

plify protragic or procomic viewpoints, and sometimes both. His first four chapters distinguish the tragic from the comic vision; the remaining five chapters apply these views to traditional Eastern and Western religions, and also to more modern religions. No religion is entirely tragic or comic, as Morreall admits, but he argues that Hinduism and Buddhism are relatively procomic, Judaism and Christianity have both procomic and protragic elements, and Islam fits neither viewpoint very well. In the later chapters, the arguments are far more qualified and tentative, and Morreall does not ultimately justify the application of these categories to the analysis of different religions. Still, undergraduates of any level, provided they have some familiarity with these genres, would benefit from the sharply drawn contrast between the individualistic, rigid, and emotionally engaged tragic hero and the protagonist of comedy, who is more social, flexible, and emotionally detached. Morreall explicitly favors the comic view, and this should prove usefully provocative as well. The book is consistently clear, well written, and tightly organized.—*P. Aronoff, Cornell University*

37-3867 BF1754 97-18199 CIP
Parsons, William B. **The enigma of the oceanic feeling: revisioning the psychoanalytic theory of mysticism.** Oxford, 1999. 252p bibl index afp ISBN 0-19-511508-2, \$45.00

Parsons (religious studies, Rice University) revisits psychoanalytic understandings of "oceanic feeling," beginning with a study of correspondence between Freud and Romain Rolland, a French humanitarian mystic and social critic who invited Freud to examine mysticism and to regard oceanic feeling (a sense of oneness with the world) as the source of genuine religious sentiment. The author argues that Freud's presentation of his case—that oceanic feeling drew from a narcissistic union between mother and infant that often served later pathology—was based on a misunderstanding of aspects of Rolland's letters. Parsons studies their correspondence (which, footnotes included, comprises a third of this volume) in the contexts of cultural-historical, developmental, and comparative mysticism scholarship. He systematically examines classic, adaptive, and transformational views, arguing for depathologizing oceanic feeling and clearing the way for fresh discussions of the enigmatic experience. On the ground of "deconstructed" Freudian notions of oceanic feeling, Parsons critiques Rolland's understandings, discusses Eastern and Western mysticism, and defends the legitimacy of mystical ways of knowing. His "dialogical" approach maintains an openness throughout. Appropriate for graduate level collections serving religious studies, theology, and psychology students and for psychoanalytic/psychodynamic institutes.—*C. T. Fischer, Duquesne University*

37-3868 DS112 98-46951 CIP
Roskies, David G. **The Jewish search for a usable past.** Indiana, 1999. 217p index afp ISBN 0-253-33505-1, \$24.95

Roskies (Jewish Theol. Seminary) shows that the Jewish present is not evolving as a simple continuation of the past nor, contrary to what is often claimed, is it emerging from a radical break with the past. It sits, rather, upon what Roskies calls "memory sites," images of the past recreated from the ashes of destruction and the potentially debilitating sense of Jewish loss these catastrophes create. How are such memory sites created? Roskies illustrates the process through careful and engaging examinations of, among other topics, Jewish chronicles of the Warsaw Ghetto, of Jewish rethinking of Jewish participation in the early socialist and Zionist movements, and of the function of the concept of holy space for secular Israelis. These studies, each a gem unto itself, together reveal how Jews cope with loss and catastrophe and illustrate that it is exactly by coping with loss and tragedy that Jews create a usable past and, in the process, define their present and shape their future. Recommended for general readers and for faculty and researchers.—*A. J. Avery-Peck, College of the Holy Cross*

37-3869 BL625 99-41879 CIP
Teasdale, Wayne. **The mystic heart: discovering a universal spirituality in the world's religions.** New World Library, 1999. 292p bibl index afp ISBN 1-57731-102-7, \$23.95

The one more than the many, sameness more than otherness—the mys-

tic does not deny diversity but stresses the unity underlying it. With a vast range of knowledge, Teasdale (a lay monk) draws on the teachings, practices, and experiences of shamans, saints, and theologians of all ages and traditions, on his own experience, and on contemporary science, art, and poetry to provide an understanding of the goal of realizing ultimate reality as it appears under many names. The urgency of his message is demonstrated in a chapter on natural mysticism; the key chapter is on consciousness. This book is about bridges, "inters": interconnectedness and interrelatedness, interfaith encounter and organizations, the intermystical journey, and above all, inter-spirituality. Teasdale defines nine practical elements in universal spirituality: moral capacity, solidarity with all life, nonviolence, self-knowledge, humility, selfless service, simplicity of lifestyle, daily practice, and serving as a prophetic witness to justice, peace, and the protection of creation. He is particularly eloquent in his support of Tibet. Surprisingly, there is almost no reference to sexuality in human experience, or archetypes as helpful in understanding universal spirituality. Hans Küng has said there will be no peace until there is understanding among world religions. This book is an informed and practical contribution to that understanding. General readers; all student levels.—*W. C. Buchanan, formerly, Grand Valley State University*

37-3870 BM197 98-48902 CIP
Zemer, Moshe. **Evolving Halakhah: a progressive approach to traditional Jewish law.** Jewish Lights, 1999. 440p bibl index ISBN 1-58023-002-4, \$40.00

Zemer, a rabbi and the director of the Freehof Institute of Progressive Halakhah in Tel Aviv, presents the product of some 35 years of his scholarly work. The book is a collection of responses and essays (previously published) which are "rejoinders to halakhic (Jewish law) rulings by Orthodox rabbis" or "answers to questions on topical matters...." Over many years of careful reading and study, Zemer's intent has been to show that the halakhah is not "inflexible and the antithesis of progress," nor "antiquated and outmoded." Zemer's writings do reflect a criticism of many of the "rulings of the established Chief Rabbinate [of Israel]." The book is divided into the following sections: "Foundations" (ethical principles), "Marriage and Divorce," "Conversion," "Israel and Gentiles," "Status of Women," "Ultra-Orthodox," "Medicine," and "Burial." This book has been called "a text for liberal Jews." And indeed it is. It certainly fulfills the goal stated by the publisher: "to stimulate thought ... engage (and) ... inspire." Highly recommended, though it is sure to be controversial in its effort to show that "the traditional Orthodox approach to halakhah has been and can be flexible and morally sensitive." All readership levels.—*T. M. Pucelik, Bradley University*

Science & Technology

37-3871 Q158 99-17186 CIP
Derry, Gregory N. **What science is and how it works.** Princeton, 1999. 311p bibl index afp ISBN 0-691-05877-6, \$29.95

With five well-told stories of scientific discovery (X-rays, structure of benzene, band structure in solids, biogeography as practiced by Humboldt, Jenner's discovery of smallpox vaccine), Derry (physics, Loyola College, Maryland) begins his eminently readable answer to the question "What is science?" He shares his broad knowledge through concrete examples from different sciences supporting limited, clearly specified generalizations about the nature of science. He distinguishes among pseudosciences (Velikovsky, creationism), borderline sciences (cold fusion, parapsychology), and mainline science. There are clear descriptions of the major current issues in the philosophy of science including a critique of postmodernism. In the final section, "Some Unifying Concepts in the Sciences" (geometry, order and disorder, symmetry), he illustrates the power of these concepts with examples both homely (sym-