

of the most important elements in the tragedies of Euripides. The final decision is usually brought about in an irrational manner by means of the *deus ex machina*, human sacrifice, or human redeemer. Euripides stands in the center of a lively cult. But his relationship to it was neither uncritical nor naive. He was neither one engaging in enlightenment nor a believer. Many of the dissonances derive from the personality of the poet himself.

A discussion of changes in form and content in Euripidean tragedies forms the background for the development observed in the study on prayers. A comparison of prayers in the early and later work of Euripides demonstrates many significant changes. Not only is there a quantitative increase but also a qualitative difference in the use of prayers in the Euripidean tragedies. In Euripides are the first signs of a development of Greek religion in which the gods have lost those human qualities which make a personal relation between deity and mortal possible.

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Outka, Gene, and Paul Ramsey, eds. *Norm and Context in Christian Ethics*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1968. 419 pp. \$10.00.

Gene Outka and Paul Ramsey, both teachers of religion at Princeton University, here bring together an anthology of essays which contribute to the debate on the new morality. The editors have attempted to incorporate a broad spectrum of viewpoints including those of Roman Catholic theologians, Protestant theologians, and moral philosophers.

The main discussion is carried on in sections I (Virtue, Principles, and Rules) and IV (Situation Ethics: Defense and Critique) with sections II and III (Natural Law and Reformation Themes respectively) supplying perspective and background material. The natural law discussion is especially pertinent. This section, dominated by Catholic theologians, represents a reassessment of natural theology which brings this type of theology out from its traditionally casuistic use to a broader, more secure footing. There is still the plea for universal norms, but not for norms that hold true in all cases.

Although it is impossible in a few words of analysis to do justice to many pages pregnant with ethical dicta and implications, I will try to bring it all together by focusing on the two great polarities in this anthology—those expressed by Paul Ramsey and by Joseph Fletcher, a leading proponent of situation ethics. The analysis will be divided into three areas: love, situation, and law.

Not one of these moralists disagrees with Fletcher that *love* is the absolute norm in Christian ethics. But all the authors, including philosopher Donald Evans who ostensibly holds basic agreement with situationism, differ fundamentally with Fletcher in their development of love. To Ramsey *agape*, as the ultimate norm, could also be translated as faithfulness. This more accurate meaning is possible because he derives love from a knowledge of "God's gracious acts"; this knowledge in turn enlightens the "ought" for man's own actions. Further, the requirements of faithfulness, entailed by

love, take the form of covenants of loyalty in which Ramsey sees life as a quality of being where fidelity between man and wife are taken with utmost seriousness. Fletcher holds love as absolute, but he refuses to give it an ontological basis. He posits love by faith (just as one presumably would also posit egoism or self-realization, for example) and then after taking this imperative stance, he lets reason run its course in supplying content. In place of a defined system Fletcher develops an abstract idea of love which at its best is act-utilitarianism, and at its worst is mere egoism. Whether love is motive, means, or goal, or possibly all three, is not made clear by Fletcher.

Without exception, these authors, like Fletcher, are "situational" in that they take the situation seriously. For instance Ramsey says, "The justification of an action always depends on some feature or features in that act's proper description" (p. 79). No one pleads for recognition of the "great 'specificity'" of actions more unequivocally than Ramsey. Whereas the situation is *one* consideration for the non-situationists, it is *the* consideration for the situationists. Fletcher begins and ends with the context. Of course the situationist appeals to love for direction, but love merely makes the need for direction imperative, according to Mitchell. The situationist's only content is the situation. Fletcher assumes that everyone will naturally know *what* love demands if he understands the situation fully.

Ramsey especially rebels against Fletcher's idea that every action is an unrepeatable spiritual venture. He does not agree that moral sensitivity is at odds with moral norms. And Ramsey is not alone. Four of the writers at least allude to their hierarchy of norms which they deem necessary in doing ethics. Regarding norms as absolute, Ramsey's basic point, in opposition to Fletcher, is that the absolute norm is appealed to *through* the strata of content-principles and not sought directly. For example, the question of whether to commit adultery appeals *through* the higher principle of marital fidelity to the ultimate norm of love and does not directly appeal to love from the adulterer's bed. The careful work of Ramsey on the side of the non-situationist is not matched by Fletcher for the situationist. It would have been profitable if such had been the case.

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Phillips, Anthony. *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law: A New Approach to the Decalogue*. New York: Schocken Books, 1970. 218 pp. \$10.50.

As the title of the book suggests, the author attempts to distinguish the Decalogue from Israel's other law codes by designating it as criminal law. In this way the Decalogue is set apart from other types of law in Israel, such as civil, customary, family, and cultic. Central to the author's work is the contention that the Decalogue constituted ancient Israel's pre-exilic criminal law code, which the nation received at Sinai following the Exodus from Egypt.