

necessary') and an opening for conversation, not to detract from the significant and substantial contributions of Schumacher's *Theological Philosophy*.  
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Stephen M. Fields, *Analogies of Transcendence: An Essay on Nature, Grace and Modernity* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2016), pp. ix + 294. \$69.95.

The serene language of this brilliant argument courteously leads the reader through what could easily have become a dizzying kaleidoscope of fundamental themes, each densely packed with more lines to pursue and implications to unfold than any one reader will likely manage. Yet reading the book arouses a kind of musing hopefulness, as if one had been gazing at a vast landscape whose intrinsic patterns now begin to show themselves, gracing the beholder with a sense of their intelligibility. Fields, a Jesuit theologian on the faculty of Georgetown University, has previously published on Aquinas, Newman, Balthasar, and especially Rahner, so a capacious and equable perspective should come as no surprise.

Many readers already familiar with ongoing debates over the legacy of neo-Thomism and its insistence on the hypothesis of a pure nature to which grace is extrinsic (and its correlate, an emaciated 'autonomous' natural reason) will be intrigued by the book's thesis. Fields is genuinely irenic in his appreciation of the concerns motivating the pure nature school, but he is also creatively on the de Lubac side of this debate – forging a truly constructive position that underscores the congenial conversion of nature by grace and ensures both divine and human freedom. In Fields' account, God's eternal decision savingly to include the creaturely other within beatific life is the ground both of every creature's existence and also motivates human persons towards their supernatural destiny. Moreover, Fields rightly unfolds the analogy between grace and nature as rooted in the Word as the self-communication of God who of course is the source of both grace and nature (and of their similarity and distinction). As Fields writes, 'Created, presided over, and incarnated by the Logos, nature cannot be absolutely alien to the life of grace. The Word refashions from within what he himself primordially fashioned and conservingly guides' (p. 112).

Fields develops this constructive position in the central chapter of his book. Three preceding chapters expose the problem and various attempted solutions, and three succeeding chapters test the constructive position by applying it creatively to ongoing difficulties in theology. The work

concludes with a somewhat pastorally oriented Afterword that many readers may find a good entry point, setting as it does the whole project in the contemporary landscape of the church's kerygmatic mission. Finally, Fields offers in an appendix a succinct and highly useful taxonomy of contemporary approaches to the theology of the symbol.

The work begins with a fresh application of Louis Dupré's seminal analysis of the modern condition (especially as offered in *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (Yale, 1993)). Fields deploys Dupré's account of the late medieval dissolution of the participatory relationship among human knowing, the objective intelligible reality of the cosmos, and the divine source of both. Interestingly, he emphasises inherent instabilities in the thought of Aquinas, and a triumph of the (increasingly naturalised) agent intellect over Augustinian illumination as crucial to the breakdown in the medieval understanding of nature and grace. It does seem odd that Fields apparently sees no role for nominalist thought in the account of this breakdown (though it was a major feature of Dupré's analysis). But Fields instead argues that 'modernity begins with the West's recovery of Aristotle and its clash with the reigning Augustinian synthesis. The tentacles of a theory of pure nature independent of grace that is added on to it as a free-standing foundation extend widely through the seven hundred years of our purview' (p. 38).

In the second and third chapters, Fields probes nineteenth- and twentieth-century attempts to overcome the 'estrangement between nature and grace', especially drawing on Möhler, Hegel, de Lubac, Max Seckler on Aquinas, Rahner, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. All the while, he helpfully points towards the lingering questions and unsatisfactory readings that he will address in the central constructive chapter 4 discussed above. In the fifth through the seventh chapters, Fields tests his thesis by showing what good work it can do on the question of theological aesthetics, the relation of divine love to a spontaneously evolving creation and the relation of Christianity to other religions.

This is an essay in the best sense – thought-provoking, hugely insightful, full of possible lines for further inquiry. It will certainly be of considerable interest to scholars in the fields of historical and systematic theology, and along with recent works by Cyril O'Regan, Hans Boersma and Charles Taylor will advance our reflection on contemporary thought's re-engagement with grace, and contemporary culture's re-enchanted longing for the supernatural.

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