

Syrian Orthodox rites which help to shed some light on what Gregory may have known. Instead, Mikoski gives a generic Eastern format derived from Whitaker's collection. He also draws heavily on Maxwell Johnson's work, which is quite sound, but in contrast to his up-to-date bibliography on the thought of Gregory, he has relied on the first edition of Johnson. He ignores entirely this reviewer's own work on baptism, which in turn was used by Johnson in his revised second edition. This becomes more problematic with Calvin. Mikoski seems to have not known or totally ignored this reviewer's essay on Calvin in this journal (vol. 48, 1995, pp. 55–78) which corrected H. O. Old's account, and showed clearly the disconnect between Calvin's trinitarian baptismal theology and the Genevan liturgy. This is because Calvin used Farel's rite, and most changes were made in the explications and not in the prayers. Thus we need to know what is from Calvin and what is from Farel. It may well be that the final result illustrates Mikoski's thesis, but not to acknowledge the disconnect between Calvin's theology and Farel's liturgical antecedent seems misleading and calls into question the soundness of some of the conclusions drawn in this chapter. To the broad brush strokes in the concluding chapter, Mikoski could have added that preaching on the Trinity other than on Trinity Sunday, and on baptism other than just at baptisms, might also be important ingredients in a pedagogy for a trinitarian life. But most alarming is the suggestion that the baptismal liturgy needs to be more pedagogical. Most liturgical scholars would feel that it needs to become more doxological, because people learn their theology from prayer, not explication. Even so, this book is an important stimulus for working out a practical approach to trinitarian teaching.

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Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. ix + 230. £13.00.

This contribution to contemporary French philosophical phenomenology is a decisive response to the texture of love – both human and divine. Marion invites the reader to join him in this (necessarily) first-person meditation on the logic, coherence and ultimacy of love (pp. 4, 9). As an apology for love's logic, this *Phenomenon* presents itself as an amorous performance. As a demonstration of love's coherence, Marion shows that the erotic phenomenon is consistent 'all the way up' – neither *eros* and *agape*, nor any other, can divide where love unites in difference. This insight deconstructs the platitudinous division

between *agape* and *eros*; these designate only coinherent moments in love's cohesive singularity (pp. 220–1). Ultimately, the logic and coherence of love serve Marion's primary purpose: showing how love is excessively original. Love surpasses even the Being of beings. Loving-thinking, thinking-loving – finally the phenomenon of love itself – embraces and gives what is. Love shows philosophy the way beyond itself.

The *Erotic Phenomenon* unfolds in six movements. The first traces the power of vanity to disrupt the presumptuous hegemony of what is, and thinking about what is, insofar as it is. 'Assurance' is of more primal concern than is 'certainty' because the apparent finality and ultimacy of what is can always be destabilised by asking 'What's the use?' (pp. 22–3). Marion does not attempt the substitution of a 'values' discourse for a 'facts' discourse: both how something is and whether something is are irrelevant concerns if it is impossible to say why. Only love can answer the 'Why?' of vanity (p. 23). In the second movement, primal self-love is shown to be impossible. Attempting to foundationally love oneself actually leads to self-hatred and hatred of all others. The third movement is an attempted redirection: the lover gives selfassuredlessly – irrespective of another to love the lover's self; the lover guarantees the giving (pp. 70–5). Just thereby, the lover accomplishes a 'love without being' (p. 72) while inviting the beloved's response. The fourth movement is the introduction of flesh, the self as feeling-self (pp. 112–13), into the dynamic that is love's gift: this Marion calls the 'crossed phenomenon' (pp. 105, 126–7). Eventually, however, the distance between the flesh's finitude and the infinity of the erotic claim generates lying and the search for erotic truth, the subject of the fifth movement. Such a search only 'terminates' in an eternal repetition beyond repetition of loving fidelity – the assurance of the lover's accomplishment by and through the beloved (pp. 185, 189–90). This erotic assurance treats the lover to the 'conclusion' that, after all, the lover is 'loved because lovable, lovable because lover' (p. 213). In the end, vanity is conquered by discovering that vanity has been dissipated by prevenient love (pp. 214–15). Such love points towards God, who is distinct from creatures in erotic perfection, but not erotic character (pp. 221–2).

Marion himself considers this book the consummation of decades of reflection (p. 10). Indeed, *The Erotic Phenomenon* reassesses in a fresh context concerns which characterise Marion's prior writings: the question of the gift, the problem of presence, the transparency of the face, the construction of idols and the advent of icons. In these figures, Marion entertains issues which have preoccupied traditional theology – the character of grace, the meaning of creaturely contingency, the mode of divine otherness in self-revelation, the aim of theological language – and passes with them through

a philosophical horizon dominantly reconfigured by the thought of Martin Heidegger. Ultimately, for Marion, it is the ever-amorous God who gives theology for the sake of the loving of the beloved lover who worships by loving God. Love reminds theology of the way beyond itself.

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David Brown, *God and Mystery in Words: Experience through Metaphor and Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 304. £27.00 (hbk).

Henri de Lubac famously described Hans Urs von Balthasar as 'probably the most cultured man in Europe'. On the evidence of the three volumes he has devoted to 'the question of religious experience through culture and the arts' (preface), David Brown is a plausible inheritor of this title. But the comparison with von Balthasar is relevant in other ways. Like the late cardinal, Brown's work sets in motion an extraordinarily wide-ranging and many-levelled conversation between the worlds of theology and the arts, taking the latter term in its very broadest sense. Everything is here, from Kabbalah to Graham Kendrick. However, Brown's basic trajectory is very different from that of von Balthasar, since he is less concerned to interpret the arts in terms derived from Christian revelation and correspondingly more interested in revivifying theology and religious life by looking at critical and creative forces at work outside the church. With specific regard to music his strategy is nicely summed up in the assertion that 'I end this chapter by refusing absolute dividing lines either between church and concert hall or home, or between music and words' (p. 221). Thus, although the second part of the book focuses very specifically on Christian liturgy and some of its contemporary problems, the discussion is 'set up' by the more wide-ranging survey of verbal, visual and musical images and metaphors drawn from what feels like every stratum of Christian and classical history. What Brown is especially 'against', it seems, are the efforts of both theologians and liturgists to impose a single 'correct' reading on sources that revel in multiple meanings: 'Our language is richer than our prejudices, and so will on many an occasion afford new insights, if only we are open to new possibilities, so sometimes even where the context seems hostile, the end result may prove quite otherwise' (p. 69). The point is immediately illustrated by reference to Hölderlin, but elsewhere it is applied, critically, to John Drury's work in the visual arts, to Coverdale's translations of the psalms, especially their use