

the words of God into the languages of the people they encountered in their travels. These two acts, translating and teaching, became both the conduit for the spread of Christianity (and he affirms that God's message of love ought to be spoken) but also, and this is his real worry, the means that allowed hegemony and homogeneity to overtake freedom, life, and cultural agency. When the theological education that began in the hands of a few men in China and the Congo became the provenance of powerful institutions like Duke, Yale, Wheaton, and Fuller, the consequences of white self-sufficient masculinity emerged even more.

Jennings tells this story through a hand that writes for ear and eye: he has poetry and prose, memoir and discourse, reflection and assertion. The chapters naturally build upon one another as Jennings explores how theological education can be become better at the task of forming folks for service. Some of the stories and poems about his students will make you sad; the ones that show the pale underbellies of his colleagues might make you squirm. But this book is not just recounting all that is wrong. It is a work about constructing hope. He is telling us that we are in both a cultural shift and an eschatological moment. It is a moment where reorientation offers the possibility of releasing us from the reckoning ahead. *After Whiteness* is useful for anyone teaching in a seminary or college theology department. Those in the parish or the parsonage will find it an instructive text on how churches can commit themselves to a better, more faithful, discipleship.

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The Father of Lights: A Theology of Beauty. By Junius Johnson. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. xiv + 210 pages. \$32.00 (paper).
 doi: 10.1017/hor.2021.70

Junius Johnson's *The Father of Lights: A Theology of Beauty* contributes to theological studies with a philosophical argument for the objective experience of beauty. Johnson distinguishes his work from other twentieth-century efforts, and in particular the benchmark volumes of Hans Urs von Balthasar, in method and substance. Rather than theological aesthetics, which Johnson defines as reflections on art, Johnson declares that his ambition is to engage beauty directly to explore its nature and relation to theological realities revealed by God in Christ. For readers of von Balthasar, this distinction may not appear as clear-cut as Johnson suggests in light of von Balthasar's own references to beauty's appearance within the object-subject

relation (*Glory of the Lord*, volume 1)¹ and beauty's distinct relation to God's glory in Scripture (*Glory of the Lord*, volumes 6 and 7).² Unlike von Balthasar, though, Johnson's constructive method places his theological interlocutors in the background. Thinkers like Bonaventure, Aquinas, and von Balthasar, as much as philosophers like Heidegger, Buber, Derrida, and Levinas, are present, even if seldom mentioned by name.

Johnson contends that the experience of beauty offers a distinctive kind of continuation, or a "co-seeing," of the natural beauty of creation (what differs from God) simultaneously with a partial and imperfect view of divinity (God's transcendence). Beauty inheres within creation, as much as it draws those who encounter it beyond creation and to beauty's source and end in God. For Johnson, beauty is thoroughly teleological. It belongs to every created thing by dint of the good ordering of God's creative work, and it always points beyond the natural world to its source and end in God. The idea of *anamnesis* thus serves a double function for Johnson. On the one hand, it points back to the foundation of beauty in the givenness of creation itself—it reflects the God who gifts the world. On the other, it points toward God as its referent and end—it awakens the subject to this end as well.

Humans have creative power with respect to beauty, but they cannot rightly choose to ignore the objectivity of what presents itself to them. Subjectivity must recognize and rightly relate to the world that is given. Here phenomenology and semiotics intersect the teleological vision with which Johnson begins. Johnson rebuffs phenomenological and linguistic turns without transcendent grounds (e.g., Heidegger) or objective signification (e.g., Derrida, Eco); however, he also embraces the power of language as an expression where continued creative capaciousness reflects beauty's orientation to the infinity of a God whose measure exceeds creation's image.

The initial legwork of Johnson's argument supports his later focus on beauty's role in sacraments (especially the Eucharist) and the ecstatic function of beauty (in icons and the iconic function of saints). These chapters also point to questions that encroach from the margins of the book, and in particular the relation of beauty to form and to drama. Johnson's commitment to the objectivity of beauty shines in his explanation of *res*, and the

¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Seeing the Form*, vol. 1, ed. John Riches, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T&T Clark), 1961.

² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Theology: The Old Covenant*, vol. 6, ed. John Riches, trans. Brian McNeil, C.R.V. and Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T&T Clark), 1991; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Theology: The New Covenant*, vol. 7, ed. John Riches, trans. Brian McNeil, C.R.V. (Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T&T Clark), 1989.

beauty particular to *res sacramenti*. However, the deeper Johnson moves into the territory of sacrament and beauty's iconic peregrination, the more do his omissions of the categories of form and drama become noticeable. Readers may wonder why Johnson has foregone these categories, which seem apposite when engaging beauty's phenomenology of appearance as well as its relation to communal and ecclesial experiences.

Johnson's efforts in presenting a case for beauty as objective, recognizable, and efficacious are clear and persuasive. This book will satisfy those who recognize the historic voices behind Johnson, as much as those who approach his arguments without a deeper knowledge of the scope that informs his position. It will be useful both in undergraduate and graduate classrooms. It is an academic asset to any library. The scriptural grounds for this book, and its commitment to the Christian tradition, make it valuable to all who wish to understand and offer evidence in support of beauty as much more than what is simply in the eye of the beholder.

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Avery Dulles: Essential Writings from America Magazine. Edited by James T. Keane. Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2019. xxiv + 354 pages. \$24.95 (paper).

doi: 10.1017/hor.2021.91

In this volume, James T. Keane draws together a broad selection of Avery Dulles' contributions to *America* magazine. The appreciations and reflections Dulles penned on the work of scholars who shaped theology before, during, and after Vatican II offer context for Dulles' intellectual world. Similarly, the introduction by James Martin, SJ, provides a portrait of Dulles that depicts him as personally and professionally generous, diligent in his vocation as a theologian and Jesuit, and deeply faithful to Christ and the church.

The collection is divided into several sections. "Reports and Reflections" illustrates how Dulles engaged with Vatican II as well as questions related to faith, infallibility, and authoritative teaching. He combined theological precision with pastoral care in addressing the conscientious reception of *Humanae Vitae*, and his essays on the teaching authority of episcopal conferences point to another ongoing issue in the church. "Lectures and Addresses," the second section, provides access to Dulles' ideas later in his career. This portion composes the majority of the book, and a third of its texts center on John Paul II. Here as elsewhere, the generous reading Dulles gave to other authors is on display, even as his reading of John Paul is seldom