

Now as before, Habermas is, for me, a tantalizing figure. On the one hand, he refuses the extremism of a one-dimensional concept of reason such as naturalism and/or scientism represent/s; on the other hand, he never quite achieves the "more comprehensive concept of reason," or "the multi-dimensional concept of reason" (19, 16), that he apparently holds up as the relevant philosophical ideal. Just what "the cognitive substance," or the "profane truth content," of the religions is ever remains uncertain. Instead of proceeding methodically and making the necessary distinctions as matters of principle, he seems simply to pick and choose, revealing in doing so how much he is still limited by a secularistic understanding of the nature of things. This is, to my mind, disclosed in an interesting way when he says, characteristically, that "post-metaphysical thought is prepared to learn from religion but remains agnostic in the process" (17). If this means anything other than that post-metaphysical thought is prepared to learn everything from religion but the one thing that religion is prepared to teach, Habermas never makes clear why one should think so.

Of course, it is at least possible that he, in his way, is only doing what I'm trying to do in mine—and that what he dismisses as "metaphysics" is really only the kind of quasi-, pseudo-factual, supernaturalist confusion that much metaphysics does indeed continue to be, adjectivally if not substantively. But, as I've said, he's a tantalizing figure—and not least because it seems impossible to determine whether, or what extent, this is anything more than a possibility.

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