career, I feel free to include them. First, where I see James equivocating between phenomenological and naturalistic descriptions early in his career, and moving toward the former and away from the latter in his radical empiricism, Pawelski does not. Moreover, Pawelski vacillates between these two modes of description throughout the text without explicitly letting the reader in on the import of the distinction. Second, where I notice crucial equivocations between the personal and the individual throughout James’s writings, Pawelski does not. For example, is Pawelski’s description of James’s psychology a description of the self qua individual, and if not, does this contribute to a defense of his individualism? Navigating these equivocations means not only telling us what the individuating factor is (Pawelski does this, highlighting inconsistencies in James’s writings), but also telling us whether this can be identified in a phenomenological or in a naturalistic description. Last, Pawelski does not take on the question of whether James’s radical individualism and pluralism leads to nominalism. The way Pawelski reads James’s mature metaphysics, which stresses the continuity and reality of relations, suggests to me that his later writing would attenuate his earlier nominalism. However, by insisting that hermeneutic key to reading James’s later metaphysics is the earlier physiology and psychology, Pawelski potentially deters us from reading James that way. Despite these misgivings, (some of which are a function of my problems with James, not with Pawelski’s reading of him), I am thankful for such a clear and focused book on James’s individualism, I commend the pragmatic and edifying thrust of the final section, and I recommend it to those interested in the many tensions and flights of brilliance, which emerge when we read “that adorable genius,” William James. 2

Seth Vannatta Southern Illinois University Carbondale


The overarching aim of Flanagan’s fine volume is to provide a naturalistic account of meaning, or more

precisely meaningful living, which avoids, on the one hand, the pitfalls of scientism - according to Flanagan, the position that everything worth expressing can be expressed in a scientific idiom - and the (largely religious) problem of epistemically irresponsible magical thinking on the other, all while somehow accounting for enchanted and significant lives. This is no small task, but Flanagan is up for the challenge. The result is what he calls “eudaimonics” (aka, eudaimonistic scientia), a naturalistic account of how human flourishing is possible that is both scientifically credible (i.e., empirical), and philosophically enlightened - in short, one that is epistemically responsible. Eudaimonics is “based on reasoning about the evidence, historical and contemporary, as to what flourishing is (including its varieties), and what its causes and constituents are” (2). Though “not itself a science in the modern sense,” eudaimonics is systematic philosophizing which “is continuous with science and therefore takes the picture of persons that science engenders seriously” (2). Flanagan offers eudaimonics as one, but not the way, for naturalists to respond to those who claim that the scientific view disenchant the world by draining it of meaning and significance, a problem Dewey addressed repeatedly. Flanagan claims in Deweyan fashion that, “The scientific image, if conceived carefully, need not be reductive, eliminativist, or disenchanting” (36). For this to work, however, the scope of what counts as legitimate evidence must be expanded beyond narrowly construed scientific categories and methodologies, since “science hardly answers all legitimate questions” and therefore it hardly “holds all the cards” (66).

While Flanagan’s naturalism requires him to take the (neuro)scientific picture of humans very seriously, he rounds it out with a range of insightful influences from Aristotle to James and Dewey, from Buddhism to positive psychology. Flanagan’s first two chapters address the issue of consciousness and meaning. He comes out as a neurophysicalist, advocating “subjective realism” or the idea that certain mental events properly have first-personal feel as part of the objective states of affairs they are. But embodiment is also crucial; the self is a “mind/brain-in-the-body-in-the-world-with-a-history” (68). In explaining consciousness naturalistically, meaning is not only not explained away, but naturalism about consciousness acknowledges its cognitive-conative-affective nature and thus proves compatible with normativity about
eudaimonics. Chapter three investigates the (in)compatibility of Buddhism and science based on differences in epistemological standards and with a focus on evolution and mind-science. This chapter at times feels discontinuous; the tie that binds is Flanagan’s concern – as a practicing Buddhist – with a tempered Buddhism as a fruitful eudaimonic path. The fourth chapter argues for a naturalistic ethics from a normative mind-science perspective. Flanagan invokes the Dewey of Human Nature and Conduct as an exemplar of the view he is advancing. Ethics is not made nonsense by the scientific view, which shows we are both individualistic and social, but neither is ethics some separate province apart from the human and physical sciences. Rather, it is simply the application of knowledge from the specific sciences for the illumination and guidance of our actions. Interesting issues of statistical normality as measures of mental health provides the backbone of the discussion here and the ensuing chapter furthers this theme by examining neuroscientific findings on happiness and positive illusions.

Flanagan hits his stride here and the discussion is the most creative and fresh in these two chapters. Rich implications for philosophy of medicine are to be mined, and Flanagan seems overtly and rightly to blur the lines between health and flourishing. Most especially this blurring occurs when Flanagan discusses the relationship between eudaimonia and mental health. Being healthy means being statistically normal but one who is eudaimon (or a bodhisattva) is statistically abnormal, yet “embodies the most excellent norms” (111). Flanagan contends, again correctly, that the norms of health come both from within and without medicine, and he echoes Foss’s The End of Modern Medicine with an argument for downward causation (the idea that mental states can measurably influence physiological states) and by implication, that mind can influence health (though he does not pursue this latter point). He does however get into neuroscientific research on happiness, noting that while brain scans can reliably detect “where” happiness occurs, they cannot get at the content of happiness, what Flanagan calls “mattering,” which still falls squarely in the normative realm. Brain scans cannot tell us whether the “happiness” is hedonistic or eudaimonistic (for this we still must depend upon first-person and third-person narratives about what matters for those individuals whose prefrontal cortices appropriately light up on brain scans) but there remain good reasons not
to endorse hedonistic happiness. There is a wealth of emerging research indicating that individuals who regularly engage in meaningful activities such as volunteering have measurably better health outcomes than those who do not. It would be interesting to see what kind of assessments regarding the scientific image of health Flanagan would make in light of these data. The closest we get is a related discussion of research on meditating monks. The final chapter investigates the possibilities for a naturalized spirituality. Scientific explanations for the God-impulse are offered here, but with the discussion of positive illusions from the previous chapter lingering in the background, these come off in a more courteous and frank manner than Dawkins’ God-delusion arguments. The complaints here are standard and uninteresting – theistic religions tend toward dogmatism and dogmatism tends toward violence; assertions regarding creation, miracles, and afterlife are epistemically immature. Creation stories (or attempts to answer the question Why is there something rather than nothing?) are the least problematic, because the question is by its nature unanswerable, hence any story we give is just that - a story. The problem comes when creation stories are presumed to assert rather than express, when they are taken to be more than myth. Rather than representing literal accounts, theisms should be taken as expressive of “meaning and moral glue.” In other words, we should move away from theism toward spiritualism. The most compelling stretch of the final chapter is the few pages Flanagan devotes to his own spiritual autobiography. Having built a sound case in the preceding chapters for meaningful and enchanted lives in which the scientific image of humans is taken seriously, this is an anticlimactic dénouement. Still, in all, this is a book very much worth the reading.

Seth Joshua Thomas
Fordham University


Elizabeth Cooke has written a very helpful and illuminating book on Peirce’s theory of inquiry with special attention to his fallibilism. Fallibilism is a consistent feature of Peirce’s sometimes changing description of inquiry, and Cooke demonstrates the