

Book Reviews

Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology edited by Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (*New York: Oxford University Press, 2012*), vi + 583 pp.

GABRIEL FLYNN and Paul D. Murray have arranged a large collection of essays in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*, with topics ranging from the *ressourcement*'s multiple lines of historical inheritances, to its central representative figures, to assessments of its legacy. The introduction, written by Flynn, gives the work's intent as the following: "This volume is essentially about theology and history. It attempts to articulate the history of the *ressourcement* movement, its antecedents and leading exponents, and to assess the relevance of their prodigious theological output for the contemporary churches and modern society" (16). Such an ambitious goal might well fragment most works into a series of fractured sketches, but *Ressourcement* manages to cohere around its major theme while also presenting its diverging complexities.

The volume is divided into four parts: "The *Ressourcement* Movement: History and Context" (23–201), "Central Figures of the *Ressourcement*" (205–302), "*Ressourcement* as a Threefold Programme of Renewal" (305–51), and "*Ressourcement* and 'the Church in the Modern World'" (355–522). The first two parts of the book revolve around historical concerns in sections that attempt to discover the historical roots of the movement and to summarize the charismatic figures who comprised its works. The second two parts are more akin in theme to theological reviews, measuring the *nouvelle théologie*'s interest in renewal and reform, and the appropriation of that interest alongside a response to the modern age. Part of the volume's intricacy is rooted in its two-pronged desire to understand the *ressourcement* movement in both its history and its theology. This double goal broadens the range of the work and layers it with overlapping perplexities as history and theology converge. The work's dual-lensed perspective makes its overall assessment complex and open, and

Ressourcement reveals the dense relationship between theology and history as a whole through its articulation of a specific era of theological history.

Some of the most helpful and informative essays in the volume are to be found in its first two sections, where the entanglements of history receive the most attention. Here essays lay out the various open questions asked of the *ressourcement* movement's historical roots and give summaries of its essential figures and actions in the first half of the twentieth century. Jürgen Mettepenningen's review of the four historical stages that led from the 1930s into the Second Vatican Council is the most cogent and expansive summary of the era in question, and so it is something of a puzzle that his essay appears so late in the volume (172–84). Several articles explore the important figures who preceded and influenced the movement: Francesca Murphy's essay on Étienne Gilson (51–64) and Michael Conway's essay on Maurice Blondel (65–82) serve especially important roles. Yet the most important predecessor to the *nouvelle théologie* is Modernism, which is to say that the complexities of the Modernist controversy colored the controversy of the *nouvelle théologie*. The Modernist controversy influenced many of the ways the theologians of the “new theology” responded to theological problems: they were anxious not to be confused with Modernism, and yet their fascination with the role of history in theology at least superficially mirrors Modernism. At the same time, the Modernist controversy influenced how other scholars perceived the *nouvelle théologie*, as the latter movement's opponents worried over a theological relativism that appeared to reflect what had been condemned in Modernism. Because of the importance of this controversy, many essays spend themselves in attempts to uncover the differences and similarities between Modernism and the *nouvelle théologie*, and Gerard Loughlin's essay is perhaps the most programmatic here. Still, the question appears repeatedly in other essays, and increasingly scholars observe how the Modernist question itself casts Thomas—or rather, various Thomisms—in perhaps the most important underlying role in the drama between the *nouvelle théologie* and its opponents.

Both Gilson and Blondel precede the *nouvelle théologie* with important re-reads of Thomas Aquinas's work, re-reads that essentially begin the unearthing of Thomas from beneath the neo-Thomism that dominated Catholic theology in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The *nouvelle théologie* is characterized at first by Dominicans like Marie-Dominique Chenu, who are interested in keeping Thomas's theology and in recovering history, which they—especially Chenu—see as the same task. Essays from Hans Boersma (157–71), Janette Gray (205–18), and Gabriel Flynn (219–36) help to show the ways Thomas haunts both the theologians of the *nouvelle théologie* and their detractors, and it is the diffi-

culty of these varying Thomisms that holds many of the different historical essays together and relates them to one another in both contradiction and coherence. Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, and Yves Congar—more famous members of the *nouvelle théologie*—receive texture and context in these essays on Thomas and Catholic theology.

The renewal of Thomism in the first half of the twentieth century accompanied several other renewals in biblical studies, liturgy, and ecclesiology both within and outside of the Catholic Church. These renewals, reviewed in Part III, help to transition *Ressourcement* from a historical survey into an assessment of the theological influences of the *nouvelle théologie*, a project that occupies Part IV. The *nouvelle théologie*'s ambitious recovery of the patristic era and of Thomas Aquinas, and the influence of these recoveries on the Second Vatican Council and subsequent theology are, if anything, more complex than the roots of the movement itself. Brian Daley's essay on *Dei Verbum* and the *nouvelle théologie* (333–51) is an especially lucid, representative essay on the power of the movement's impact on the theology of Vatican II and thus on the theology that followed the council. Essays like Daley's help to unravel the ways the theologians of the *nouvelle théologie*, while enduring controversy, ultimately helped to reshape the way Catholic theology carries out its reflections from the academy to the official Church. The influence of *nouvelle* theologians extends outside of Roman Catholicism, and articles like Paul Murray's (457–81) and John Webster's (482–94) reveal the ecumenical vitality of the *nouvelle théologie* in the present age. Here, the importance of knowing the *nouvelle théologie*'s historical-theological roots, and thus the relevance of a volume such as this, become self-evident.

Each of the four major sections of the volume is a composite assessment of the *ressourcement* movement, voiced through the varying concentrations of the essays that rest together. The composite quality of the volume makes it difficult to summarize, especially as the various scholarly retellings of the battles with Garrigou-Lagrange and other neo-Thomists, and of Pope XII's harsh assessment of the *ressourcement* in *Humani Generis* begin to bleed together. Such is the weakness of a work as large as this, and one with so many contributors. At the same time, the multi-faceted nature of a multi-authored collection serves as the appropriate form for a movement as complex and far-reaching as the *nouvelle théologie*. What becomes clear about the *nouvelle théologie* is its multitudinous character: united by a common interest in the renewal of liturgy, ecclesiology, and ecclesial mission (cf. 3), the forms of that renewal are as varying as the figures encompassed in it. This does not make the *nouvelle théologie* opaque; rather, it emphasizes the force of its theological and historical interests,

which were vigorous enough to attempt the re-appropriation and renewal of the entirety of the Christian tradition. This was the grand ambition of the theologians who made up the movement, and their ambition does not close with their deaths. Their ambition, it is implied, is to be the ambition of the present day. The edited volume, *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*, thus serves its topic well and achieves its goals in such a way as to encourage the theologians of today to continue to mine the riches of the theologians of the past, including those of the *nouvelle théologie*. N V

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Church, State, and Society: An Introduction to Catholic Social Doctrine by J. Brian Benestad (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011*), xii + 500 pp.

BRIAN BENESTAD spans so many significant issues and considerations in his excellent 500-page introduction to Catholic social doctrine that this review can provide only a taste of this remarkable book. Professor Benestad treats complicated and sensitive issues with subtlety and yet at the same time offers a broad and comprehensible introduction from which an interested reader, whether in the classroom or not, can profit wonderfully. Benestad states his purpose at the outset: “The purpose of this book is to give an accurate account of the Church’s social doctrine for the inquiring Catholic and non-Catholic on the basis of authoritative Church sources—for example, papal encyclicals, Vatican Council II, statements of Vatican congregations, and statements of the United States bishops” (9–10). He adds that he will distinguish the authoritative Catholic teachings from some opinions held by prelates with which Catholics could legitimately disagree (10). In his first chapter, Benestad identifies the broad need for education in Catholic social doctrine, and then distinguishes it from political philosophy with help from Pope Benedict and de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*.

In his introductory chapter, Benestad sounds familiar notes from Pope Benedict’s writing on Catholic social doctrine about the objectivity of moral norms over and against relativistic standards (11–13), the obligation to help the poor (13–14), and the significance and content of conscience (18–22), among other concerns all with obvious respect and admiration. Next he looks to de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* and sees “how liberal political principles have . . . both affected the way Americans live and the

way they understand and practice their faith" (27). Although Americans tend to divide rights from consideration of man's ultimate end, we usually act in light of some truths (31). "America the Beautiful" expresses cultural concepts (e.g., "liberty under God") that indicate a possible openness to Catholic social doctrine, but Benestad believes that Catholic universities, insofar as they can educate students to "think intelligently about the moral and legal requirements of democratic regimes," will be the linchpin for general acceptance of Catholic social doctrine in American society (32). He hopes that Bl. John Paul II's *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* will eventually initiate renewal of liberal education in Catholic universities (32).

In Part 1, Benestad defines human dignity both as a "permanent endowment," inherent within our identity as created in God's image and likeness, redeemed by Christ, and destined for heaven, and as the achievement of communion with God (38–39). Our dignity requires that, despite temptations, we act virtuously, according to the natural law, and necessarily respect the rights of others. Understanding human dignity as a commission to virtuous action is "the best way of advancing the cause of rights" (80). Benestad is sensitive to the Hobbesian origins of modern discourse on rights, the influence of Locke on the American founders, and the subsequent interposition of historicism, relativism, and Nietzschean autonomy (54). The author outlines Mary Ann Glendon's *Rights Talk* to help identify "the problems that emphasis on rights can cause" (58). After this lengthy chapter on human dignity, human rights, and natural law, Benestad considers the meaning of the common good.

Benestad offers the standard definition of the common good found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "The sum total of the conditions of social life which allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their own perfection more fully and more easily" (108). He emphasizes the final component of this definition, thus tying the common good into his conception of human dignity as goal-oriented. Benestad returns to virtue, particularly that which flows from grace, as the primary means through which human beings should seek the common good. With the virtue of charity at the center, Benestad connects social morality with personal conversion (113–14). He draws on Aristotle, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, Aquinas, and Pope Benedict to present the tradition on virtue ethics, and he uses two novels, including Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, to illustrate virtue theory.

Virtue, and Aquinas's "legal justice" specifically, figure prominently in Benestad's discussion of social justice. He believes that this virtue, as it directs acts of all the virtues to the common good, can help clarify the nature and requirements of "social justice" (151–52). In his view, Catholic

laity must take every heroic initiative to establish a just social order, and the clergy are charged to educate the laity and give them an outline of the common good (167). Benestad moves from these reflections to consideration of law and public policy as a means to the common good.

Benestad states: "In a liberal society government will not have the primary responsibility for promoting the full range of the common good" (170). Nevertheless, on his view, government can and should contribute to the common good within the limits of subsidiarity, although the practicalities of such interventions may be debated legitimately (168–69). The author spends the vast majority of this chapter examining several burning issues: the question of same-sex marriage, the protection of life in all its stages, and the role of biotechnology in dehumanization. Benestad employs the arguments of Mary Ann Glendon and Leon Kass to help present Catholic social doctrine on these matters.

In Part 2, Benestad claims that the Church, the family, and the university are "the three most important agents of civil society" (215). In the three chapters that follow, Benestad discusses the roles of bishops, priests, and laity in contributing to the political community. He relies on conciliar, papal, curial, and national bishops' conference documents to substantiate the claims he makes about Catholic social doctrine in these areas, while conducting penetrating analysis, especially of the U.S. Bishops' *Faithful Citizenship*. Benestad details specific tasks for families, and, following Augustine's thought, claims that Catholic universities "must educate students to love what is good . . . which requires professors who love their faith and love their students" (312). The author affirms that Catholics must engage in public life through discussion and action despite attempts to privatize religion (253). Benestad considers this engagement for the common good "a logical implication of human dignity" (280). In Parts 3 and 4, Benestad takes up several important issues under social morality, including property and stewardship, and international relations.

Benestad turns to the writings of Leo XIII and Bl. John Paul II to explain Catholic social doctrine on economics, work, and poverty. When considering immigration, he takes principles from the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* and the 2003 joint pastoral letter of the Mexican and American bishops, *Strangers No Longer* (338–39). Benestad also collects insights from Mary Ann Glendon's 2006 article in *First Things*, agreeing with her that forming specific policies "will require enormous dedication, intelligence, creativity, and goodwill on the part of all concerned" (341). Next Benestad considers approaches to environmental sustainability.

The author presents the arguments of the Neo-Malthusian movement, and then offers a broader proposal for environmental concern from

the perspective of Catholic social doctrine. From a Catholic perspective, Benestad emphasizes the role of the family and the importance of conscience in proper stewardship of creation (365–71). He believes that the current sustainability movement opens the door to consider the essential elements of a sustainable community, including several spiritual and moral criteria, but the movement at present is “too narrowly conceived,” particularly in its assault on human dignity, to be successful (374). After this, Benestad takes up the international community.

Professor Benestad sets out to present the foundational principles that “should animate the international community” (377). Benestad claims that Bl. John Paul II sought to direct international attention away from autonomy and toward solidarity and the common good (381). He explains that the *Compendium* focuses on facilitating “the unity of nations through the Church, morality, and law, and promoting development” (381). Benestad summarizes Pope Benedict’s April 2008 speech at the United Nations as a call for international solidarity to promote lasting peace and sustained development (384). The author mines Mary Ann Glendon’s *Traditions in Turmoil* for analysis of the UN’s *Declaration of Human Rights* and the controversial 1995 UN Women’s Conference in Beijing (390–400). Benestad claims that, according to Catholic social doctrine, actors in the international community should promote the dignity, rights, and duties of the human person, and then he offers a list of ten principles to guide the international community in its efforts (400–402). The author examines just-war principles in the last chapter of Part 4.

Benestad considers contemporary ideas about just war in light of the thinking of Augustine and Aquinas. He draws attention to Augustine’s view that peace will be realized through the moral unity of citizens and rulers with God in “the practice of all the virtues” (403). Benestad raises several important considerations under *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* categories, employing scholars like John Courtney Murray, Paul Ramsey, James Turner Johnson, John C. Ford, and George Weigel. He spends a few pages on pacifism and conscientious objection, with some reservations about the absolute denial of corporate self-defense by military means (421–26). From this point, Benestad moves to the conclusion of his work.

Over and against the proponents of religion as a private affair, Benestad claims that excluding religion from the public square harms the common good as it hinders the promotion of true justice, which is based on “theological and philosophical views of the good” (443–44). Benestad holds up Pope Benedict’s *Caritas in Veritate* as an example of a respectful critique of liberal democratic regimes. He follows this up with an appendix that contains a 20-page analysis of *Caritas in Veritate*, concluding that Pope

Benedict holds up the practice of the virtues by all participants in modern economies as more important than self-interest or any structures established through policy or law (466). Benestad rounds out his text with an 18-page bibliography that ranges across the spectrum of social morality.

Brian Benestad has produced a remarkable volume on Catholic social doctrine that offers many treasures for the interested reader. In Benestad's view, human dignity, with its double foundation in human identity (as created in the image and likeness of God, redeemed by Christ, and destined for heaven) and vocation to action in favor of human fulfillment, stands at the center of Catholic social doctrine. The common good rests on human dignity and stands with it as the guiding light of Catholic social doctrine. Virtue recurs often as the means to the common good and the proper response to God's calling. Benestad has obvious love for the contribution of Pope Benedict to Catholic social doctrine, and he repeatedly looks to Mary Ann Glendon for arguments and insights. *Church, State, and Society* is the best introduction to Catholic social doctrine I have encountered, and it is well worth the investment. **N V**

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Christianity and Politics: A Brief Guide to the History by C. C. Pecknold (*Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010*), xxii + 174 pp.

THIS book tells a story, and tells it well. The story has been gestating in the theology departments of American universities for about two decades. Many of the founding ideas for the story were penned by academics who endorse Pecknold's work on the covers of the book. It is not a story found in the papal encyclicals of the Catholic social thought tradition, however.

Carl Schmitt is the origin of the story though he barely figures in this brief work. Schmitt, a genuinely original and provocative thinker, is commonly associated with the claim that politics is always a manipulation of more original theological categories. Pecknold takes us from the Greeks to the present to show that this is a true insight into Western politics. He offers a synthesis of recent American scholarship to make his case rather than grapple with the knotty Schmitt. Is this account plausible? Few working in the political science departments of the modern university would find it remotely plausible. Attached to Schmitt myself, I would side with Pecknold, but I have reservations about how Schmitt's basic insight is developed here.

Pecknold is a good, clean writer and credit is due for the fact that he boldly tells his story. As we all know, far too many academic books are barely readable. Pecknold has a lean style that recommends itself but he sets himself an extremely difficult task: Offering a brief guide to the development of the relations between religion and politics from the Greeks until our times. Most would be wary of trying to write such a book. To think: You would need an intimate knowledge of the Greeks, the Middle Ages, early and late Modernity, and besides a rich knowledge of religion and theology, politics too, and so necessarily history, the arts, and philosophy. I can think of only six people who might successfully write such a guide: Benedict XVI, MacIntyre, Taylor, and the Frenchmen Remi Brague, Pierre Manent, and Philippe Nemo. Likely there are people I'm forgetting, but I'll venture few can think of many other names to add to the list. Perhaps someone might retort saying: "It's a guide, so stuff will be left out, some corners cut, some facts garbled." This reaction reverses an important point: A guide is even harder to write; it demands a surety around the details so one can convincingly abstract from the fine texture to take the reader through the broad expanse of history. In this regard the book falters on the first page, where we learn something false: Aristotle was from Athens; he was not.

The story of the book was always going to be a tough sell, and a young member of the Academy likely to struggle more. The ambition of the book is complicated further by the fact it is not merely a short guide to the history of the West's theologico-political life but a call to a certain kind of politics.

I think it fair to say political theology is still an emergent field of analysis. The book should have opened with a clarification of the aims and boundaries of this method, because political theology has, in fact, two different origins. Starting this way would have given the reader a useful setting for Pecknold's own politics, about which he is very clear. Political theology first began with the anarchists who wanted the revolutionary period of the West to attain new degrees of purity. Schmitt's political theology is a reaction to anarchism. For anarchism, it was not enough for the American colonists to shed their imperial masters, nor the French to kill their king, aristocrats, priests, and nuns: The West needed to be purified of all hierarchy, obedience, superstition, and inequality. The anarchists invoked political theology as a method to root out lingering theological categories, which had infiltrated and corrupted economic, social, and political life. Pecknold does not want *this kind* of purity, but he does hanker after purity. In this he is little like Schmitt. He wants to identify how the Enlightenment, liberalism, and markets trade, for their authority,

on the sense of community first accomplished by the Eucharistic community of the Church (104, 110, & 139). The book wants to show that the Church is weakened when ignorant of the way that secularism offers a mangled image of its own life, an image all the more subversive because it satisfies people precisely by drawing on what is best in the Church (83). This is a potential use of political theology, and Tracey Rowland is a good example of how effective it can be in clarifying Christian conscience when done carefully in specific studies.

It is far from Schmitt, though, and the deeper resources of the Catholic social thought tradition. Pecknold wants Christians to be loyal to the Eucharistic community and to free themselves thereby from loyalty to nation (93, 104, & 119). In this conception, the Christian is transnational and local, experiencing a civic life centered about parish altars, where a true and universal community is daily renewed (138). Unfortunately, Pecknold does not discuss an alternative. Distributists, like Chesterton and Scheler, were localists who nonetheless were proud of what a carefully crafted national culture could offer the human spirit. Pecknold requires another premise: Christians are pilgrims on this earth and so strangers to national lands (28–29 & 118). This is a popular idea in universities, and many argue that it has strong biblical warrant, but it is no part of Schmitt's political theology, nor does it resonate with the encyclical tradition.

Pecknold's drive to a purity politics explains his skepticism toward natural law, and this skepticism gets at a basic point. He rather mangles the point. In a rather curious commentary on *Caritas in Veritate* (no other encyclicals figure in the book) Pecknold argues that Benedict *opposes* a regard for truth to natural law in the development of conscience (154–55). Perhaps Pecknold is thinking of Cardinal Ratzinger's *The Dialectics of Secularization* (69–70), where the usefulness of natural law to contemporary moral theology is doubted. The opposite is stated quite clearly in *Caritas in Veritate* (sections 59 & 48). Following a long ancient tradition, Thomistic natural law affirms public authority as a guarantor of public safety. The reality of crime and war requires the vigilance of a public authority, which, for Aquinas, might be a city, a dukedom, a kingdom, or even an empire. In the Catholic social thought tradition built on Aquinas, localism is not merely welcomed but on account of subsidiarity morally required. At the same time, solidarity legitimates (in many circumstances) a national public authority. Indeed, in certain circumstances, such an authority is morally required. The Distributists, following leads given in Leo XIII's *On the Condition of the Working Classes* (1891), rightly saw that rejection of national cultures and their capacities would offend solidarity.

Schmitt, ever the dramatist, puts the Thomist point far more provocatively. Walls express the fault line between friend and enemy. Most primordially, what sets this fault line is a sacred orientation: Communities, argues Schmitt, always spread out from their altars. The religious and public authorities are inextricably linked, therefore. This is the axiom of Schmitt's political theology. Pecknold expresses horror at Constantinianism ("From a certain angle, this "domestication" of the church can be seen as persecution by other means" [31]) but this can only baffle Schmitt. This is why the book should have opened with methodological clarity.

Pecknold's *Christianity and Politics: A Brief Guide to the History* is a book with sharp claims that prompt other clear thoughts about what is at stake in good theology. Not a bad thing to say about a brief guide. N V

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The Promise of Christian Humanism: Thomas Aquinas on Hope

by Dominic Doyle (*New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2011*) xi + 233 pp.

THIS book, winner of the John Templeton Award for Theological Promise, seeks to move beyond the nineteenth- and twentieth-century disputes between atheistic and Christian humanism. Dominic Doyle convincingly argues that at the heart of these disputes is the question of whether belief in a transcendent God helps or hinders human flourishing in the world. Doyle proposes a theological expansion of the roots of Christian humanism in light of a renewed interpretation of the theological virtue of hope as understood by Thomas Aquinas.

Doyle sets out his argument in three parts: he first examines the *status quaestionis*; he then proposes a close exegesis and creative extension of Aquinas's treatment of hope; and finally, he applies this Thomistic understanding of the virtue of hope to the question of offering adequate theological grounds for a renewed Christian humanism in the twenty-first century.

The tradition of a genuinely Christian humanism, Doyle argues, is rooted in the Incarnation and the consequent positive theological assessment of the *humanum*; in light of this positive assessment, Christian humanism "aspires to some form of synthesis—intellectually, between faith and reason; and socially, between church and culture" (5). The recent renewal in Christian humanism exemplified by the work of Nicholas Boyle and Charles Taylor has brought to light the challenge of holding together a concern for the human good and an insistence on religious transcendence.

The Taylor/Boyle project is limited by its lack of explicit theological articulation. This lack, Doyle posits, leads to cascading failures: an inadequate differentiation between nature and grace, with a consequent failure to integrate the theological virtues; an insufficient exploration of the specifically Christian link between desire for the common good and the drive for religious transcendence, making it difficult to distinguish a genuinely Christian humanism from a generalized religious humanism.

Retrieving the work of earlier theologians who rooted Christian humanism in the theological virtue of faith, Doyle shows that such a grounding leaves open the question of the form which Christian life, understood as being conformed to Christ through acting in the world, must take. This is where the theological virtue of hope comes in, since it is precisely concerned with practical living out of belief. Thus, the theological sources of a renewed Christian humanism “must not only include the assent to a particular doctrine [i.e. the Incarnation] that makes a humanism distinctly Christian; it must also include the fundamental process whereby this Christian vision becomes embodied” (38). Hope attains God as both present good (*auxilium*) and future good (full communion in beatific love), and these two dimensions of the good correspond precisely to the two elements of a renewed Christian humanism.

Doyle turns, in the second part of the book, to a careful exegesis and extension of Aquinas’s doctrine on the theological virtue of hope. In light of criticisms leveled against Aquinas’s teaching from such authors as Moltmann and Wolterstorff, Doyle proceeds to show that, far from separating religious transcendence and concern for the common good here and now, Aquinas’s treatment of hope brings to light how the orientation to religious transcendence empowers and anchors concern for the common good here and now, and how present human goods participate in and mediate the future good of communion with God in the fullness of eschatological loving.

Doyle’s exegesis proceeds in two steps. First, he brings to light the three key theological presuppositions that frame Aquinas’s teaching on hope: Creator and creation are not competing causes; the human person naturally desires God; and God’s grace perfects human nature. The explanation of creation’s participation in God’s existing is masterful, as is the explanation of creation’s *reditus* to God as final cause. The uniquely human dynamic of *reditus* to God in freedom is helpfully brought to light, and the explanation of the need for grace is a model of clarity, especially why the will’s desire for the beatific vision is genuinely supernatural. Chapters three and four are one of the most pedagogically and systematically satisfying presentations of Aquinas’s teaching on theologi-

cal anthropology that I have read. The account of the theological virtues is excellent, and Doyle's decision to preserve the movement from universal to particular in relating chapters three and four is most helpful.

The proposal articulated at the beginning of chapter five and developed through chapter six, that the three theological virtues can be understood as the potency, motion, and act of a renewed Christian humanism, is novel and quite interesting. Faith and charity cannot properly be said to involve motion toward God in their essence. Only hope properly involves motion, which is the reduction of potency to act. Faith is thus the specific potency for a Christian humanism; charity is that potency fully reduced to act. Hope moves the believer toward that end through God's *auxilium*. Specifically, such an understanding of hope brings to light the necessarily cruciform nature of the believer's quest to promote the common good in light of a genuinely transcendent orientation: "insofar as hope encounters difficulty, it deepens the engagement with the Christian narrative, from assent to the doctrine of the Incarnation to appropriation of the reality of the Cross" (114). In the context of developing his argument linking eschatological hope and the present good, Doyle makes excellent use of analogy and the ontology of participation that grounds it, generating a complex account of the authentically human so as to dialogue positively with secularity and retain some critical purchase on it. One of the most interesting elements of his account of analogy is its ability to recognize the reality of struggle and the paschal dimension of Christian living in the world.

Christian hope, as presented by Doyle, "unites within a single virtue what modern culture repeatedly drives apart: the desire for religious transcendence and the concern for the human good." It thus supports Christian humanism at the precise point where it is tempted in modernity, "the failure to relate historical emancipation and religious salvation" (145).

The author models, in his concluding chapter, a deeply respectful engagement with a multitude of authors across the political and theological spectrum. In particular, his response to the work of Tracey Rowland is perspicacious, respectful, and forward moving, overcoming the false dilemma of what he calls a pessimistic Augustinianism versus a naively optimistic secularism. The presentation of the Second Vatican Council in light of the virtues of faith and hope is interesting and tantalizing, but it is in need of further development, specifically by bringing forward more explicitly some of the details of his exegesis and extension of Aquinas to address such questions as whether one finds the virtue of hope articulated in the self-understanding of the Council, or whether it is in the implementation of the Council's humanism that the need for a theological

grounding in hope has come to light. Much more convincing is the analysis of the contrast between Christian humanism and religious fundamentalism in terms of the opposition between hope and security. This is a very helpful and enlightening theological explanation that can engage more sociologically and politically oriented analyses.

The work is well researched and very well written. The exegesis of Aquinas is solid and rooted in a multiplicity of texts, including many not usually studied for an understanding of Aquinas's teaching on hope. The endnotes (62 pages of them!) contain a wealth of commentary and insight in their own right. This is a rewarding work that bears a second and third reading. N.V.

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Balthasar: A (Very) Critical Introduction by Karen Kilby (*Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012*), xii + 176 pp.

HANS URS von Balthasar has enjoyed more than two decades of theological appreciation since his death in 1988. While theological progressives, as well as conservative Thomists, have hardly embraced his thought, it is fair to say that Balthasar is broadly viewed as a stock figure of creative fidelity to the Catholic tradition. The vast majority of studies done on Balthasar may raise modest criticisms here and there, but, on the whole, scholars working on Balthasar find his "theo-dramatic" project to be creative, coherent, and compelling—and in continuity with the great tradition. This appreciation is due not only to the content of his work but also to the post-conciliar context of it. Many bishops have embraced Balthasar as an antidote to a theological liberalism that some believe has harmed the implementation of the Second Vatican Council. Because of Balthasar's friendship and theological proximity to Joseph Ratzinger (together they founded the journal *Communio*), many have seen the election of Pope Benedict XVI as a kind of implicit *imprimatur*, lending Balthasar a kind of magisterial authority by association; there is a proper caution about how to criticize the theology of the great Swiss theologian, who is regarded as a faithful "son of the Church" today. However, the tide may be turning toward a more complex appreciation of Balthasar which includes vigorous yet balanced critique. Karen Kilby's "very critical" introduction to Balthasar indicates just such a direction. Rather than critique this or that aspect of Balthasar, while affirming the whole, Kilby's approach is to affirm this or that aspect of Balthasar, yet critique the

whole form of his theological method and the conclusions about God and persons to which she says his method inevitably leads.

Kilby is a Catholic theologian teaching at the University of Nottingham. Most of her research has been critical of contemporary trends in theology—she has written important critiques of Karl Rahner, as well as of social trinitarianism. Trained originally as a mathematician, and then as a systematic theologian at Yale Divinity School in its postliberal heyday, Kilby takes an analytical approach to Balthasar that might strike his most fervent disciples as “shallow” or even boring compared to the aesthetic depths and ecstatic heights of Balthasar himself. After pointing out in the introduction the various difficulties of “finding one’s way around Balthasar” and the fundamental difficulty of criticizing Balthasar (a central theme of the book), her first chapter, “The Contexts of Balthasar,” introduces Balthasar as an “unfettered” theologian who was not really intellectually accountable in a university setting or in the Church, which gave his work a freshness but also entailed significant risks, which she sees in his overall tendency to take a comprehensive “God’s eye view” of theology. She treats his training as a Jesuit, and his subsequent departure from the Society of Jesus to found a secular institute with Adrienne von Speyr (whose influence Kilby considers crucial), as evidence that his context was less attached to structures of accountability and more attached to the mystical visions of a woman who understood herself as living on earth and in heaven at once. She also addresses here the influence of Henri de Lubac and especially Karl Barth on his theology. This sets the stage for the next four chapters, which deal with his theological method through his “central images” in chapters 3 and 4; then in chapters 5 and 6 Kilby strategically utilizes her methodological critique to interrogate his doctrine of the Trinity and his nuptial mysticism.

Noting the difficulty of any critical approach to a theologian who wrote so much, Kilby sets out not to deal with the details of his work but to first attend to its style, its method, and its central images, which she counts as four: the picture, the play, fulfillment, and the circle. “The picture” refers to the way in which Balthasar constantly commends us to “see the Form,” not so much as a drama but as a picture. Here she sees Balthasar as too much the *comprehensor* and not enough the *viator* in his theo-dramatic approach. The viewer of the picture either sees the form or does not; there is no “continuum or gradation” in seeing the form (57). In this regard, Kilby tends to read Balthasar as a kind of all-or-nothing Barthian. I could not help but wonder, however, if reading him in this way was already to miss the dialectical nature of Balthasar’s method and his life-long attempt to argue *in favor* of Erich Przywara’s account of *analogia entis*.

"The play" is the image that Balthasar himself is more readily drawn to in his *Theo-Drama* trilogy, and here Kilby excels at interrogating this image, since she rightly understands it to be central to what is most problematic about his understanding of God as fundamentally *dramatic*. "God is himself, even apart from history, to be conceived through theatrical analogies: the eternal relations of the persons of the immanent Trinity are fundamentally dramatic, and, rather dizzyingly, Balthasar proposes that all of history can be thought along the lines of a 'play within a play'. . . a drama which takes place in the space opened up by the more fundamental drama played out among the persons of the Trinity" (58). Kilby makes no initial judgment about this, but it is clear that she sees Balthasar ostensibly responding to Barth's Christomonism—which allowed no room for human agency—through this dramatic category that gave human beings freedom in which to act in a divine drama. But implicit in this image is also the ghost of Hegel's god, with his categories of transcending the lyrical (experiential) and the epic (objective) with the dramatic (61). For Balthasar, it is God's drama in which we are participating, and which will draw all spectators to eventually become fellow actors "whether they wish to or not" (62, citing Balthasar), which may nevertheless limit human freedom in another way. Here the theological implications for the doctrine of God, anthropology, and eschatology come immediately to the fore. Kilby defers her theological critique for her chapter on the Trinity, and on nuptial mysticism respectively, but here provides a light critique of his subjunctive account of universal salvation, *Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved"*? She is primarily concerned here to point out that Balthasar's central aesthetic images emphasize the wholeness of the form. Kilby worries that his tendency to make confident, comprehensive claims "seems to lead to a theology which allows little room for argument, little space for a reader to question and disagree" (65). Her fundamental methodological concern is pronounced as a question: Does differing from Balthasar's survey of all of world history "in relation to God, and God's inner life" finally mean "the absence of faith" (65)?

In treating the central image of "fulfillment," Kilby is more ambiguous. She speaks of the "fulfillment pattern" in Balthasar, and notes two ways of seeing fulfillment. Either the fulfillment pattern in Balthasar means that Christ fulfils what is present but only confused and partial (79) in an absolute way, or more contingently and in *ad hoc* fashion, the fulfillment pattern in Balthasar simply marks "a certain habit of thought" (80). This is an ambiguous critique. She clearly favors the contingent over the absolute in Balthasar, yet she consistently finds that the problem with his approach precisely is to be found in his absolutism. Does she mean that we cannot

be sure that Christ is the fulfillment of all that is good, or does she mean that we cannot be the ones who decide what counts as fulfillment? Something like the latter seems to be her point, for she states: "To suppose that all things must be related to Christ is one thing, but to suppose that one can *know* the relation of all things to Christ is quite a different thing" (81). Once again, the image of fulfillment becomes another occasion to ask her central question about whether his high view of Christ is not too closely united with an excessively high regard for his own comprehensive gaze.

Her final discussion of Balthasar's "aesthetic imaginary" treats the less pronounced image of "the circle" in his work. This is largely a cipher to critique the "circularity" of his descriptions—that is, the elliptical nature of his thought—and to decry the absence of actual arguments which would make his thought more open and accountable to criticism. The image of the circle might, however, suggest something contrary to her point: the image of the circle, in the hands of the "perspectivalism" of Nicholas of Cusa, who certainly influenced Balthasar, usually is seen to exhibit a certain kind of epistemic modesty, even a mystical apophaticism, that she so clearly wants from Balthasar. She implicitly recognizes the possibility of this rebuttal, stating that "in his very affirmation of the fragmentariness, the perspectival nature, of all theology, Balthasar frequently positions himself *above* it" (91). There is something absolute, she fears, even in his epistemic modesty! She recognizes the paradox: "on the one hand we find the profound insistence on theological humility . . . on the other hand there is Balthasar's theological procedure, which silently presumes his own comprehensive grasp and control of the material" (93). These methodological critiques of Balthasar are often well made, and I share her worries, but there is the nagging suspicion that she has not fully appreciated the delicate dialectical balancing act of Balthasar, nor fully attended to the apophatic checks against the excesses that concern her. It may be that Balthasar's apophatic checks fail, but unfortunately she barely touches upon them at all.

No chapter in the book resonated quite as positively with me, however as her chapter on the Trinity. The previous chapters take the reader deep into methodological reflections on the task of theology, but they tend not to be very theological themselves. That problem is rectified in chapter five, which is one of the best summary critiques of Balthasar's doctrine of God that I have read recently—itsself worth the price of the book. And it is here that we can see the fundamental reason why she spends so much time establishing the central images in Balthasar as all tending toward a single conclusion: the methodological reflections are finally ordered to the end of her critique of particular theological mistakes which she thinks are not accidental but essential to the entirety of his thought, and not problems here and there.

Balthasar is famous for his reading of the “Cry of Dereliction.” When Christ asks why God has forsaken him, the Son is proclaiming an absolute rupture from the Father, and thus the Cross is understood as the revelation of the eternal *kenosis* of the Son in the Trinity. The Cross thus reveals to us the “Trinitarian substructure”: the Father “strips himself, without remainder, of his Godhead and hands it over to the Son” (99, quoting Balthasar). Rather than stress, as is traditional, the intimacy and inseparability of “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” Balthasar stresses the opposite, speaking even of an “absolute, infinite distance” between the Persons. Kilby might have added that a great cloud of witnesses—St. Athanasius, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas—would attest that the *kenosis* to which St. Paul refers in the Christ hymn of Philippians is a *kenosis* which does not occur in the inner-life of the divine economy, but is a *kenosis* into “the economy of the flesh.” Balthasar, however, interprets *kenosis* not as something which refers to the divine condescension only, but that the *kenosis* of the Son into the economy of the flesh is simply an unfolding of a *kenosis* in the Triune God’s eternal *inner* life.

It is not exactly like Hegel (or Feuerbach)—projecting the dialectical unfolding of the Absolute into the immanent frame of history—but rather like the dialectical unfolding of the infinite distance between the Trinitarian Persons in the economy of time. Kilby studiously avoids any genealogical examination of Balthasar’s relation to Hegel. (She does not see Balthasar as being as closely allied to Hegel as Moltmann is, but it is clear that she sees the influence as a cause for concern.) This is one of the strengths of the work, in fact, because she does not rest her critique on whether or not Balthasar is either indebted or resistant to Hegel; rather, she focuses on *how* Balthasar knows what he claims to know. How does Balthasar *know* that the “Cry of Dereliction” is the revelation of an eternal *kenosis* within God? Kilby observes two routes by which he arrives at this knowledge. The first is through an analytic understanding of the Trinity. In an attempt to avoid Barth’s modalism, and thus to affirm the distinctions between the Trinitarian Persons, Balthasar believes that an “infinite distance” or “infinite space” between the Persons must be affirmed (107). The second route by which we can know of this inner-Trinitarian distance is by way of the Cross: “It is only from the Cross and in the context of the Son’s forsakenness that the latter’s distance from the Father is fully revealed” (107, quoting Balthasar).

In a manner consistent with the methodological worries exhibited throughout, Kilby replies that neither reflection on the Trinity nor reflection on the Cross has yielded this knowledge before, so why should we take it on faith that Balthasar has a privileged viewpoint on God’s inner

life? Why do we have the “sense that Balthasar knows very well what he is describing . . . a theologian who seems very well to know his way around, to have a view—even sometimes something that seems remarkably like an insider’s view—of what happens in the inner life of the Trinity” (112). Balthasar, she intimates, writes less like a theologian of God’s mystery, and more like a novelist (114). Her essential charge is that Balthasar is making things work according to criteria that seem external to the tradition, “transgressive” of the bounds of traditional theology, and confident in knowing “more than can be known” (114).

This all touches upon the very lively topic of divine impassibility and immutability, which have been central affirmations of the tradition until the twentieth century, when passibilism became fashionable in post-Hegelian German theology and post-Whiteheadian American theology. To be sure, Kilby recognizes that in some sense Balthasar does not quite “bring suffering into the Trinity. But he does speak of something in the Trinity which can develop into suffering, of a ‘suprasuffering’ in God, and, as we have seen, of risk, of distance, and of something ‘dark’ in the eternal Trinitarian drama” (120). The great risk of Balthasar’s theological novelty is that despite his differences from them, he is “divinizing the tragic” in ways that are very similar to the passibilists that he critiques. Kilby finds that the result is that Balthasar introduces divine darkness into the divine light, coalescing divine love and divine loss into an image of a suprasuffering God who does not seem to fit well with the vision of Christianity as “good news” (120).

The chapter achieves its desired effect, and I agree with the way in which she favors divine impassibility against modern passibilist trends. My worry is that while she aims at the right target, she does not quite see the target clearly enough. Balthasar is, in fact, performing a very subtle balancing act (“on a knife’s edge” as he puts it), which is intended to invert the very problematic nature of post-Hegelian passibilism. Balthasar is trying to find “perfection” language for divine suffering—“suprasuffering”—but fails to do so in a way which fully conforms to the logic of Chalcedon. As Gilles Emery has pointed out, Balthasar fails to identify the eminent term of suffering in God, which, Emery notes, is not suffering at all, but divine Charity (following Maritain). Although Kilby does cite the work of Gerard O’Hanlon, in which the latter defends Balthasar as a kind of impassibilist, further attention to the contemporary literature on divine impassibility would have refined her critique, as well as supported and strengthened it. To be fair, her critique of Balthasar on the Trinity asks not only about the darker theme of abandonment and distance but also about the Father constantly surprising the Son, and the intra-Trinitarian “faith,” which makes clear that her concern has not so much to do with a theological

concern about God's nature but really derives from her basic methodological critique of Balthasar as inventor of wildly implausible metaphorical characterizations of the divine Persons.

Kilby's final chapter concerns Balthasar's "nuptial mysticism." Her basic critique here is that Balthasar's imagery in his ecclesiology and anthropology is dominated by sexual intercourse. The active-passive and the giving-receiving metaphors that he utilizes in his account of male and female persons are, Kilby thinks, fundamentally derived from sexual relations. She is troubled by Balthasar's "asymmetrical" account of men and women, which seems to affirm that women are "both secondary and equal to men" (146). While Balthasar can talk about every cell of a person being male or female, Kilby suggests that gender itself might be superseded by the category of the sexual union. This "sexual reductionism" (138) is another instance of Balthasar's making the biblical and traditional data fit his strong hermeneutical lens, which cuts like a hot knife through cold butter. Balthasar consistently argues "*from* his nuptial scheme rather than *to* it" (144). While it suits her thesis to argue as she does about his nuptial mysticism, I think she misses the real target, which is not nuptial mysticism per se but Balthasar's relational ontology. Where Kilby wants to see an absolute nuptial hermeneutic, it seems to me that Balthasar's insistence that persons simply *are* relations makes it possible for him to enter into various sexual confusions and reductions with respect not only to human beings, male and female, but also to Christ and the Church, the clerical and lay states, and the Eucharist itself. That is, confusions in his Trinitarian theology might provide a more important key for understanding the problems she rightly identifies in his nuptial mysticism, even as the nuptial understanding of the Church remains intact. (Does Kilby think that the rationale for male priesthood is defeated by defeating Balthasar's nuptial mysticism?)

Her conclusion confirms a widely held suspicion, namely that the real *way* that Balthasar *knows* what he claims to know, what justifies his theological novelty, the reason for his comprehensive confidence, is his trust in the mystical experiences of Adrienne von Speyr. But Kilby also carefully disconfirms this suspicion that Balthasar is at heart an experiential, constructive theologian: "Although Balthasar may be susceptible to such a reading at times, we do not for the most part *have* to read him this way, and we ought to avoid it if we can" (160). Charitable reading, in fact, requires that we consider other possibilities. One of the virtues of Kilby's book is that she repeatedly points out that there are other ways of reading Balthasar. She admires that Balthasar is a theologian at prayer, that his is a "kneeling theology," but she wonders if this is always true. In her view, Balthasar's work is "not in fact so much reminiscent of one who prays as it is of one

who directs the prayer of another. . . . One can quite easily hear in his works the overtones of the retreat director, speaking intimately, directly, confidently to his audience, working to bring them to the point of breaking down their barriers, of becoming open afresh to the gospel" (160–61). This is at once a very critical and a marvelously generous conclusion.

What she commends to the theologian in her concluding epilogue is a much more apophatic approach, which she sees exemplified in theologians as disparate as St. Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth. The combination of those figures reminded me that the book is dedicated to George Lindbeck and is marked by his Thomistic-Barthian synthesis (also developed in a different, and more explicitly apophatic, way by Victor Preller). There is certainly great wisdom here in commending a greater apophatic reserve in theology, but I was left with the nagging doubt that she had made this point at the expense of downplaying the dialectical, analogical, and apophatic dimensions of Balthasar's theology. Kilby tends rather to reduce his apophaticism to moments that do not finally temper his theological excess. That might be true (in fact I think it is true), but she does not demonstrate this. Balthasar's thought is frequently allied to Origen in the book, but she neglects the import of Maximus the Confessor and Pseudo-Dionysius. Such lacunae will surely be noticed by Balthasarians, who are certain to accuse her of misunderstanding his project. Just as Thomists might be tempted to embrace all of Kilby's criticisms because they confirm their own suspicion of Balthasar, Balthasarians will be tempted to circle the wagons in a defensive posture. Both responses to such a book would be a shame, given the excellent criticisms she offers and the charity with which she offers them. Kilby's book provides a welcome, vigorous, yet charitable critique of a theologian whose work is strong enough to take it. **NV**

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Treatise on Human Nature: The Complete Text (Summa Theologiae I, Questions 75–102) by Thomas Aquinas, translated by Alfred J. Freddoso (*South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2010*), xiii + 353 pp.

ALFRED Freddoso is currently working on a new translation of St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. In 2009 he published a translation of the entire *Treatise on Law* from *Summa theologiae* I–II, questions 90–108, and his translation of the *Treatise on Human Nature* is now available as well. No one familiar with Freddoso's previous translations of Aquinas, Ockham, Suarez, and Molina will be surprised to learn that he has produced a very

readable translation of the *Treatise on Human Nature* that captures the nuances of Aquinas's thought.

We already possess good English translations of the *Treatise on Human Nature*. For this reason the value of a new translation largely hinges on small decisions, such as how to render a given word or phrase. Judged by this standard, Freddoso's translation is an overwhelming success. At every turn his translation reflects careful consideration of what Aquinas intends to communicate to his reader. Consider the difference between Freddoso's translation of a section of *ST* I, q. 76, a. 3 and the 1920 English Dominican translation of that section. In this place, Aquinas is considering the view (which he attributes to Plato) that a person has more than one soul because souls are differentiated on the basis of the corporeal organs through which they operate. Against this view, Aquinas cites one of Aristotle's arguments for holding that the different powers that use corporeal organs still constitute only one soul. While the argument from Aristotle addresses the issue of appetitive and sensory powers, Aquinas goes on to comment on an ambiguity in Aristotle's position regarding how the intellectual power is distinct from the other vital powers of a man. In our two translations, Aquinas writes:

(1) But with regard to the intellectual part, he [Aristotle] seems to leave it in doubt whether it be only *logically* distinct from the other parts of the soul, or *also locally*. (English Dominican translation, emphasis in original)

(2) However, as regards the intellective soul, he seems to leave it in question whether it is separate from the other parts of the soul "only conceptually or also spatially" (*solum ratione, an etiam loco*). (Freddoso)

Aristotle seems to express himself ambiguously regarding what kind of distinction exists between the intellectual and other powers of the human soul. Freddoso's rendering of *loco* as "spatially" rather than "locally" makes what is at issue much clearer to the reader. This kind of care and thoughtfulness pervades Freddoso's translation.

In other places Freddoso's translation decompresses Aquinas's terse Latin. Consider, for instance, how he renders a passage from *Summa theologiae* I, q. 76, a. 1, where Aquinas writes about the different powers that a rational soul confers on its subject:

For instance, the soul is that by which we first and foremost assimilate nourishment (*nutrimur*), have sensory cognition (*sentimus*), and move from place to place (*movemur secundum locum*); and similarly, the soul is that by which we first and foremost have intellective understanding (*intelligimus*).

To see the distinctiveness of Freddoso's translation we can compare it with the 1920 English Dominican translation and with Robert Pasnau's recent translation:

- (1) "For the soul is the primary principle of our nourishment, sensation, and local movement; and likewise of our understanding." (English Dominican translation)
- (2) "For the soul is the first thing through which we are nourished, through which we sense, through which we engage in locomotion, and—likewise—through which we first think. (Pasnau)

The latter two translations are more literal renderings of Aquinas's text without, however, being guilty of "translationese." Freddoso's translation of the text is longer because he draws on the basic principles of Aquinas's thought in order to draw out some of the implicit nuances in this passage. Thus, for instance, Freddoso's translation indicates that sensation is a type of cognition. Also, Freddoso renders Aquinas's statement about the nutritive power of the soul in a way that makes clear that it is an active power. This way of translating Aquinas will delight the expert and instruct the beginner.

One of the main reasons for publishing sections of the *Summa* in individual, treatise-length volumes is to make them available for classroom use. The publication of Freddoso's translation now gives teachers a choice among at least three one-volume editions of Aquinas's writings on human nature. Aside from Freddoso's volume, there is a volume edited by Thomas Hibbs (Hackett, 1999) whose selections from the *Summa* are drawn from the 1920 English Dominican translation and from Anton Pegis's revision of that translation. Robert Pasnau has also edited and translated a volume devoted to Aquinas's writings on human nature (Hackett, 2002).

Each of these volumes has its own advantages and disadvantages when compared to the others. The main advantage of Hibbs's volume is its inclusion of material drawn from Aquinas's commentary on *De anima* as well as some of Aquinas's writings on the will and the passions from the *prima secundae*. Some, however, may find Hibbs's volume less useful, since it includes only twelve of the twenty-eight questions that make up the *Treatise on Human Nature* from the *prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. Anyone looking for a volume that focuses more extensively on that treatise will do well to consult the editions by Freddoso or Pasnau. Pasnau's edition includes questions 75–89 from the *Treatise on Human Nature* as well as eight appendices with short excerpts from other works by Aquinas. Freddoso's volume, on the other hand, covers the entire treatise on human nature (questions 75–102). The additional questions included in Freddoso's translation—on matters

such as God's production of the human soul and various matters related to our prelapsarian state—will make Freddoso's edition especially attractive to those with theological interests. One of the chief advantages of Pasnau's volume is the very fine commentary that he includes with his translation. Freddoso's translation has a table of contents and an index of names and topics, but it includes neither an introduction nor a commentary. While both Pasnau and Freddoso are very able translators, they have a different approach to their work, inasmuch as Freddoso usually draws from the established English scholastic vocabulary that has been widely used in translations of ancient and medieval authors, whereas Pasnau sometimes departs from this terminology. Thus, for example, Pasnau translates *habitus* as 'disposition' and *liberum arbitrium* as 'free decision', whereas Freddoso renders these as 'habit' and 'free choice.'

Freddoso's skill as a translator of scholastic texts and his deep knowledge of Aquinas's thought have produced one of the most readable and precise translations of the *Treatise on Human Nature* currently available. This places us all in his debt and should make us eager for the publication of future volumes of his translation of Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. N V

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Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church by Merold Westphal (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009*), 156 pp.

IT IS a well-worn cliché that continental authors are obscure and unreadable. But the writing of such thinkers as Heidegger, Derrida, and Levinas does in fact often justify the cliché. Merold Westphal, however, has invariably been an exception to this unfortunate state of affairs in continental philosophy, always writing with lucidity and cogency. One thing that makes Westphal's work over these past forty-some years so valuable is that this lucidity and cogency is typically in the service of expositions of continental figures like Heidegger, Derrida, et al., who lack Westphal's gift.

This gift is once again on display in *Whose Community? Which Interpretation?* The book is part of a series edited by James K. A. Smith of Calvin College for Baker Academic that bears the title "The Church and Postmodern Culture." In a preface to Westphal's volume, Smith says that the series "presents an exciting opportunity for contemporary philosophy and critical theory to 'hit the ground,' so to speak, by allowing high-level work in postmodern theory to serve the church's practice" and explains

that the goal of the series is “to bring together high-profile theorists in continental philosophy and contemporary theology to write for a broad, nonspecialist audience interested in the impact of postmodern theory on the faith and practice of the church” (7). At the moment there are four other volumes in the series by Smith, John Caputo, Carl Raschke, and Graham Ward.¹

The aim of Westphal’s contribution is suggested in its subtitle: showing what contemporary philosophical hermeneutics can teach us about how to approach Sacred Scripture. The philosophical hermeneutic theory drawn upon is primarily that of Hans-Georg Gadamer, but there are also appeals to Ricoeur and, to a lesser extent, Heidegger and Derrida. Other thinkers also play important parts in this volume, especially Kant, who has been a major influence on Westphal from the very beginning of his career.²

We might sum up Westphal’s main argument thus: contemporary hermeneutic theory awakens us to the fact that our finitude and our consequent inability to have a complete overview of things entail that (1) interpretation—whether of facts or texts—is unavoidable and that (2) there will always be an irreducible multiplicity of interpretations. This is likewise true for the interpretation of Sacred Scripture and has implications for ecumenism and ecclesiology: the various Christian traditions must recognize that none of them has—cannot have—the right interpretation of Scripture and so they must develop greater mutual respect and be open to learning from each other.

In Chapter 1 Westphal takes the first step in his argument by making his case for the unavoidability of interpretation. The villain in Chapter 1, and throughout the book, is “naïve realism,” or just plain “realism,” since apparently Westphal does not think that there are any important distinctions to be made among those who identify themselves as realists (cf. 18–19).³ The

¹ J. K. A. Smith, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (2006); J. D. Caputo, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct? The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church* (2007); C. Raschke, *GloboChrist: The Great Commission Takes a Postmodern Turn* (2008); G. Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens* (2009).

² One of Westphal’s first publications attempted to draw out the theological import of Kant’s epistemology: “In Defense of the Thing in Itself,” *Kant-Studien* 59 (1968): 118–41.

³ In personal correspondence with the author he explained to me that in fact he does not equate naïve realism with realism *tout court*, since the anti-realism that he espouses does accept “what Kant calls empirical realism.” According to Westphal, this is “the realism that apprehends things as they should be apprehended *relative to the categories, prejudices, conceptual schemes, etc.* that are in play, understanding that

realist is the person who believes both that there is a world “out there” independent of what we think about it and that our thoughts and judgments about it can correspond to it as it really is. But Westphal thinks that the first proposition—that there exists a world independent of our mind—is insufficient to distinguish the realist because “in spite of appearances, no one really denies this” (18). The second proposition, about our minds being able to correspond to reality, is what realism is all about, and it is also the *problem* with realism and what makes it the enemy of the hermeneutic proposal that Westphal seeks to defend. Kant is “the paradigmatic antirealist. He insists that we don’t know the ‘thing in itself,’ the world as it truly is, but only the world as it appears to human—all too human—understanding” (19). Westphal, however, as he does elsewhere, revises Kant’s *a priori*: the structures that shape our understanding of the world are not necessary and universal to human knowers but are contingent and historically relative (cf. 152). Every claim about the world will then be an interpretation; I can never legitimately say that I “just see” the world as it is, I can only say that this is how I see the world, this is *my interpretation* of the world, which will be determined by *my historical situatedness*. The realists of biblical interpretation, Westphal contends, suppose that they can upproblematically “just see” what the text means, that no interpretation is necessary, naively overlooking the perspectival character of their readings.

To help us understand his general point Westphal borrows a couple of visual images from Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*.⁴ The first is the figure of a box in which we can see the lines that connect all eight of its corners (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H). Westphal rightly points out that, depending on how we look at it, either ABDC or ABFE could be considered the open top of the box. A good argument could be made for either one, neither can be excluded, both are acceptable interpretations. It would be wrong to insist that *only* ABDC is the open top or *only* ABFE

these lenses through which we see the world give us particular and contingent ‘realities’ and not the unqualified reality of the, for example, Aristotelian–Thomist realist claim. This is what I mean by anti-realism. There is ‘truth,’ the right account relative to a contingent and particular lens, but no ‘Truth’ free from any ‘contamination’ by such relativity. It corresponds to the Kantian distinction between empirical realism and transcendental idealism except that the transcendental idealism is not grounded in a set of universal and necessary categories but in a variety of historically, culturally, linguistically contingent and particular language games.” Because this clarification comes from personal correspondence and is not part of the book itself, I have decided not to adjust my evaluation in light of it but thought that it would be nevertheless helpful and fair to include it in a footnote.

⁴ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, II.xi.

is. Westphal next employs the famous “duck-rabbit” drawing (which Wittgenstein himself had taken from Joseph Jastrow). The figure is drawn in such a way that, again, depending on how we look at it, it could be interpreted either as a duck or a rabbit. Finally, Westphal presents a poem about six blind Hindustanis who, each unable to see the elephant that they are touching, interpret it according to the part of the beast that they happen to be examining. The poem concludes: “Though each was partly in the right / they all were in the wrong!”

Westphal hastens to add that he is not suggesting that, with regard to interpretation, “anything goes.” Of the box example he says “even though there were two correct answers to the question ‘Where is the open top?’ it does not mean that every answer is correct. ACEG, CDHG, EFHG, BDHF could all be seen as open sides, but not as the open top” (24). Of the duck-rabbit he says, “[O]f course it would be quite wrong to say the figure is a moose or a spider” (24). And of the Hindustanis he asserts that they were all right about parts of the whole but wrong about the whole itself and their mistake (in logic we would call it the fallacy of composition) was to take a given part for the whole.

But how has realism—understood as identical with the claim that our minds can correspond to a reality independent of them—been refuted, or even seriously challenged by these examples that Westphal offers? Has it not rather been assumed? Surely the ability to adjudicate between the various interpretations of the box, the duck-rabbit, and the elephant all take for granted that the judge has a correct understanding (i.e., his or her mind corresponds to reality) of what the interpretations are about. Could I say that interpretations X, Y, and Z are possible while A, B, and C are not unless I knew the thing that is being interpreted? In the case of the duck-rabbit, for example, do I not have to know that it is a drawing that could be reasonably interpreted either as a duck or as a rabbit?

We might also ask whether realism, as defined by Westphal, logically excludes multiple legitimate interpretations of the same reality, as he appears to believe it does. If I might be permitted to turn for a moment to someone who accepts the correspondence theory of truth, Thomas Aquinas, is it not a basic epistemological principle of his that a reality that is materially or numerically the same can be reasonably understood under different formalities? Thus, in a baseball a geometer sees a sphere, the natural philosopher sees a matter/form composite, a metaphysician sees an essence/existence composite, and so forth, and all have a concept of the ball that, *secundum quid*, corresponds to a mind-independent reality. Aquinas would be surprised to hear that truth as correspondence entails a hermeneutic theory of only-one-legitimate-interpretation-per-fact. To be

sure, Aquinas would not deny that mistakes can be made (and that we are even more often in error than in truth, as he says in the *De Anima* commentary) and therefore that some interpretations are just wrong, but he would not agree that several different interpretations of the same thing cannot all be right in a certain sense. The formal object/material object distinction is just one way Aquinas would recognize the possibility of multiple legitimate interpretations. This is not the place to consider the other ways.

Moving on to Chapter 2, here Westphal offers a brief synopsis of the work of two of Gadamer's influential nineteenth-century predecessors in hermeneutics, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey. Westphal outlines four key features of their romantic hermeneutics. (1) There is first what Ricoeur calls the "deregionalization" of hermeneutics: an attempt to develop a theory of interpretation that would apply not only to, say, religious or legal texts, but to all culturally significant texts regardless of subject matter. (2) Next there is the notion of the "hermeneutic circle": the continual to-and-fro movement in interpretation between part and whole in literary terms (e.g., from chapter to book and back again) and in extra-literary terms (e.g., from text to author and back again). (3) The goal of interpretation is taken to be an understanding of the mind of the author; this is the so-called "psychologism" of romantic hermeneutics. (4) Lastly, there is the aim of arriving at the *right* interpretation, which is thought to entail an escape from our own situatedness (which makes our readings merely perspectival) and to be achievable through construction of the proper hermeneutic method; this is the so-called "objectivism" of romantic hermeneutics. Dilthey expects that finding and using the right method will deliver us from the "anarchy of opinions," that is, from interpretive relativism (cf. 31–33).

Gadamer rejects the psychologism and objectivism of romantic hermeneutics, but before Westphal turns to his exposition of Gadamer he presents Nicholas Wolterstorff's critique of psychologism in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 4 his own critique of the objectivist hermeneutics of literary theorist E. D. Hirsch, Jr. For Wolterstorff the chief aim of interpretation should not be trying to win access to the private inner-life of the author's mind. "It is nothing of the sort," he explains. "It is to discover what assertings, what promissings, what requestings, what commandings, are rightly to be ascribed to the author on the ground of her having set down the words she did in the situation in which she set them down. Whatever the dark demons and bright angels of the author's inner self that led her to take up this stance in public, it is the stance itself that we hope by reading to recover, not the dark demons and bright angels"

(41–42).⁵ Westphal is pleased by Wolterstorff's rejection of psychologism but worries about his objectivist tendencies, which Westphal believes are in evidence when Wolterstorff writes that the issue in interpretation is "whether one's conclusions are correct, whether they are true—whether the discourser did in fact, by authoring or presenting this text, say what one claims he said" (43).⁶ Commenting on this remark, Westphal suggests that in Wolterstorff's opinion interpretation "seems to be a fairly simple matter of getting it right or getting it wrong" (43).

Like Wolterstorff, Hirsch eschews psychologism but endorses objectivism. As a hermeneutic objectivist, Hirsch maintains that the goal of interpretation is a reading of the text that is "universally" or "absolutely" valid (47). Such an interpretation will attain to "*the meaning of the text*"⁷ (47) which is "one, particular, self-identical, unchanging" (47).⁸ And it is the author and the author alone who is "*the determiner of textual meaning*" (47); nonetheless, the author's intention, Hirsch believes, is not about "private experiences, or mental processes, much less the author's personality. Authorial intention is about the public, shareable meanings the author offers us" (48). As with Wolterstorff, Westphal is glad for Hirsch's renunciation of psychologism but takes issue with his objectivism and his privileging of the author as the sole determiner of textual meaning. According to Westphal, Hirsch's hermeneutic theory is partly meant as a bulwark against an "anything goes" style relativism that would eliminate the author as the arbiter of textual meaning, but, Westphal urges, Hirsch seems to be tilting at windmills, as he never identifies anyone who actually defends this sort of relativism, and Westphal himself insists that no such person exists. Moreover, Westphal queries, why should we suppose that the reader has no role to play in determining the meaning of a text? Is it not possible that the author and reader co-determine textual meaning? Whatever the truth may be, Westphal asserts that the reason Hirsch is so adamant about the author as sole determiner of meaning is that, in Hirsch's view, it makes possible the stability of meaning that is necessary if we are ever to be able to claim that we *know* what a particular text is saying. But for Westphal this ideal is not self-evidently desirable and may even be dangerous. Is not this vision, he asks, "the product of a particular tradition, one that includes Plato and Descartes, whose ideal of knowledge

⁵ N. Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 93.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁷ E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

is largely determined by mathematics?" (54–55). Returning to the question of the interpretation of Holy Writ, Westphal asks: "Should those of us interested in interpreting the Bible assimilate its texts to a series of equations?" Scripture itself, Westphal maintains, hints at the necessity of a more pluralistic hermeneutics, since it seems to think that we need four different authors to interpret Jesus. "Must we assume that our interpretation is the only right one and that all the believers throughout Christian history who depart from our party line are simply wrong?" (55).

In Chapter 5, still setting the stage for his exposition of Gadamer, Westphal invokes Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, and Ricoeur against Hirsch's privileging of the author. Discussing the theories of the first three together, Westphal argues that they show that the author and reader are in fact *co-creators* of textual meaning and, furthermore, that neither of the two creates this meaning *ex nihilo* but they create through languages and traditions that they have inherited. Despite their "death of the author" rhetoric (the phrase that Roland Barthes seems to have coined in his famous essay by that title), what this French trio really aim to do, Westphal tells us, is not to eliminate the author but to de-center him and direct our attention to the multiple sources of meaning in any text. Ricoeur, making a similar point, will speak of the text's "autonomy": the text has a life of its own that, although it stems from various sources, is not wholly reducible to any one of them. But on the basis of any text's plurality of meanings Ricoeur—Westphal is keen to stress—does not advocate an "anything goes" hermeneutics. He thinks methods can be developed—in connection with Scriptural exegesis Westphal suggests grammatical-historical analysis—that permit the reader to distance himself from the influence of his cultural frame of reference and intelligently "argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations, to arbitrate between them, and to seek for agreement, even if this agreement always remains beyond our reach" (67).⁹

Chapters 6–9 are taken up with a presentation of Gadamer's hermeneutic theory. Many of the essential points that Westphal hopes to make through an appeal to Gadamer have already been made in the first five chapters. What the four chapters on Gadamer do perhaps is deepen those points and put them into Gadamerian language. To begin, Gadamer observes that we are all shaped by the multiple traditions that find their intersection in us and thus each one of us is what Gadamer calls a *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*, "an historically effected consciousness"

⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation*, ed. and trans. J. B. Thompson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 213.

(74). Another way of putting this is to say that our traditions endow us with “prejudices” (*Vorurteilen*), which are inescapable. Maybe we can slough off old prejudices and adopt new ones, but we can never achieve the Cartesian ideal of existing without prejudices (Heidegger’s claim about the impossibility of pure authenticity is obviously in the background). Because it seems that no two people have the exact same set of prejudices and because all of our prejudices cannot become completely transparent to us, the author’s and reader’s understandings of the text will never completely overlap and there will even be meanings in the text that the author did not intend. Consequently, textual interpretation cannot just be a matter of finding out what the author intended. But even if this were our aim, it could never be definitively achieved, since our prejudices would always prevent the total correspondence of understandings.

His account of the relativity of interpretation notwithstanding, Gadamer does not believe that all interpretations are equal. For Gadamer, textual interpretation is best likened to an artistic performance, such as of a play or a symphony. Every performance will be different and yet each is bound to the strictures of the work itself. As Westphal explains: “Because the presentation is ‘bound’ to the work, the former cannot be ‘arbitrary’ but must be ‘correct.’ In other words, if I am playing Hamlet I am not free to say ‘To fish or not to fish’ instead of ‘To be or not to be.’ Nor am I free to play an A-flat every time the score of the *Hammerklavier Sonata* calls for a C-sharp” (104). But, we might ask, is this claim sufficient to extricate Gadamer from the vortex of “anything goes”? It is fine to say that the interpreter is “bound” by the work or text, but is it not the very meaning of the work or text that Gadamer tells us is undecidable? We are tempted to ask in reply to Gadamer’s appeal to the text as the authoritative standard: Whose text? Which interpretation? I am certainly not unsympathetic to Gadamer’s hermeneutic theory and I understand the complexity of the problem. Still, I wonder whether Gadamer’s principles are consistent.

Gadamer thinks that the reader of a text does well to understand himself as a partner in conversation or dialogue with the text rather than as a disinterested observer of the text. The latter attitude is out of place because, presumably, it is the attitude of those who suppose that there is a single right way to understand the text. There are four vital features of Gadamer’s notion of interpretation as conversation, according to Westphal. First, as readers, we must be open to what the text is trying to tell us, even if it goes against us. Second, the questions that the text poses to us should provoke us, not so much to try to find answers as to propose other relevant questions. Third, we should be humble enough to let the

text lead us wherever it goes and not insist on continuing to assert our own opinions. Fourth, our goal in trying to understand the text should not be the victory of our viewpoint but “being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were” (117).¹⁰ This last has to do with what Gadamer calls the “fusion of horizons” (*Horizontverschmelzung*): our worldview is enlarged by another worldview communicated through the text.

Westphal says that Gadamer’s concept of “dialogue with the text implicates a dialogue among readers” (117), for “the changes in my horizon that reading and listening, questioning and being questioned lead to may or may not represent a deepened understanding of the subject matter” (117). Being in dialogue with other readers of the text can help me in this respect. Similarly, the six blind Hindustanis “might have come to a less inadequate view if they had shared their insights with one another and in the process broadened their horizons” (117).

Is Gadamer’s hermeneutic theory right? Westphal evidently thinks that it is. Indeed, Westphal claims that it “*describes* what actually happens when individuals and communities interpret classic texts” (120). But this assertion of Westphal sounds suspiciously like realism and its belief in the mind’s ability to conform to reality, does it not? Consistency, of course, would dictate that Westphal not hold up Gadamer’s theory as the only possible correct one. And as Westphal has shown himself over the years to be a committed anti-realist, I have no doubt that he is quite prepared to embrace this consistency.

The book’s next two chapters develop the Gadamerian conception of the relationship between textual interpretation and dialogue into a proposal for biblical hermeneutics, ecclesiology, and ecumenism. Toward this end, in Chapter 10, Westphal weaves together Gadamer’s ideas with the liberal political theory of John Rawls and the “communitarian” moral and social theory of Alasdair MacIntyre. According to Rawls, modern democratic societies can thrive only when the majority of the adherents of the various secular and religious “comprehensive doctrines” on offer are unwilling to impose their beliefs and values on other citizens and when there is an “overlapping consensus” among these groups about a form of political justice that entails promoting the rights of all citizens to free and equal citizenship. Westphal believes that this conception of Rawls can be appropriated as a model for how the many Christian traditions, which together constitute “*the church of Jesus Christ*” (133), should relate to each other. Since no single tradition can claim to have the one true interpreta-

¹⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall, 2d ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 379.

tion of Scripture, it is best for all to work together to form an overlapping consensus—which Westphal sees as a type of *Horizontverschmelzung*—on certain doctrinal points that are not unique to any of the traditions but which all accept. While Westphal says that MacIntyre’s communitarianism, with the social homogeneity that it prizes, is politically dangerous, it is not without its ecclesiological uses. It will not do for showing us how one tradition should comport with another but it can instruct on the internal organization of each tradition. “Communitarianism can be the model of the comprehensive integrity of the particular traditions that constitute this plurality [of the church of Christ] and that keep Christianity from being reduced to its least common denominator” (133).

The theme of Chapter 10 is continued into Chapter 11. It seems that any overlapping consensus that the different Christian traditions might achieve, although important for peaceful, constructive relations among Christians, will probably be insufficient for providing meaning for the whole of Christian life. For such meaning the individual traditions—understood in a communitarian way—with their “rich networks of beliefs and practices” (139) would appear to be indispensable. Westphal also finds the “perspectivism” of MacIntyre’s brand of communitarianism theologically useful. He notes that MacIntyre’s moral/social theory teaches us that “different traditions have not only different conceptions of justice but also different conceptions of rationality” (141). So, substantive debates cannot be resolved by appeals to “Reason” since the meaning of reason fluctuates between traditions. A similar consideration applies to theological debates: “Christians who appeal to ‘Scripture’ as the highest criterion, right and proper as that is” are not “immune from the questions, ‘Whose Scripture?’ ‘The Bible according to whom?’” (141).

Are there any real life examples of the liberal/communitarian ecclesiological and ecumenical model sketched by Westphal? He offers the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, signed in 1999 by the Lutheran World Federation and the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity as just such an example. Since the document was signed only by Lutherans and Catholics, Westphal acknowledges that it is not yet a complete overlapping consensus. But he thinks that it still gives us some kind of picture of what he has in mind.

We come now to Chapter 12, the book’s final chapter. Westphal realizes that Scripture is not a merely human document (although it is also that) but “the Word of God” (147), the Holy Spirit having inspired its human authors. What is more, the Spirit aids believers in the interpretation of Scripture: “the Holy Spirit was not only directly involved in the creation of the Bible . . . but also continues to guide the church in understanding

it" (149). He adds, however—drawing in different ways from Barth and Levinas—that we must distinguish between the purity of God's self-communication, which Westphal calls "revelation" in the strict sense, and "religion," which is the impure, imperfect human interpretation of revelation. Our goal should be to open ourselves as best we can to God's revelation, but given our hermeneutic finitude, it will always be "an unfinished task, approximated to a greater or lesser degree as we become better or worse listeners to the Word of God" (155). While in revelation "God speaks to us καθ' αὐτό, our hearing is always religion, that is, human, all too human" (155). Religion, therefore, must see itself as "relative and penultimate in spite of its perennial tendency to take itself to be absolute and ultimate" (154). And this is how Westphal would have each Christian tradition understand itself too. Hence, again, his plea for a Rawlsian ecclesiology.

Westphal himself belongs to the Reformed tradition—as some of his views may have already intimated—but the book is addressed to Christians of all traditions. In the present venue it makes sense to ask about the book's value for Catholics. Gadamer and Ricoeur have a history in Catholic theology, even at relatively high levels. John Paul II invited them to the Summer colloquia he held with intellectuals at Castel Gandolfo. And the Pontifical Biblical Commission includes summaries of their theories in its 1993 document "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church." Though there was definitely an interest in continental hermeneutic theory in an older generation of Catholic theologians, I am not certain how strong this interest is among the present generation. Westphal's book might serve as a useful introduction to continental hermeneutic theory for this new generation, although there are also books on the topic by Catholic authors.¹¹ For those Catholic theologians already familiar with the likes of Gadamer and Ricoeur, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation?* could help to deepen their understanding.

I do not think many Catholic theologians would quarrel with the idea that our understanding of revelation can always improve, that we are never at such a state that we could not understand it better. "As the centuries succeed one another," *Dei Verbum* states, "the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her" (§8). This is just a way of putting the widely accepted notion of development of doctrine. And again, few Catholic theologians would have trouble accepting that there can be multiple valid interpretations of Scripture. Is not the "fourfold sense" of Scripture a very traditional teaching? And consider Aquinas's hermeneu-

¹¹ For example, G. T. Montague, *Understanding the Bible: A Basic Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997).

tic liberality: "Even if commentators adapt certain truths to the sacred text that were not understood by the author, without doubt the Holy Spirit understood them, since he is the principal author of Holy Scripture. Every truth, then, that can be adapted to the sacred text without prejudice to the literal sense, is the sense of Holy Scripture."¹² Here, in a nutshell, seem to be some of the key things that Westphal wants to get from Gadamer: plurality of interpretations, limits for valid interpretation, and the human author's non-mastery of the text.

But Catholic theology does not take the above considerations to exclude the possibility of definitively settling certain disputes: the Arian, Monophysite, and Sabellian interpretations of Scripture, among others, have been definitively set aside. On the Catholic view, we can get our interpretations right enough, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to be able to close some doors. It is the business especially of the Church's magisterium, likewise guided by the Spirit (without which it could do nothing), to make such determinations binding. But it is not obvious that Westphal would accept the legitimacy of such theology, or this teaching office, or their marginalizing gestures. I see no reason why he would not want to include Valentinians or Pelagians in the larger church he envisions that is respectfully striving for overlapping consensus. Here we pass directly into Westphal's dubious relativizing of all Christian traditions. Catholic theology cannot follow him very far here. Whereas there is no problem with accepting that non-Catholic traditions (the Eastern Orthodox traditions, who have a privileged rank here, are a separate case) all contain many elements of truth, Catholic theology holds that there is a oneness to the Church that is not only invisible but visible. No doubt Westphal sees this as hubristic, as grossly lacking in epistemic humility, since it would appear that, for him, the Spirit only hovers *over* the historical, visible Church but never works *in* and *through* her, being indissolubly wedded to her. While we might try to convince him that this latter conception of the Church is what is taught by revelation itself, his "hermeneutics of suspicion" (another, quieter theme in the book, which there was no time to treat in this review) would "see through" every attempted defense of this "dangerous" ecclesiological vision.¹³ At that point perhaps we must see that our "spade is turned" and that the only option left is to follow Wittgenstein's advice and say: "This is simply what we do," or more aptly: "This is simply what we believe."

¹² Thomas Aquinas, *De Potentia*, q. 4, a. 1.

¹³ Westphal's most sustained case for a Christian hermeneutics of suspicion appears in *Suspicion and Faith: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998).

Despite these important points of difference, which cannot be overlooked, there is still much that can be learned from Westphal's informative and challenging book, and I think that anyone who finds the topic intriguing will discover that it is definitely worthy of study. **N·V**

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