obstacle to the procedures for establishing well-ordered science, namely the fact that many religious groups and persons have divergent epistemological commitments from those of their secular compeers. Specifically, Kitcher argues that religious persons employ what he calls 'hybrid epistemologies' or 'chimeric epistemologies', which he defines as 'tendencies to acquiesce in scientific recommendations on some occasions and to defer to non-scientific authorities on others' (Kitcher (2008), 5; (2011b), §26). Many, though not all, religious persons will share some but not all of the epistemological commitments of their secular peers and this renders their participation in public deliberation problematic; for instance, they may disagree about the relative priority of certain forms of evidence and modes of argumentation, or recognize sources of knowledge which secularists reject, and so on. The presence and persistence of hybrid epistemologies generates epistemic dissensus, thereby jeopardizing attempts to establish well-ordered science.

The solution that Kitcher proposes to the problem of hybrid epistemologies is the establishment of a 'shared notion of public reason' (Kitcher (2011b), ch. 6). Public reason would consist of mutually shared and consensually adopted evidentiary and argumentative norms, such that a community committed to public reason adopts shared ways of articulating and evidencing claims and positions. The tenability of well-ordered science depends upon the epistemic consensus which public reason offers. Kitcher also insists that public reason must be invested in our premiere epistemic authority – namely the natural sciences – and so urges the establishment of a 'fully secular public reason' (Kitcher (2011b), §26).

Kitcher acknowledges that religious persons will not easily surrender their distinctive epistemic commitments in the manner that secular public reason requires. It is not enough to promote public reason by emphasizing the pragmatic value of epistemic consensus, because religious persons must also be persuaded that their epistemic losses will be balanced by corresponding social and psychological gains. This is why Kitcher has augmented his call for secular public reason with a wider programme of *enlightened secularism* (Kitcher (2008), (2011a)). It is *enlightened* because it is explicitly sensitive to the moral and psychological investment that religious persons have in their epistemic and metaphysical commitments, a sensitivity lacking, argues Kitcher, in many debate about secularism, especially in the dogmatic polemics of 'modern militant atheists'. It is *secular* because its aim is to isolate religious values and traditions from policy debate. Kitcher hopes that enlightened secularism, if successful, can facilitate the shift from a religious to a secular society by establishing common epistemic standards – public reason – while also ensuring that formerly

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religious persons suffer minimal psychological and existential disruption to their lives.

Enlightened secularism can be understood in terms of four connected theses. These four appear, individually or collectively, and in part or in whole, in many other secularist programmes; and indeed, some of them – especially the 'solubility thesis' – are arguably constitutive of secularism. My focus, however, is on Kitcher's enlightened secularism. The following statements are summaries and will be developed in detail later in the article:

1. *Solubility thesis*: religious belief is, in principle, dissolvable through rational and evidential challenge.
2. *Epistemic thesis*: human beings are uniformly responsive to modes of argumentation and forms of evidence.
3. *Surrogacy thesis*: an enlightened secularist can offer satisfying alternative 'surrogate' beliefs to replace the displaced religious beliefs of formerly religious persons.
4. *Teleological thesis:* newly 'enlightened', formerly religious persons can enjoy an equal or greater sense of purpose and meaningfulness following their adoption of surrogate secular beliefs and commitments.

These four theses are implicit in Kitcher's account and the plausibility and success of enlightened secularism rests upon them. In the next section, I present James's account of temperaments and then go on to argue that it undermines each of these four theses.

James and Ratcliffe on philosophical temperaments

William James's theory of emotion emphasizes the role of *feeling* in helping to shape human metaphysical and epistemological commitments. James refers to our 'temperaments', the tacit and often inarticulate ways in which one finds oneself within the world, and which constitute the taken-for-granted basis upon which more explicit and systematic philosophizing takes place. To borrow a phenomenological idiom, they are 'the way one finds oneself within a world', providing the implicit epistemological and metaphysical predispositions on the basis of which explicit philosophical enquiries can proceed.

In a justly famous remark, James writes that, 'Pretend what we may, the whole man within us is at work when we form our philosophical opinions. Intellect, will, taste, and passion co-operate just as they do in practical affairs' (James (1897), 92). Two points should be noted here. The first is that James emphasizes the element of duplicity or self-ignorance regarding temperaments; we often 'pretends' that our 'philosophical opinions' are the product of intellectual cogitation alone, because we are, too often, ignorant of the constitutive role of 'will, taste, and passion'. The second is that our affective and intellectual capacities are 'co-operative' rather than

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conflicting; philosophical opinions are the joint product of our affective and intellectual aspects, a claim supported by contemporary studies in the philosophy of emotion and cognition (see, for example, Goldie (2000)).[1]

Temperaments have a foundational role in shaping our metaphysical and epistemological commitments. It is important to emphasize just what their role is; they do not commit a person to specific arguments and claims, but rather to broader doctrines or positions. James's examples include the 'tender-hearted empiricist' and the 'tough-minded rationalist', or the monist, for whom the world is 'economical and orderly', and the pluralist, to whom it feels 'turbid [and] muddled' (James (1920), 45–46). A person lacking the requisite temperaments could, of course, understand the arguments which constitute those positions, and even display skill in articulating and defending them; however, those arguments and positions would not have the affective significance they have for those with the appropriate temperaments, and so do not grow 'hot and alive within us', as James put it (James (2002), 156; see further Ratcliffe (2008), 243–244).

Three points should be noted about temperaments. First, temperaments do not necessarily predispose a person to positions or doctrines which are necessarily comfortable or existentially assuring. Certainly, James agrees that many temperaments incorporate positive existential feelings, and his examples include '[r]eligious rapture, moral enthusiasm [and] ontological wonder', in which 'the sand and grit of the self ... disappear' within one's sense of the world as 'a region in which we find ourselves at home' (James (2002), 218). But although such positively valenced temperaments certainly exist, the existential feelings they incorporate are much more varied than this. As Matthew Ratcliffe indicates:

> In everyday life, we might feel close to the world, distant from it, part of it, estranged from it, helpless before it, in control of 'things', at one with nature, at one with life, part of a greater whole, part of a machine, slightly lost, overwhelmed, conspicuous or inconspicuous. And the world might feel familiar, unfamiliar, intangible, unreal, threatening, safe, fascinating, empty, imbued with significance, dreamlike, surreal, alien or warming. (Ratcliffe (2005), 52)

Certain temperaments can therefore be estranging, entailing a deep sense of existential dissatisfaction, even despair, often issuing in quite vivid descriptions (for examples, see Ratcliffe (2008), ch. 10).

The second point about temperaments is their plurality. One strategy for identifying them is to consider people's very different responses to certain broad philosophical doctrines, such as naturalism. John Cottingham regards the naturalistic picture of the world – of brute contingencies, of our fragile existence in a random universe – as an impossibly 'bleak' picture, within which a 'fulfilled and worthwhile life' becomes impossible (Cottingham (2011b), 299). Yet that same naturalistic doctrine, replete with contingencies and randomness, elicits no such despair from Richard Dawkins, who by contrast regards its picture of the world with a 'feeling of awed wonder' and a 'deep aesthetic passion', which, as Dawkins puts it, 'makes life worth living' (Dawkins (2000), x). Other examples could be offered,

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but it should be clear that there is a plurality of temperaments, evidenced in part by the different existential responses that people report. See further Kidd (forthcoming).

The third point about temperaments is that they are not fixed but can change over time. Ratcliffe, for instance, argues that instances of severe depression can be understood in terms of radical changes in a person's temperament, or, in his terminology, 'existential orientation' (Ratcliffe (2013)). Other experiences which indicate the changeability of temperaments might include religious conversion and experience, periods of intense physical or psychological suffering, and sustained philosophical reflection, amongst others. Therefore temperaments are not static but changeable either naturally or in response to dramatic life experiences, even if our understanding of these changes is, at yet, incomplete. This third point is especially important to my purposes here, for although I agree that temperaments can change over time, they do not, in the overwhelming majority of cases, change through evidential and rational disputation of the sort that secularists – even enlightened ones like Kitcher – propose.

With these points in place, the significance of temperaments to Kitcher's enlightened secularism can be more clearly stated: persons with (what I will call) religious temperaments will be neither epistemically responsive to, nor existentially satisfied with, the secular and naturalistic doctrines that constitute enlightened secularism. So what are religious temperaments? That term has two senses. First, the world may appear metaphysically rich enough to sustain the specific ontological postulates of one or more of the world's religions, for instance, if one has a sense of there being 'something more', but without necessarily being of sufficient strength as to prompt them to interpret this religiously (see Goodenough (1998) and Raymo (1998)). Bas van Fraassen, for example, describes a stance of 'abiding wonder' at the world, one that does not 'cease with the conclusion of [scientific] enquiry', a sense of there always being 'other questions that need to be asked' (van Fraassen (2002), 188, 182).

The second sense is that the world one's temperament discloses may seem deeply religious. It might, say, be deeply teleological, or seem to pulse with divine presence, perhaps as it was for Spinoza who was memorably described by the poet Novalis as being 'a God-intoxicated man' (quoted in Cooper (2000), 114). Similarly, John Dewey writes of the tacit and implicit 'impulses' which constitute a 'religious attitude' (Dewey (1934)) while more recently Leszek Kolakowski described religiosity as a 'feeling of participation in the ultimate reality' which those who possess it can neither deny nor efface (Kolakowski (2001), 1–2). Such testaments to the affective and experiential aspects of religiosity are not the preserve of a small group of 'God-intoxicated' persons, but reflect, at least for some modern commentators, a central and essential aspect of what being religious entails (see, for instance, Wynn (2005)).

There are a plurality of religious temperaments, ranging from powerful predispositions towards theistic belief through to less doctrinally intense

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orientations towards the world (see Cooper (2009) and McGhee (2006)). James himself argued that the 'spiritual excitement' which characterizes religious temperaments need not take the 'character of [mono]theistic belief', because they can also be found in Stoicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism 'in the highest degree possible' (James (2002), 218). These two forms that a religious temperament can take are not intended to be clearly demarcated from one another, for the point will remain that certain persons have certain tacit, inarticulate ways of finding themselves in the world which are describable as religious – and that others clearly do not. As James puts it, 'in the metaphysical and religious sphere, articulate reasons are cogent for us only when our inarticulate feelings of reality have already been impressed in favour of the same conclusions' (James (2002), 62). The cogency and salience of the broad metaphysical and epistemological commitments available are determined, at least in large part, by these temperaments, many of which will be religious in character.

The claim that our broad philosophical predispositions are shaped by one's temperament has important implications for the solubility thesis. Secular and religious persons disagree in their temperamental assessments of the salience and cogency of the explicit epistemological and metaphysical commitments that they dispute. Ratcliffe explains that their disagreement 'stems from contrasting ground-floor intuitions concerning the nature of the world, the scope of our epistemic abilities and the goals to which philosophy should aspire' (Ratcliffe (2008), 252). The debates between secular and religious persons will therefore often reflect fundamental disagreements which indicate competing temperaments, different ways in which those persons find themselves in the world.

Indeed, those conflicting temperaments are so tacit and inarticulate that they often remain invisible to those who have them, becoming visible only during encounters with persons of very different temperament, or through sustained phenomenological enquiry. Such disputes can, if carefully attended to, expose differing 'ground-floor intuitions' about the cogency of the epistemological and metaphysical doctrines being disputed. Ratcliffe develops this point:

> [Feelings] operate as backgrounds to explicit theorising, determining the kinds of debate that are deemed worthy of engaging with, the kinds of argumentative strategy that are favoured, which arguments are taken seriously and which are dismissed altogether as somehow wrongheaded in their premises or general strategy. (Ratcliffe (2008), 243–244)

The differing temperaments of secular and religious persons become visible when their ordinarily unrealized tacit predispositions are challenged. It is worth citing a few of the unwitting testimonies that naturalists offer to their temperaments which indicate both their taken-for-granted-ness and the ways they function to constrain the metaphysical and epistemological views their confessors regard as intelligible or cogent.

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Starting with a notable naturalist and secularist, Dawkins wrote of naturalism that 'this view of life … bleak and cold though it can seem [affords] deep refreshment', a sense of 'facing straight into the strong keen wind of understanding' (Dawkins (2004), 13). For the eminent physicist Steven Weinberg, another noted naturalist, the universe 'seems pointless', and though he acknowledges that some physicists derive 'spiritual satisfaction' from their studies of it, 'I do not' (Weinberg (1992), 256). Echoing this cosmic pessimism, the astronomer Margaret Geller responded to the question, 'Does the universe have a point', with the reply: 'I don't know. It's not clear that it matters … It's just a physical system, what point is there?' (quoted in Lightman & Brawer (1990), 340). For Bertrand Russell, the universe 'is just there, and that is all' (Russell (1997), 529). These testimonies all come from contemporary naturalists, but historical antecedents could be cited at length.

These figures are clearly describing naturalistic temperaments. Their testimonies clearly indicate a certain implicit taken-for-granted sense of what the world is like, one which generates pre-reflective metaphysical and epistemological commitments of which, crucially, they are unaware – often, even when that fact is pointed out to them. The implicit nature of these orientations evidences itself in three ways. The first is that certain questions appear unintelligible or perplexing, such as Geller's flat insistence that the universe is just a 'physical system', which betrays an implicit commitment to metaphysical naturalism which excludes teleological realism. The second is that certain questions do not appear salient, urgent, or meaningful, such as Geller's report that, for her, 'it's not clear that it matters' whether or not the universe is purposeful. That attitude may be quite natural to her, but it would strike many others as simply incredible, and perhaps even as quite impossible; consider its contrast with Jean-Paul Sartre's remark that 'there is no consciousness which is not haunted by … value' (Sartre (1957), 463). But where, for Sartre, some persons are 'haunted' by such questions, others, like Dawkins and Geller, are unmoved by them – those questions do not 'grow hot and alive' within them. The third feature of these naturalistic temperaments is that they affect the naturalists' capacity to engage empathically with persons with different temperaments. Dawkins's cheerful remark about the bracing nature of naturalism may be rousing for fellow naturalists, but they would – and, indeed, does – strike those with alternative temperaments as intolerably facile, hubristic, even disturbing (see Cooper (2002), chs 9–10).

Ratcliffe emphasizes the philosophical consequences of a person's ignorance of the role of temperaments in shaping their experiences and enquiries. Those persons fail to appreciate that the philosophical positions they adopt are rendered plausible and salient by feelings, ones which, moreover, other persons may not share. Without that appreciation, those persons will 'fail to "connect" in philosophical debates' and probably find themselves occupying 'inflexible, dogmatic positions that are immune from critique and that can, at best, be

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confessed' (Ratcliffe (2008), 267). An ignorance of one's own philosophical temperament jeopardizes one's capacity to engage in both introspective and intersubjective understanding, such that we should 'attempt to articulate [them] and thus understand the nature of the disagreement, rather than pursuing argument after argument, all of which fail to hit home' (Ratcliffe (2011), 129).

In the next section, I use James's account of temperaments to criticize Kitcher's proposals for enlightened secularism. The core of my objections is that Kitcher fails to appreciate that human religious sensibilities are grounded in temperaments and that this commits him to an over-optimistic estimation of the solubility of religious belief.

The four theses

The purpose of enlightened secularism, recall, is to both rationally and evidentially challenge religious belief and to provide 'surrogates' for those beliefs. I take each of the four component theses of enlightened secularism and argue that none are tenable.

Before proceeding, a caveat is needed. My argument that religious belief cannot be rationally and evidentially dissolved applies primarily to those with religious temperaments, rather than those whose religiosity is attributable to non-temperamental factors, like cultural conditioning, spiritual exploration, and so on. It strikes me that non-temperamentally religious persons may well be susceptible to the sorts of challenge that Kitcher has in mind; however, it is the temperamentally religious whom secularists are most keen to challenge, and they may also constitute the majority of religious persons.

The solubility thesis

The solubility thesis maintains that religious belief can be undermined or dissolved by cognitive challenge. The enlightened secularist claims that a person who is sufficiently educated and informed, and who enjoys comfortable material circumstances, will find their need for religious belief dissolved. Kitcher connects the solubility thesis with an admirable appeal for social and political programmes, such as the provision of healthcare, education, and social welfare. I do not disagree with those progressive political values, but I do object to the solubility thesis, on two grounds.

The first is an historical objection. The Enlightenment case against religion that Kitcher adopts has become progressively more sophisticated over the last four hundred years as scientific enquiries have proceeded, at the same time that the material conditions of social life have improved considerably (for many people, at least). Yet despite such cognitive and material improvements, religious belief remains strong and in fact has increased; indeed, Kitcher's recent work on secularism is prompted partly by the proliferation of religious belief in the United

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States. The sociohistorical reasons for this are complex, but it strikes me that the ostensible intractability of religious belief can be explained, in part, by James's account of temperaments. For if religious belief is not primarily reflective of cognitive confusion or material poverty then the persistence of religious belief despite cognitive and material improvements is wholly explicable.

The second objection to the solubility thesis is that it relies upon the untenable claim that religious belief is grounded in rational and evidential considerations. That claim is suspect, especially when those considerations are defined in terms of the natural sciences. Naturalistic philosophers of science, like John Dupré, argue that their 'objection to souls, deities, and the like is not mere prejudice', since it reflects the fact that '[t]he claim that there are deities at all remains devoid of evidence' (Dupré (2006), 42–43). That in turn reflects Kitcher's conviction that science and religious disputes turn on the 'basic epistemological thesis' that 'scientific enquiry sets the standards for the acceptability of beliefs' (Kitcher (2008), 11). These objections presuppose both the facile account of the basis of religious belief that I am rejecting and the epistemic thesis, which, I will argue, is untenable. Therefore although Dupré and Kitcher may be right in their objections, they are oblivious to the fact that they are reflective of, and therefore responsive to, naturalistic temperaments – and as Ratcliffe points out, this does not contribute to the project, clearly important to them both, of critically engaging with the beliefs of religious persons.

More generally, contemporary philosophers of religion criticize the claim that religious belief is determined by rational and evidential procedures. Cottingham recently argued that 'it is not as if [a religious person] look[ed] around dispassionately at the world [and] detect[ed] a jolly, happy world and infer[red] a kindly Father Christmas-type deity'. Instead, our religious sensibilities, though shaped by sociohistorical contingencies, reflect the temperaments of 'profoundly spiritual and passionately religious people', and, continues Cottingham, secularists who ignore that fact and maintain that religious beliefs are matters of reasoned reflection therefore 'surely … miss the point' (Cottingham (2005), 23). This is consonant with a venerable tradition of philosophical and theological thought, especially vivid in Kierkegaard's writings, which maintains that genuine religious beliefs are motivated and sustained not by dispassionate reflection on the results of scientific enquiry, but in what Cottingham calls 'deep yearnings', 'sensibilities and impulses' (Cottingham (2009), 15, 19). Those who do not experience those 'yearnings' and 'sensibilities' probably lack a religious temperament, and so will probably find little evidence in their experience of the world for any sort of religious belief, nor find that the evidence offered by others elicits the same responses from them – a point I return to later in the article.

The solubility thesis misrepresents the nature of human religious belief. A religious person does not ordinarily adopt their particular beliefs on the basis of the rational or evidential support they identify for them. Instead, their beliefs are

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invested in a temperamental sense of how they find themselves in the world, one which predisposes them to epistemological and metaphysical commitments, which can later be manifested in explicit doctrines and beliefs. This does not indicate that a person's temperament determines their religiosity, for two related reasons. The first is that, as Cottingham has argued at length, a person must also decide to explore and embrace their religious temperaments. The 'path of spirituality' involves, for Cottingham, a 'practical choice' to become 'immersed in a community', and, indeed, a useful feature of the metaphor of a path of spirituality is the point that one must *decide* to embark upon that path (Cottingham (2005), 140, 6, 17). The second is that entering into a religious life involves one's sustained engagement in religious practices and communities, not just embarking upon the path of spirituality but also staying with it. Cottingham writes that entering into a religious life will involve 'integration' into a 'tradition and community', without which 'one's spiritual impulses could not have form or expression in the first place' (Cottingham (2005), 164). More generally, one function of religious art, practices, and communities is, I take it, to help a person to explore and cultivate their temperamental religious predispositions (see Bennett-Hunter & Kidd (2012)).

Taken together, these remarks indicate that the basis of religious belief is, in many cases, the result of a religious temperament, one which predisposes a person towards epistemological and metaphysical commitments which can, if properly cultivated, be developed into religious beliefs and doctrines. Kitcher is therefore only half-right to state that cognitive activity and psychosocial needs play a role in a person's adoption of and commitment to religious belief, for those activities and needs are much deeper than he supposes, grounded as they are in temperaments which exist and operate prior to rational deliberation and argumentation and which arguably provide the backdrop for those activities.

The epistemic uniformity thesis

The epistemic uniformity thesis maintains that human beings have a uniform receptivity to modes of argumentation and evidence. It includes the presumption that persons who are suitably educated and with normal cognitive faculties will be receptive to the same sorts of argumentation and evidence (and, conversely, find others unpersuasive, uncogent, and so on).

Kitcher's enlightened secularism clearly rests upon this epistemic thesis. Central to that account is the presumption that there exists a single set of legitimate modes of evidence and argumentation, including a set of truths to which epistemically competent human beings should commit themselves. The sort of epistemic consensus at work here is, of course, undermined by hybrid epistemologies, hence Kitcher's worries about them. For a society subjected to hybrid epistemologies will include groups and communities which differ, 'not only in their values but also in their conceptions of knowledge and evidence', such that their 'differing epistemic

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standards yield incompatible factual determinations' (Kitcher (2008), 12). Within that society, policy disputes would become intractable, for '[w]hoever loses will be committed to seeing the outcome as based in a faulty conception of the facts, one rooted in a failure by the victors to respond to what the evidence demands' (Kitcher (2008), 12). The epistemic thesis of enlightened secularism reflects this concern with establishing and maintaining the epistemic consensus upon which public reason and well-ordered science depend.

My objection to the epistemic uniformity thesis is that the salience of particular argumentative and evidentiary modes depends upon one's temperament. Certain modes of argumentation and evidence will be cogent and persuasive to a person of one temperament, yet may be utterly unintelligible to those of another. To cite van Fraassen again, some persons are 'content with the scientific form as exclusively sufficient', whereas others experience an 'abiding wonder' at the world which 'does not cease with the conclusion of enquiry', such that they are perpetually open to further questions and epistemic uncertainties (van Fraassen (2002), 155, 188, 182). Those latter persons cannot, then, easily find themselves in what Kitcher calls 'evidential harmony' with those secularists who find scientific enquiry 'exclusively sufficient' (Kitcher (2011b), §31). More broadly, religious persons often recognize sources of knowledge – ranging from mystical experience to scriptural authority – which secularists and naturalists reject. Although they may share in certain of the secularists' epistemic commitments, they afford them less significance, and might also augment them with others (such as scriptural authority, mystical experience, teleological argumentation from divine purpose and so on; see Kidd (2012)).

The intelligibility and salience of these argumentative and evidentiary modes will be affected by the epistemological and metaphysical commitments of the persons involved, which are, in turn, grounded in a person's temperament. What, for one person, may be a solid and incorrigible form of evidence may, for another, be incidental or at best ancillary, or may not even be recognized at all. Kitcher therefore surely exaggerates when he remarks that science 'supplies ... an all-purpose basis for the practice of giving explanations' – that 'whatever interests people may have, whatever feelings of satisfaction or puzzlement they harbour, there is a set of relationships that, ideally, science presents to us, and [which] brings a distinctive epistemic benefit' (Kitcher (2001), 68). For although the metaphysics and epistemologies associated with the sciences may be highly relevant and satisfying to persons with receptive temperaments, they are far less so for those whose temperaments predispose them to alternative conceptions of what the world is like.

The rejection of the epistemic uniformity thesis entails the adoption of a richer conception of rationality. As James himself warned, the term 'rationality' was 'one of those eulogistic words that both sides claim', even though it has 'too many meanings' for any one conception to predominate (James (1920), 319–320).

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The alternative conceptions of rationality that James proposes included the 'dialectic', 'aesthetic', and 'teleologic' (James (1920), 320–321), which are perhaps represented in the history of philosophy by Spinoza, Hegel, and Bradley (see Cooper (2002), 200–201). James therefore proposes that an appreciation of the diversity of temperaments should issue in a correspondingly diverse understanding of human rationality.

The epistemic uniformity thesis should be rejected once one appreciates that the diversity of temperaments generates an irreducible plurality of intelligible and salient forms of evidence and argumentation, including a diversity of epistemic authorities and explicit articulate doctrines and systems of belief. Such plurality makes epistemic consensus of the sort built into enlightened secularism untenable unless, *per impossible*, one could achieve a homogenization of the diverse temperaments which human beings normally enjoy.

The surrogacy thesis

The surrogacy thesis is the claim that secularism can provide for the ethical and social needs of formerly religious persons. A formerly religious person can adopt secular surrogates for their religious beliefs without a corresponding loss of moral or social security. It is a distinctive and welcome feature of Kitcher's enlightened secularism because it reflects the conviction that secularists cannot simply criticize and undermine religious belief, but must also provide viable 'surrogates' for them, accommodating and respecting 'the religious impulses and concerns that militant secularists currently ignore' (Kitcher (2008), 15). Certainly such earnest concern for the ethical and existential functions of religious belief is an improvement upon the polemics of militant modern atheists; and in any case, there is the pragmatic consideration that religious persons are hardly likely to be persuaded to abandon their beliefs unless the enlightened secularist can offer viable alternatives to them.

The secular surrogates that Kitcher has in mind seem to include the repository of moral and existential norms, principles, exemplars, and possibilities which the history of human civilization offers. The enlightened secularist can, offers Kitcher, 'find value in the teachings of Jesus . . . but also in ideas of the Torah or the Qu-ran, in the sayings of the Buddha, in Socrates and Augustine, Kant and Dewey, Gandhi and Du Bois', and so on (Kitcher (2007a), 153). In other writings, Kitcher affirms an important role for literary and musical sources, such as the works of James Joyce and Richard Wagner (Kitcher (2007b) and Kitcher & Schacht (2004)). These secular surrogates therefore include an 'understanding of thought about what is valuable and worth achieving' from secular and religious sources both ancient and modern from Western and Asian cultures (Kitcher (2007a), 154).

Much more could be said about the idea of secular surrogates for religious belief. Yet even if many issues are set aside, the surrogacy thesis should be rejected for the reason that a person cannot be satisfied by explicit philosophical positions

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that fail to resonate with their temperament. A person whose temperament discloses to them a rich world pulsing with divine purpose is unlikely to be satisfied with philosophical positions – naturalistic ones for example – that fail to acknowledge those feelings. Many secularists, for instance, are not disturbed by the idea that our moral norms are the results of biological and social evolution, as Kitcher himself has argued (Kitcher (2011c)). Yet although many moral naturalists are quite happy to accept that our moral beliefs and sensibilities are the result of biological and social evolution – rather than being divinely ordained, say – many others find that same idea of the contingent biological and social origins of our moral sentiments disturbing and alarming. As James nicely put it, that person would not be 'able fully to share' in moral naturalistic doctrines because of their 'essential foreignness', their incapacity to 'make the[ir] very life … seem real and earnest' (James (1920), 68, 49–50). Although an enlightened secularist may be able to derive moral nourishment from a diversity of figures and traditions – ranging from Jesus to the Buddha – it is hardly clear that persons with other temperaments could do the same.

To develop that claim, consider a recent statement of the surrogacy thesis by the neurologist Geoffrey Miller: 'science will kill religion – not by reason challenging faith, but by offering a more practical, universal and rewarding moral framework for human interaction. A naturalistic moral philosophy will replace the rotting fictions of theological ethics' (Miller (2006), 59). There are three points to note. The first is that Miller's proposal is premised upon the presumption that religious persons can find equal or greater satisfaction in naturalistic moral philosophies to that which theological ethics affords.[2] Yet if the adoption of a theological ethic reflects a temperamental predisposition to a rich metaphysics, that claim hardly seems plausible. The second is that Miller presumes that all persons – religious or otherwise – can and will find naturalistic ethics a 'rewarding moral framework for human interaction'. That, too, is unpersuasive because many religious persons report their disenchantment with the ethical and existential potential of naturalism – for instance, its 'bleakness' (see Cottingham (2011a) and Haught (2006)). The third and most disturbing point is that Miller does not actually recommend engaging religious persons in the sustained rational and evidential debates which – one hopes – would be central to secularism in all its forms.

The surrogacy thesis should therefore be rejected since it naively presupposes the uniformity of human ethical and existential needs, a claim at odds with the fact of diversity of temperaments. Geller and other naturalists may be unmoved by considerations about the purposefulness of the world, but there are many others who cannot entertain such insouciance; indeed, these persons regard the naturalism embraced by Geller with what Kolakowski vividly described as 'metaphysical horror' (Kolakowski (1988)). Such persons will find that the proposed secular surrogates cannot satisfy their existential and teleological needs, for instance because they lack 'those ingredients – purpose and beauty, for

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example – which could serve to guide our activities', but which are present in '[r]icher metaphysical schemes', such as those disclosed by religious temperaments (Cooper (2002), 56). The idea that a certain set of secular doctrines can satisfy the existential and ethical needs of all persons, regardless of their temperaments, should therefore be rejected once one appreciates that those needs are as diverse as the temperaments that underlie them. It may be the case that a person could come to embrace secular surrogates if their underlying temperament changed from a religious to a secular one, but that would require, first, acknowledgement of the existence of temperaments, and, second, a robust mechanism by which changes in those temperaments could be effected. Yet as it stands, enlightened secularism includes neither that acknowledgement nor any such mechanism, if indeed the idea of such mechanisms is even plausible.

The teleological thesis

The teleological thesis is closely related to the surrogacy thesis. It may, in fact, be a specific instance of the surrogacy thesis, for it maintains that a religious person could embrace a naturalist or secular set of beliefs without any consequent loss of purpose or meaningfulness. The preservation of a sense of the purposefulness of human activities is of course central to Kitcher's enlightened secularism, for he concedes that 'ordinary Americans should be unpersuaded' by appeals to the 'disenchantment of nature [as] a wonderful achievement' (Kitcher (2008), 14). The project of enlightened secularism hinges on the possibility of those alternatives being able to offer equal or greater teleological support than their initial religious beliefs.

Kitcher proposes that the teleological sufficiency of secular surrogates can be ensured if they are developed with an informed understanding of the basis of religious belief. Such aetiologies of religious belief are, of course, a common feature of secularist projects, whether they are pursued in evolutionary, psychosocial, or neurological terms (see Hinde (2010)). As Kitcher puts it, secularists must identify the 'impulses that continue to fuel adherence to religion' (Kitcher (2008), 14). Once those impulses are identified and understood the enlightened secularist can identify efficacious means of satisfying them and thereby 'lend deep and enduring support to the processes of living' (Dewey (1934), 15).

Enquiry into the aetiology of religious belief is not in itself objectionable. James emphasized the importance of naturalistic enquiry to our understanding of human religiosity, proposing that 'the philosophy of the future' should appeal to the sciences, 'taking them more and more elaborately into account' (James (1920), 331). But although James grants the sciences an important role in our understanding of human religiosity, he also insisted that those enquiries were valuable only insofar as they 'broadened and thickened up' our understanding of the '*particularities of life*', rather than effacing them (James (1920), 330).

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Naturalistic enquiry into the aetiology of religious belief should aim to enrich our understanding of those beliefs, for instance, by enabling greater articulation of their temperamental basis; as James nicely puts it, it is 'surely a merit in a philosophy' that it can 'make the very life we lead seem real and earnest' (James (1920), 49). Since the 'earnestness' of our life is informed by our underlying temperamental sense of how the world is, the question of which doctrines and beliefs can fulfil that need will depend upon the temperament one has; and it is clear that certain temperaments cannot be satisfied by naturalistic doctrines and beliefs.

Since Kitcher does not acknowledge the diversity of temperaments, his claims about secular surrogates are over-optimistic. Although some persons will find that secular doctrines satisfy their teleological needs, it is clear enough that there are many others for whom the meaningfulness of their lives and activities must answer to something 'deeper'. Such persons are those for whom, in Robert Nozick's phrase, the foundations upon which 'the significance of our lives' is invested must go 'all the way down' (Nozick (1981), 599). It strikes me that many forms of religious temperaments endow people with intense teleological imperatives which cannot be satisfied by appeals to, say, the stability of their practices, commitments, and forms of life, since their question will, in each case, be upon the grounds of *their* meaningfulness. Those persons will, therefore, remained unsatisfied with secular surrogates which appeal to human figures, contingent social practices, and naturalistic ethics, for their feeling will be that, as David E. Cooper puts it, 'whatever remains within the precincts of the human [world] always inspires the question of its own significance' (Cooper (2002), 271).

Clearly such tenacious demands for deep teleological foundations – ones which go 'all the way down' – will seem peculiar and perhaps perverse to many naturalists for whom there is nothing 'deep' to ground those demands. Yet the fact that secularists and naturalists are unmoved by such concerns does not impugn the significance for those persons who are, just as my absolute indifference to participating in or observing sport does not entail any absurdity or error on the part of those who play football, watch rugby, and so on. Kitcher is overly optimistic in his judgement that religious persons can, after due instruction, find teleological satisfaction in secular surrogates. For although both persons with religious and with secular temperaments 'wonder why their lives matter' it seems clear that only the latter can be satisfied with an appeal to something like 'a space for concerted ethical action' (Kitcher (2008), 14). The earlier remarks on the 'bleakness' of naturalism which those with religious temperaments often report is reflective of the main point that the teleological sufficiency of secular surrogates will in large part be determined by the temperament that a person has.

I judge that Kitcher is overly optimistic to suppose that a set of secular surrogates could satisfy the teleological needs of persons with religious temperaments. It may be that certain temperamentally religious persons could be satisfied with certain of those surrogates, perhaps because their teleological

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needs are less intense. But that concession still undermines the enlightened secularists' hope that they can provide effective surrogates for religious belief, at least for the majority of religious persons. Cottingham puts the point well in his objection that 'secular analogues' for many religious beliefs and doctrines tend to appear 'inauthentic' to religious persons, such that they lack 'power', no longer seeming 'intelligible and attractive' (Cottingham (2009), 157, 15, 95).[3] It is clear that such concerns are both genuine and, for those who feel them, profound in a way that renders Kitcher's claim that secular responses to them can be provided implausible; and so the idea of secular surrogates, and the teleological thesis it incorporates, should be rejected.

The four theses rejected

I conclude that the four component theses of enlightened secularism as Kitcher develops it should be rejected. The solubility thesis rests upon an inadequate account of the nature of religious belief. The epistemic uniformity thesis neglects the differential assessments of the salience and intelligibility of modes of argumentation and evidence which the plurality of temperaments generates. Furthermore, the surrogacy and teleological theses wrongly presuppose that secular beliefs and doctrines could satisfy the ethical and existential needs of persons with religious temperaments. Of course, it is quite possible that certain religious persons might be attracted to and even persuaded by secular alternatives, since temperaments are changeable; however, they are neither as changeable as Kitcher needs them to be, nor changeable in the ways that he proposes, for instance through evidential and rational challenge.

Prospects for solubility

Since the four component theses of Kitcher's enlightened secularism appear, in part or in whole, in many other secularist projects, it is worth ending by considering some of the wider implications of my arguments. My hope is that the suggestions which follow will contribute to the facilitation of more productive debate about science, religion, and secularism, and that they will be taken in this spirit. For although I do not agree with many of the specifics of Kitcher's enlightened secularism, I do share his concerns about the 'deeply fragmented' nature of modern democratic societies, and agree about the importance of the 'enormous endeavour' of responding to that fragmentation in a humane manner (Kitcher (2008), 15). With these remarks in place, let me offer what I judge to be the five main implications of my remarks for debates about secularism.

The first is the need for an appreciation of the existence, role, and plurality of temperaments, especially of their role in shaping our epistemological and

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metaphysical predispositions and our existential needs. James emphasized that an understanding of the nature of temperaments should also entail that one identifies and articulates one's own, a self-reflective critical awareness which was, he lamented, all too often lacking:

> I show my feelings; why will they not show theirs? I know they *have* a personal feeling about the through-and-through universe, which is entirely different from mine, and which I should very likely be much the better for gaining if they would only show me how. (James (1912), 278)

Too many debates concerning science and religion proceed on the assumption that our engagement with the issues raised – about the existential adequacy of naturalism, say – can admit of one-size-fits-all answers; for instance, that there is a fact of the matter about whether or not naturalism is 'bleak'. But those debates are likely to result in a stalemate unless the interlocutors appreciate that judgements about the existential adequacy of naturalism is affected by the temperament one has. So although Cottingham finds naturalism 'bleak' where Dawkins finds it 'bracing', it is a mistake to suppose that one of them is right and the other wrong. Once the role of temperaments in shaping our existential needs is appreciated, it should become easier to identify unproductive debates, and either avoid them or reconfigure them into more tractable forms.

The second is the point that understanding of these temperaments can aid the project of critical enquiry. I endorse Ratcliffe's judgement that phenomenological insights have an essential role to play in philosophical enquiry. Recall that, for him, the conception of philosophical disputation as simply a matter of 'trading arguments [and] formulating positions on the basis of reason and evidence' is naïve, since it betrays an ignorance of the fact that a certain position 'comes ready-made in the way that one finds oneself in a world' (Ratcliffe (2008), 244). If that is the case, then it becomes important to appreciate that any given philosophical doctrine will engender different affective responses from different persons, varying degrees of conviction and salience which affect how, if at all, one embraces or engages with it. As Christopher Hookway puts it, our doubt about a certain proposition or argument often has a 'phenomenological immediacy' – the argument *seems right* or the position *feels wrong* – and such 'felt doubt' is not 'the conclusion of a complex reflective argument', even though it is clearly essential to the project of rational enquiry (Hookway (2002), 256). Understanding how temperaments regulate conviction, doubt, and other epistemic evaluations is, I think for obvious reasons, essential to productive critical enquiry, not least because it indicates that philosophical disagreements may reflect different 'ground-floor intuitions', as Ratcliffe called them, rather than necessarily indicating the obstinacy, dogmatism, or ignorance of one's interlocutors.

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The third point is that it is mistaken, in my judgement, to establish naturalism as the epistemic arbiter in debates about science, religion, and secularism. Although it is, of course, perfectly intelligible for secularists to adopt naturalism as their philosophical position – for which see Ruse (2010) and Dawes (2011) – caution should be exercised when invoking it as the default position in those debates. This is not to reject naturalism, but simply to recognize that commitment to it can be, and I think often is, temperamental, and other persons, including one's interlocutors, often have different temperaments. Clearly a naturalist may be persuaded – to repeat a remark of Kitcher's cited earlier – that 'science supplies an all-purpose basis for the practice of giving explanations', no matter what 'interests [they] have [or] feelings of satisfaction or puzzlement . . . they harbour' (Kitcher (2001), 68). But those with strongly religious temperaments will not find such claims cogent or salient, and it is important for the naturalist to incorporate recognition of that fact and to find ways to respond to it in a way that both avoids an untenable relativism and honours the demands of critical debate. Identifying and 'confessing' one's temperament is, I think, a good place to start.

The fourth implication concerns pluralism. If one presumes that the plurality of temperaments which James describes will remain fairly constant, then it seems that no single set of philosophical doctrines and positions will be able to satisfy all persons. This is not the perhaps otiose point that, as it happens, people tend to disagree – surely a boring truism – but the more substantive point that the very idea of epistemological consensus, of the kind built into the idea of secular public reason, is fundamentally implausible. Equally implausible is the hope that any single set of doctrines, whether secular or not, could satisfy the ethical and existential needs of human beings.[4] What is needed is, then, 'recognition of pluralism', an 'appreciation of th[e] rich and varied' ways in which human beings experience and understand the world, one reflective of the plurality of underlying temperaments (Cooper (1997), 123, 122). It is worth noting, too, that recognition of pluralism does not entail a crass relativism, since, for one thing, our temperaments tend to prompt us to engage in critical disputation with others, and, for another, temperaments can change, sometimes through such disputation.[5]

The fifth and final implication I would like to draw concerns epistemic virtues.[6] Let me focus on just one such virtue, epistemic humility, which is cited by Ratcliffe, who argues that certain temperaments – or, in his terminology, 'existential orientations' – are liable to inflexibility and dogmatism because they fail to incorporate a sense of their own 'incompleteness and fragility', of their dependence on, and status as, a contingent existential orientation; by contrast, certain orientations encourage 'humility', a sense of their being one amongst others, and which might 'fall away, or change' (Ratcliffe (2008), 267).[7] It is this sense of contingency, incompleteness, and fragility which, argues Ratcliffe, is too often absent in naturalism, which 'incorporate[s] a comfortable obliviousness

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to the fact that one does occupy a contingent existential orientation', and is, moreover, characterized by the 'suffocating certainty that some contingent set of epistemic practices will ultimately be able to encompass absolutely everything' (Ratcliffe (2008), 265, 267). Once a person becomes aware of and sensitive to their dependence upon one amongst a plurality of contingent temperaments, dogmatism and inflexibility should become increasingly difficult to embrace.[8]

These five points should be interpreted as further lines of enquiry. Certainly each of them can be developed further to assess both their merits as they stand and their possible applicability to debates concerning science, religion, and secularism. It is also worth noting that similar proposals have been made by other writers, including ones from traditions outside phenomenology. To take just one example, Paul Feyerabend, in his last book, called for a 'sense of spontaneous tolerance' of the 'open, changeable, ambiguous' nature of the 'abundance' of ways of conceiving of and comporting oneself within the world. Like Ratcliffe, Feyerabend also emphasized that this tolerance should take the form not of a 'hands-off' or 'anything goes' relativism, but rather of 'passionate argument' coupled with 'a quieter, more wondering attitude' (Feyerabend (2001), xi). Here one finds an emphasis upon the many ways of finding oneself within a world – though Feyerabend does not put it like that – alongside an appreciation of pluralism coupled with an insistence upon epistemic virtues and an insistence upon critical engagement.[9]

Conclusions

Kitcher's enlightened secularism is one of the most attractive contemporary forms of secularism available today. Using James's account of philosophical temperaments, I argued, however, that it fails because its four component theses are untenable. Religious sensibilities are not, in the main, grounded not in rational and evidential considerations, but in a tacit and implicit sense of reality which can be disclosed through phenomenological enquiry. These criticisms of Kitcher do offer positive prospects, though, for his wider concern of identifying ways of resolving disputes between science and religion. The answer lies, I suggested, in an appreciation of the role and contingency of temperaments. This should issue in an appreciation of the irreducible plurality of the ways in which human beings conceive of and live within the world, and of the epistemic virtues which should accompany the recognition of such pluralism. If such virtuous pluralism is our best response to disputes between persons with competing naturalistic and religious orientations, then a new and more attractive set of strategies becomes available to us. Developing and applying those strategies will hopefully be a fruitful project for future studies.[10]

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Notes

1. The significance of this point becomes clear later in the article, since it informs my remarks on the need for a wider conception of rationality than that which informs many secular projects, including Kitcher's.
2. It is visible in the idea that one's choice of moral theory is a matter of assessing and weighing up the different available theories. That idea is suspect, I think, because certain persons feel what James might call a 'temperamental' aversion to certain sorts of moral theory – some find deontological ethics stern and rigid, whereas others find it reassuringly stable and secure, and so on. I will not develop this proposal about 'moral temperaments' any further here.
3. Cottingham is here criticizing Wielenberg (2005).
4. James, after all, once suggested that the history of philosophy could be understood as a 'clash of temperaments', for example, between 'tough-minded' rationalists and 'tender-minded' empiricists (quoted in Ratcliffe (2008), 245).
5. As Ratcliffe puts it, such recognition is 'indispensable to critical, philosophical dialogue' because it facilitates 'conviction, doubt [and] openness to change' (Ratcliffe (2011), 129). As should be clear from that remark, critical dialogue, doubt, and openness can all result in one's changing one's views, beliefs, and so on.
6. See further Baehr (2011) and Roberts & Wood (2007).
7. It is worth noting, too, that Ratcliffe has recently argued that 'a phenomenological stance can be integrated into our attempts to engage with the experiences of others', and thereby encourage a form of *empathy* (Ratcliffe forthcoming).
8. Cooper identifies a further sense of humility, reflective of a recognition that the 'backdrop' against which meaningful human activities take place is not of our making, that our 'identities' are 'shaped and bequeathed' by a certain cultural inheritance; and, furthermore, that the appropriate attitude to take to that 'backdrop' and 'inheritance' is one of gratitude, to regard them as 'gifts' (Cooper (2002), 349-350). Exotic or abstruse as such remarks may seem, it is worth noting that they have a venerable pedigree, including Eckhart, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, certain Buddhist schools, and Daoism. See further Cooper (2012).
9. For more on Feyerabend's views, see Kidd (2013).
10. I offer my thanks to an audience at the 2010 Applied Phenomenology workshop at the University of Durham, especially to Matthew Ratcliffe and Benedict Smith, and to Philip Kitcher for a long and helpful conversation about his views.

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