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I review the book from the perspective of assessing it as a methodological progression of the discipline of religious experience. This is a general overview which attempts to highlight some possible developmental consequences and linguistic/ideological issues inherent in the emergence of a contemporary discipline of Religious Experience. Taves writes from within the established framework of Religious Experience for example referring to William James and Emile Durkheim and others, there is a rich scholarly base. Taves also drawing on Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Cognitive Science and Philosophy in terms of the wider scope of disciplines. Taves establishes her work by referring to the researchers in each field from a 'study of religions' perspective. The multidisciplinary approach describes overall, a foundational methodological assessment tool. What is established from the first chapter is a strong lineage knowledge focusing more primarily on the last 35 years as indicative of an emergent approach which is the main objective of the book.

In some sense Ann Taves is presenting something that is well overdue, a sustained union of disciplines, the establishment of a non-ideological, scientific, foundational approach for the field of Religious Experience research, which attempts to account for many aspects of human experiences. "Experience 'deemed' (Ibid) to be religious. may well be one the most important but extremely simple descriptive adaptations to the knowledge structures. What this does move towards releasing the researcher from a priori, embedded, enculturated, assumptions, which are entwined in classical research methods for many historical and political reasons. To put this another way, who decides what is and is not religious? The researchers should not make assumptions, the researcher can only report what has been 'deemed' religious or 'special' through the personal testimony of participants in the field. 'Deemed' (ibid:21-23) creates a natural delimiter in the field and allows for, on the one hand, a narrowing of scope in the hands of the researcher, which can lead to clearer and more focused distinctions with the research and on the other and chance to discover relationship to other 'special' (Ibid) aspects of experience.

Each chapter presents a fairly easy to understand layout which primarily covers religion, religious experience, explanation, comparison, including methodological and even philosophical moments of clarity. Each chapter carries its corresponding conclusion and reference to experiments and data. Therefore the book itself can be taken up in a modular fashion without necessarily needing to serially read the book from cover to cover in the first instance. It can be a handbook.

Ann Taves creates a process oriented approach which seeks to level the field without normalising it, therefore, the approach is non-reductive. It does not seek to level all experiences under one banner of religious experience. A building block approach which is akin to a modular approach as seen in architecture, product and software design. For Taves it allows for a vast scope of combinational outputs with their according descriptions given by participants, who themselves participated in what is a religious experience for them. Not all things are equally deemed religious but can still have a special meaning which essentially leaves the door open for further distinctions at a latter date, part of further considerations perhaps?

Encompassing an approach to dreams and their interpretation. Taves is inclusive of what may fall into categories other than the religious descriptor, elements, that possibly that have in the past too easily been ascribed as religious, that is pre-cognitively from a research perspective.

Ann Taves work is both seminal and prototype because although it establishes a clear direction for the discipline, as a prototype, contains dialectical and ideological hangovers from a previous times. These hangovers appear as ideological insertions which are the signature of the socio-political history what Taves refers to as 'convert presuppositions'. Further aspects to 'presuppositions' lies in [terms used] which represent signs/signifiers/cognitive structures (such as hierarchy) embedded in the languages of the researchers. From that perspective there are several words which bring with them ideological and dialectical overtones. The so called divide between academic disciplines is equally held in place by the continual use of the word multi-disciplinary, a problem perhaps academia in general?

In order to reconsider Ann Taves's work we as researchers should note that the multidisciplinary concept is temporary at best transitional, it enforces, through dialectics, the academic divisions that once existed within the scholarly world as a whole, which are breaking down faster than we can write. The study of religious experience requires an extremely broad range of understanding which can be termed a polymathic, poly-historic. What I mean is an improvement to calling for a multidisciplinary study is to call for a poly-historic approach which by nature implies and includes the history of many disciplines, what may need to be called for is an institutionalised (pedagogical) reconstitution and adaption towards the production of researchers who have the approach of poly-maths, which, I tend to think, is a rational development of the transitory multidisciplinary model.

Multi-disciplinary groups can lack the critical analysis which applies to each independent discipline, that is to say that the critical history of each discipline can be less prominent in a multidisciplinary environment which is primarily concerned with creating academically balanced methodologies. Cognitive Anthropology is an example of a discipline that has emerged as a composite of two independent disciplines, so therefore needs to develop its own critique, the composite model is understandably worthwhile within data modelling as well as institution modelling. I am suggesting that a composite disciplined Methodological approach will emerge in relation to Religious Experience, which is of itself, and requires a vast scope of disciplines in order to fairly and reasonably approach the subject, for me this is the natural progression of Taves works.

Ann Taves shows that there is a dialectical relationship between ascription, sui-generis and or structural approaches and that these aspects can be reasonably left out of the discourse within and around Religious Experience nor can they be assumed. There appears to be a natural place for elements of structuralism and elements of ascription or sui-generis considerations. These methodological approaches have their benefits as well as their critiques. However, the overall goal is for the researcher to arrive in the field with a comprehensive yet fluid approach.

What remains obvious by its absence is a sustained conversation about the mediating the experience of the researcher in terms of the capacity to bring ideological presuppositions, emotions, into the discourse which have bled into to language through cultural usage, these terms reflecting the history of research (eg belief, spiritual, visions, unconscious, higher consciousness, dreaming, unintentional, special) troublesome terms that require, in themselves, a deep analyses and working definitions as there are several way points in history that have shaped the language and understandings that surrounds certain phenomena, these are not ignored by Taves in one sense but lightly touched on.

The future of Religious Experience is an area that almost requires an umbrella term such as “Deep and Meaningful Experience’ (DME) which can serve to encompass religious, mystical, special and ordinary experiences leading to specified categories of experience such as religious, mystical, special etcetera as modular descriptors. Ultimately even the word religious has to be withdrawn except when it appears in personal testimony, because the word religious has itself historically, been born out of ascription. In my view.

I appreciate that this review is a general summary that aims to highlight elements of *Religious experience reconsidered* that have not particularly been picked up in other reviews. I do not claim here, to have covered all aspects of the book and have presented a particular perspective. The book is a welcomed addition to the discourse that surrounds the discipline of Religious Experience and will most likely, if it has not already, constitute a major forward development into the widening field of Religious Experience. The book is essential reading for researchers interested in the study of religions if not only because of its contemporary setting. Published in 2011.

Reference:

Taves A, 2011 - *Religious Experience Reconsidered - a building block approach to the study of religion and other special things*. Princeton University Press. New Jersey.