

have struck a balance between faith and history, even if from the quotations, history had the whip hand. It has to be said that not for the first time there is quite a bit of unnecessary biographical material. Barth refused to take scholarly exegesis seriously, so is rather summarily dismissed. Lincoln admits that viewing the incarnation as the 'implanting of God-consciousness' might be just as problematic in its divine interventionism as traditional 'hypostatic union'. He insists that all that is being requested is the acknowledgement that there is a variety of options. (Actually they amount to two: affirming or denying the virgin conception.) For there is more to truth than 'literal truth'. Spong here is preferred to Machen, for scriptural truth is 'polyphonic and dialogical'. The ancients did not intend everything to be taken literally. Yet in our contemporary terms Jesus must have had a Y-chromosome from some biological father, for him to be an individual human being. 'Vive la difference.'

Belief in the virginal conception, then, served to safeguard Jesus' humanity against a variety of docetic views. (Just how is not terribly clear.) A belief in exalted Christ got read back into eternity via the conception of an extraordinary kind. In fact if God assumed anything in the incarnation it was 'a personal body, that is Jesus of Nazareth' (p. 278) and persons are formed in narratives (Kelsey) of transformation. Sinless is as sinless does, and obedience gets vindicated by resurrection. Meanwhile, a Chalcedonian 'hypostasis' is not the same thing as a 'person', so Jesus could well have had two of the latter. Hence: 'The divine subject God the Son, who takes on the human subject Jesus in the incarnation' (pp. 286–7). There is a lot going on in this book and the range is impressive, even if some of the judgements are less so.

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Don Capps, *At Home in the World: A Study in Psychoanalysis, Religion and Art* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2013), pp. 212. £17.50/\$35.00.

In this book, Don Capps further pursues his interest in men and religion, a topic he also explored in his earlier books *Men, Religion and Melancholia* and *Men and their Religion*. Moving beyond a focus on the adolescent years, Capps now considers how adult men yearn to find a sense of being 'at home in the world', and how this quest is driven by the melancholy which emerges and lingers after the early childhood emotional separation of a boy from his

mother, beginning around age 3. Capps contends that 'this sense of having lost something precious remains with us throughout our lives' (p. xii), and that this loss shapes a man's religious sensibilities and capacities, if not the actual content of religious beliefs.

What is distinct about Capps' approach is his use of specific pieces of art to illustrate and reinforce his claims; he centres throughout on the question of 'how art works assist in our efforts to recover creatively from the loss of the loved one we experienced in early childhood' (p. xx). Capps also draws heavily on the work of Freud and Erikson, particularly as he argues for the way in which Freud's 'melancholy self' is one of the selves in Erikson termed the 'composite self'. Capps' aim is to show how specific art works reflect that melancholy self.

Among the works of art Capps discusses are such famous pieces as DaVinci's *Mona Lisa*, James McNeill Whistler's *The Artist's Mother* and Norman Rockwell's *Shuffleton's Barbershop*. Capps digs deeply into each artist's own biography, lifting up elements of the artists' life stories which for him are characteristic of the melancholy self and its regard for the mother figure and the longing to feel at home. Supporting his claims with the work of various biographers and art critics, Capps details the ways in which each painting features the melancholy self of the artist and in turn may elicit the melancholy self in its viewers. In this way, the book's claims are supported in a multifaceted manner throughout – a reader may find varying amounts of compelling evidence for the melancholy self in, for instance, the contents of the painting itself, or in the artist's life circumstances, or in how the painting has historically been received and satirised. In light of this multifaceted treatment, perhaps Capps' argument would be better stated more broadly – namely, that the work of art itself is not the sole conveyor of the melancholy self, but that the painting reflects the artist's melancholy self, or that the painting evokes a sense of honour, hope or humour (all of which are characteristic of the melancholy self, for Capps) from the one who beholds it. These distinctions would help the reader navigate the footing on which Capps' argument rests as he moves quickly and fluidly among and between analysis of psychobiography, art criticism and historical backdrop.

The book would be enhanced, I believe, if it were to address and explore questions of generalisability and cultural specificity, such as were raised in the mind of this reader. Without situating his argument in this way, Capps leaves the reader to wonder whether these examples of artists and artwork are indeed meant to resonate with a universal developmental experience in men of all cultures and eras. I wonder what new richness might be added to Capps' claims were he to consider how the same works of art have been

perceived by viewers in non-Western contexts, or how the melancholy self may be represented in non-Western works of art. Nonetheless, this book does offer an intriguing foray into the dynamic dialogue which emerges from psychoanalysis, religion and art.

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