

So, an exciting collection that could be recommended as an introduction to contemporary ideas on the big theological questions of nature and grace, faith and reason, body and spirit, and to the role of the arts in the theologian's work. In view of this, the absence of an index is a shortcoming. Nevertheless, like David Brown's own work, this collection invites more responses. For one thing, it suggests to me that more work is needed on the hermeneutic relationships between Revelation in Scripture and Christian tradition, and the 'revelations' that people report in art, sport and gardens, *inter alia* (Brown's 'Sacrament in Ordinary'). In our increasingly broken and conflict-riven society, in which art increasingly rejects transcendence and yet is inspired by the occult (cf the Berlin Biennale of 2018), can we really say that all art is revelation of God? Perhaps, if we are to have a true dialogue between the 'depth' in people's experience and contemporary art on the one hand, and the Bible, Christian tradition, and theology on the other, we need to recover and renew metaphysics, evacuated from so many schools of theology in the later twentieth century? More work for David Brown and his ever-growing network of respondents.

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THE HUMAN PERSON: A BEGINNER'S THOMISTIC PSYCHOLOGY by Steven J. Jensen, *Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 2018, pp. 296, \$34.95, pbk*

What would a first-year student of psychology, somewhere in the last part of his first-year curriculum, expect to read when he looks at a book in an academic bookshop with the title: *The Human Person. A Beginner's Thomistic Psychology*? Probably he has never heard of 'Thomistic', and might wonder if this is one of the several branches of personality psychology. What would a psychologist expect, who has worked for some forty years in clinical practice and academic personality psychology, looking at the same book in the same place? Maybe, he is at that very moment not conscious at all of the influence the picture has made on his choice to buy the book. Yes, later he realizes that the picture is a modern adaptation of one of the paintings by his fellow countryman Johannes Vermeer. Is his choice a predominantly rational one, or is it more determined by sensations or emotions?

How human beings make their choices is one of the questions raised in this book on Aquinas. Referring to Aristotle that all knowledge begins with the senses, Jensen starts his introduction to Thomistic psychology with sensation. That is something which would be agreed with by most psychologists in the 21st century, and certainly by the academic community. Many of them would also agree with the importance of the

influence of the senses on the mind, although some would prefer concepts such as ‘personality’ or ‘self’. These ‘some’ may still even form a majority within psychology and not belong to what Jensen qualifies as reductionistic, deterministic, and materialistic modern psychology. That seems itself a bit of a reductionistic caricature of what psychologists believe (yes!) and do, both in science, as in their profession. It is true, a substantial number of them would say: for scientific reasons, we should limit the study of the human being to the human brain, human behaviour, cognition, and emotion, and the interaction with other humans and the rest of the world. But they are probably not as cynical as Jensen seems to suggest. Most first-year students of psychology may even be motivated to choose their study by the same *adagium* which Jensen has chosen for a start: ‘Know thyself’ – Socrates’s famous words, recorded by his pupil Plato. Many psychologists experience in their professional work that ‘know thyself’ means also ‘know the other’.

It is true, as Jensen puts forward, that the ‘soul’ is not very popular in academic psychology. But in many areas psychologists still use this word or concept, and in particular in France, Argentina, and other countries, psychoanalysis is still an important branch of (even academic) psychology, in which the knowledge of the *Seele* is its most important purpose.

Reason and will are, according to Thomas Aquinas and Jensen, the most important psychological elements in our human choices. This means that we are free to choose, because we are able to deliberate about ‘pro’s and ‘contra’s’ and are finally not determined by our instincts or senses. This is, according to Aquinas, an important difference with animals and other non-rational beings. Jensen is right to argue how creative use of language is a particular human achievement and helps us in our ability to understand common features of things apart from the concrete differences. But does this mean that there is most of the time enough freedom for human beings to make deliberate rational choices?

One of the positive incentives of this book is that it helps the reader to formulate important questions. The way in which Jensen (following Aquinas) treats human sensation, instinct, memory, imagination, emotion, reason, and will, is very systematic and clear. However, by its philosophical vocabulary and way of thinking it seems not so easy to follow for psychology students or even for professional psychologists. Jensen defends both this book and his approach by saying that psychology is much older and broader than modern psychology: in fact it is a branch of philosophy. By the same reasoning one could say that medicine is a branch of philosophy, as it once was as ‘*philosophia medicinae*’.

For whom has Jensen written his book? Theologians and philosophers who are interested in Thomas Aquinas’s philosophy of human being have many other publications at their disposal. If they are interested in psychology, they would probably expect some connection with modern psychology and questions they think belong to psychology, for example, about purpose and meaning in the life of depressed persons. ‘Purpose’ is,

in Jensen's opinion, what in the end makes the human being into a whole human person. Not a self-created purpose, but a purpose received from God, which leads to the human purpose to know God. All these steps, as said, are not so easy to follow for both the common reader and the non-philosophically trained academic.

Personally (is that the same as: 'as a human person'?) I may agree with most of what Jensen puts forward in his book. But at the same time, as his purpose was to write an *Introduction*, I think it is a pity that he did not try to bridge the gap between modern psychology and Aquinas's philosophical 'psychology', with first-year psychology students in mind. Because, as Socrates has taught us, one should motivate the youth to desire to know themselves, and so to study the human soul – that is the whole human person.

JOOST BANEKE

UNEARTHLY BEAUTY: THE AESTHETICS OF ST JOHN HENRY NEWMAN
by Guy Nicholls Cong. Orat., *Gracewing*, Leominster, 2019, pp. xxiv + 352,
£25.00, hbk

In the opening 'Comment' to the first issue of *New Blackfriars* this year, John O'Connor OP, referring to Saint John Henry Newman, observes that 'it is the sign of a profound thinker that their insights applied to one situation can shed light on many more' (2020, pp. 3-4). There can be few more striking illustrations of this truth than Newman's understanding of beauty and its role in the Christian life, as Guy Nicholls's milestone work, *Unearthly Beauty*, shows. Yet despite its richness and importance, this area of Newman's thought has until now remained underexplored in Newman scholarship. Nicholls lays down the indispensable foundation of future scholarship by bringing together in one comprehensive study Newman's views on music, architecture, the visual arts, literature, and poetry. He traces Newman's account of what contributes to the attainment of beauty in each of these areas, and of beauty's significance in liturgical, devotional, and theological contexts. It is a project of tremendous scope and ambition, engagingly written and thoughtfully constructed to bring out the continuity across the different areas of Newman's aesthetics and their relationship to other areas of his thought and life.

The title refers to one of the ways in which Newman describes his idea of beauty. This idea, Nicholls suggests, 'is rooted in the idea of God Himself' (p. 273). Just as theology is not 'merely words', but a way in which God may be known, so too, Newman believes, in the experience of beauty we are granted an intimation of the heavenly harmony that is beyond the reach of the 'unaided intellect' (p. 170). Understood in this way, beauty