

kenotic Christology (which is not so much the relinquishing of attributes but an intimate and full presence of God with humanity). A key concept for this Christology is 'Wisdom'; and a key expression of this inclusive Christology (one which properly embraces nature) is beauty. She then grapples with atonement and theodicy, before culminating with an emphasis on 'wonder' as a key concept in her eschatology.

It is difficult to summarise such a rich and complex work. It is a book which invites careful study and could work very effectively as a graduate-level textbook. The moments I enjoyed most are often incidental to the main argument (and to be honest provided a helpful summary of books which I have not read). So, for example, in her discussion of evolutionary psychology, I found her summaries of both Susan McKinnon (who argues that evolutionary psychology reflects certain cultural values around gender and sexual double standards) and Peter Munz (who argues that this movement is a revival of positivism) very compelling and interesting. In every area she provides a helpful map and survey of the debates to date.

This is a distinctive contribution to the debate around the implications of contemporary biology and theology. Thus far most of the contributions have been heavily influenced by process theology or Teilhard de Chardin or certain aspects of the work of Karl Rahner. This volume brings a certain reading of Bulgakov and Balthasar into the arena. These are voices not normally heeded in this area; the result is a distinctive approach. As a result of this book, the discourse has changed.

Ian Markham

Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia 22304, USA

imarkham@vts.edu

doi:10.1017/S0036930611000317

Paul A. Macdonald, Jr., *Knowledge and the Transcendent: An Inquiry into the Mind's Relationship to God* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), pp. xxiii+306. \$69.95.

In this excellent debut monograph, Paul Macdonald succeeds in showing 'how Thomistic epistemology allows us properly to conceive the mind-world and mind-God relationships' (p. xxii). Showing himself adept at navigating not only the writing of Thomas Aquinas himself but also contemporary scholars of Aquinas as well as other contemporary philosophical theologians and contemporary analytic philosophers, Macdonald presents a full-throated defence of theological realism.

Macdonald has divided the book into three sections. In the first he shows the problems which arise when philosophical theology falls into the errors

of subjectivism and scepticism. Macdonald diagnoses the distinctly modern picture of human subjectivity whereby 'the mind is bound in what it can know, and God radically transcends the mind'. As a result of this picture God is outside a 'cognitive boundary' and this 'prevents the mind from coming to know God objectively' (p. 43).

In the second section of the book, Macdonald turns to Thomas for an account of how to overcome this cognitive boundary. For Thomas, Macdonald argues, 'what ensures direct realism in sensation is formal causality, or sensible forms inhering in the senses, thereby conforming our senses to the sensible forms or features that external objects actually possess' (p. 102). Instead of the boundary between the mind and the world, Macdonald notes that 'mind' for Aquinas (and Aristotle before him) 'is simply a capacity (and moreover a natural capacity) for being "informed" by the world' (p. 113). One of the strengths of the book is that Macdonald puts Thomas into conversation with John McDowell's 'naturalized Platonism' and acquired 'second nature'. Thus Macdonald's essay is not merely of historical interest, but puts Thomas' epistemology into conversation with contemporary concerns. Like Thomas, Macdonald's philosophical interest is at the service of increased theological understanding. In chapter 4, Macdonald considers the beatific vision and argues 'the blessed know or "see" God because God unites the glorified minds of the blessed . . . to God's self . . . not because God eradicates a boundary that encloses the space in which those capacities are actualized or exercised' (p. 171). Macdonald rounds out his discussion with a chapter on how Thomistic epistemology relates to knowing God in this life, when 'even in faith we remain to God as to one "unknown"' (p. 173).

In the third section of the book, Macdonald argues rightly that Thomas was unaware of the nature/grace dualism which has plagued so much modern theology. Macdonald argues 'we can protect God's divine transcendence in theological epistemology by equating objectivity with openness' (p. 283). This openness prevents 'objectivity' from becoming 'onto-theology'.

I have one small reservation about this otherwise excellent book. I do not see why Macdonald included the last chapter. He spends the chapter defending his realist conception of theology against the objections of Peter Byrne, who argues that 'realist' disciplines must 'show the accumulation of reliable belief' (p. 265). Yet Byrne's challenge seems rather thin. Besides this reservation, I have a call for further study. As Macdonald notes, Thomas' philosophical work came at the service of his theological commitments. Those theological commitments were based on studying God's revelation in light of the tradition which handed it down. Unfortunately, much analytical Thomism neglects Thomas' scriptural commentaries and his use

of earlier figures in the tradition. I hope Macdonald's future work brings his philosophical acumen and textual analysis to bear on, for example, Thomas' commentary on 1 Corinthians and Paul's teaching on faith and knowledge or Thomas' use of Augustine. In this way, philosophical theology will not be a prolegomenon to faith, but an exploration of what God has revealed to human beings.

Scott D. Moringiello

Villanova University, Villanova, PA 19085, USA

scott.moringiello@villanova.edu

doi:10.1017/S0036930611000329

Thomas Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus and Genesis: A Study of Competition in Early Christian Hermeneutics*, *Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplement*, 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), pp. xv+250. \$34.95.

Holsinger-Friesen's book is a welcome addition to Irenaeus scholarship. Although readers often associate Irenaeus with 'the rule of faith' or 'recapitulation', Holsinger-Friesen joins a growing group of scholars who have turned their attention to Irenaeus' scriptural exegesis. Although there may not be a single 'key' text around which the disagreement between Irenaeus and his 'Gnostic' opponents centred, Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:7 'notably stand out amongst a crowd of candidates' (p. 106). In order to show how Irenaeus engaged in this disagreement, Holsinger-Friesen first explains Irenaeus' characterisation of his Ophite and Valentinian opponents (in chapter 2), then moves on to a consideration of Irenaeus' interpretation of Gen 1:27 in selections from books 3 and 4 of the *Adversus Haereses* (in chapter 3), and Gen 2:7 in selections from book 5 of the *Adversus Haereses* (in chapter 4).

Chapter 1 is a lengthy literature review which argues 'Harnack's portrayal of Irenaeus' recapitulation had a persistent, though subtle influence on Irenaeus scholarship throughout the past century' (p. 7). Holsinger-Friesen is right to shift his discussion to Irenaeus exegesis, which his theology of recapitulation summarised rather than drove, but this literature review ended up adding little to the main thrust of the book's argument.

In chapter 2, although he makes some reference to the texts found at Nag Hammadi, Holsinger-Friesen focuses on Irenaeus' opponents as Irenaeus portrays them. He does so because 'Irenaeus's depictions described an objective phenomenon . . . to a reasonable . . . degree of accuracy'. Moreover, 'it is in pursuit of our primarily theological and hermeneutical interests . . . that our inquiry takes shape' (p. 50). This focus allows Holsinger-Friesen to explore the contours of Irenaeus' exegetical method.