Passion for Nothing: Kierkegaard's Apophatic Theology. By Peter Kline. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017. xvii + 204 pages. $79.00.
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The words "apophasis" and "apophatic" do not appear at all in Kierkegaard's authorship. At first glance, then, it may seem surprising that a book subtitled *Kierkegaard's Apophatic Theology* has been published. Surely an "apophatic theology" would entail using the term "apophatic"! If, however, one attends to the meaning of this terminology, possibilities begin to emerge. "Apophasis" is derived from the Greek verb *phanai*, "to say," and the prefix *apo*, "off" or "away from," and so it has come to connote "denial" or "negation." Consequently, an "apophatic theology" is a negative theology, wherein discourse about God is couched in terms of what God is *not*. The paradigmatic instance of this type of theology is found in the writings of a fifth-century Syrian monk known to posterity as Dionysius the Areopagite—a pseudonym derived from Acts 17:34. For Dionysius, the believer's ascent to God is made possible by a progressive stripping away of familiar, and thus delimiting, theological concepts. "[The supreme Cause] does not live nor is it life. It is not a substance, nor is it eternity or time," he writes in *The Mystical Theology*.

To say that Kierkegaard is an "apophatic theologian" would seem to imply that a similar mode of discourse is prominent in the Dane's authorship—an implication that Peter Kline fleshes out in his new book, *Passion for Nothing: Kierkegaard's Apophatic Theology*. As he puts it, "The organizing claim of this book is that Kierkegaard's authorship is premised upon an apophatically conceived and enacted idea of God or the absolute" (1). Kline acknowledges at the outset that his project is not wholly novel—he cites David Law's 1993 monograph *Kierkegaard as Negative Theologian* as a case in point—but he intends to devote needed attention to "Kierkegaard's negative theological core, namely, infinite reduplication, which is the conceptual (un)ground of the articulation of both God and the self as 'nothing'" (3). He also wants to demonstrate that Kierkegaard can be productively read alongside Neoplatonic thinkers such as the German mystic Meister Eckhart (who was, in fact, influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius). These overarching tasks are carried out across six chapters. The first provides a general orientation to the topic, which focuses on Kierkegaard's understanding of "God's non-objectivity" and, in turn, of how it constitutes an "existential, spiritual task" (27) for the human being. Chapter 2 argues that Kierkegaard's use of pseudonymity and indirect communication are corollaries of his apophatic theological commitments. Chapter 3 continues to analyze Kierkegaard's "concept of God" (64), ultimately centering on the notion of infinite "reduplication" (*Fordobelse*), which suggests that God, as infinite freedom and thus

sheer movement, is impossible to circumscribe: "God is a nothin-ing, neither this nor that, neither here nor there, neither something nor nothing, neither substance nor subject" (85). Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are collectively shorter than their predecessors, marking a "shift" from theory to "lived enactment" (107). That is to say, they maintain that, for Kierkegaard, the so-called theological virtues of faith, hope, and love are actions of giving away, of becoming nothing—"over again, always again" (176).

The above synopsis may imply that Kline's book is a fairly typical scholarly exercise, but it is nothing of the sort. Recognizing that the very nature of his project precludes hard and fast "conclusions" about Kierkegaard's thinking, Kline attempts to personalize and, in a certain sense, to delegitimize his scholarly bona fides. *Passion for Nothing* not only incorporates his own (expressionistic, perhaps Rothko-esque) artwork, but it also includes a handful of informal written sections such as an opening "Attunement" and closing "In-Conclusion," not to mention a general impishness with language (e.g., terms such as "(un)ground" and "in-completion"). Whether or not these features are attractive or off-putting (or even both simultaneously) will depend on the reader. Indeed, I found myself wanting fewer rhetorical flourishes and, at times, more scholarly gravitas (Kline does not provide cross-references to Kierkegaard's writings in Danish, and he occasionally smooths over hermeneutical-cum-historical problems). And yet, I sympathized with Kline's desire to harmonize form and content, and I appreciated the fact that, despite being a young academic, he was willing to take risks. *Passion for Nothing* is a puzzling yet intriguing text—one that advances an important thesis with one hand and erases it with the other. As Kline writes in the Preface, "Let all that follows be un-said into the gap—" (x).

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Authentic Liturgical Renewal in Contemporary Perspective. Edited by Uwe Michael Lang. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2017. x + 197 pages. $26.95.
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This collection of papers given at the 2016 Sacra Liturgia Conference offers an important glimpse into the thinking of those who support a "reform of the reform" for the Roman Catholic liturgy. Evident in each contribution is care about and reverence for the liturgy of the church. Contributors raise good questions about excessive verbalization in the current liturgy (Charbal Pazat de Lys 43) and about how the principles enunciated in *Sacrosanctum*