

maintained that God and the secondary cause (in dependence on and complete subordination to God) is each, in its own order, a total cause of the effect, God, as the primary source of being and form, is more causally intimate in a created thing than any secondary cause. However, post-Scotus and especially post-Ockham, the Thomistic *duplex ordo*, in which the created secondary causes were ontologically grounded in and subordinated to the divine First Cause, unraveled. By the end of the 14th century, God's *influentia generalis* or "merely mediate concurrence" (212) with secondary causes had largely replaced Aquinas's neo-Platonist conception of God's immanent *influentia* or causal influx in secondary causes. In the 16th century, the Jesuit theologians Suárez and Molina further weakened the *influentia generalis*, regarding the latter as a *concursus generalis* in which God and the secondary cause are each but a *partial* cause of the same effect, like two men simultaneously rowing a boat. Inevitably, within the modern Scholastic causal paradigm, the infusion of grace is assigned to God's special or extrinsic causality vis-à-vis human nature viewed "naturalistically" or as autonomous.

This collection is a Dominican, in-house work, written by Thomists in a style congenial to Thomists. Although the book is not focused precisely on de Lubac, he dominates it, even as his influence seems rather ambivalently acknowledged. Perhaps for in-house reasons, the book as a whole skirts rather than directly confronts de Lubac's issue: whether the Thomist commentators clarified or obfuscated Aquinas's nature-grace doctrine. But the issue has not gone away. To assess the plausibility of that extraordinarily global charge, we can learn important details from, but will also need to range beyond, the purview and sensibility of this book.

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IDENTITY, ETHICS, AND NONVIOLENCE IN POSTCOLONIAL THEORY: A RAHNERIAN THEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT. By Susan Abraham. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Pp. xiv + 242. \$80.

Susan Abraham's book highlights the importance and implications of postcolonial theory for contemporary Christian theology; it is an intervention into both discourses. Postcolonial theory, she argues, often neglects the varied and powerful roles that religion plays in the ongoing negotiations of culture and identity. Christian theology, in turn, often neglects the complex relations of power and culture in the process by which religious identity is negotiated. Embarking on a project of postcolonial theology, A. brings these two discourses into conversation so that each may critique and learn from the other. The central conversation partners from postcolonial theory are Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Ashis Nandy. From theology, A. draws on Karl Rahner and supporting authors; she also appeals to the writings of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI to engage Roman Catholic magisterial positions. A. displays an impressive

breadth of knowledge in successfully corralling this formidable group into a multifaceted conversation.

As her title indicates, A. focuses on the central themes of identity, ethics, and nonviolence. In part 1, her critique of the limits of postcolonial theory is particularly clear regarding identity. Locating human agency within ongoing cultural negotiations, Bhabha articulates his influential concept of “hybridity” using a religiously loaded example: colonial archives describe Indian Hindus who refused to convert to Christianity yet drew on Christian symbols and texts in their resistance to colonial powers. Although to the theologically inclined such narratives call for exploration of the religious subjectivity involved, A. asserts, “Bhabha strives to distance himself from the religious and theological in every possible way” (53–54). To address this issue, A. marshals Rahner’s theology, which has its own set of limitations—for example, his theological anthropology forwards such a profoundly religious sense of freedom and agency that it cannot fully attend to how identity and subjectivity are negotiated in situations of unequal power within concrete historical situations. However, Rahner’s articulation of the supernatural existential provides A. with a vision of the self in which culture and religion are not kept separate, and in which the self is both historical and transcendent (71–73). In this context A. offers a refreshingly positive interpretation of Rahner’s view of anonymous Christianity, envisioned as a “porous identity boundary” in the self-understanding of Christians (97). Returning to the topic of conversion raised by Bhabha, A. states that, in a Rahnerian frame, “conversion . . . may have much to do with the self-perception of Christian identity” (98).

Such thoughtful theological reconfigurations are the reward for the difficult work of bringing several complex authors into conversation; there are many such rewards in this book. In the focus on ethics of part 2, Rahner’s universalizing account of the fundamental option is placed in tension with Spivak’s emphasis on heterogeneity. The constructive goal is to give a theological account of love that is concrete, political, embodied, and honoring of difference. Section 3, on nonviolence, casts Rahner and Nandy as collaborators on a concretely ethical mysticism that garners wisdom from both Rahner’s account of Ignatius’s *indiferencia* and Nandy’s *Ahimsa*.

I do have quibbles with A. on a few issues. In the midst of such a complex conversation, generalizations sometimes stand in for the gritty specifics of an argument, author, or movement. For example, she critiques “identity-based liberation theologies” as being “carefully cultivated by the center, at the center, and in great part, for the center” (36). This is not adequate to the liberation theologies I know, which, based in local churches and grass-roots activism, have a more complex relationship with “the center.” Such liberation theologies often ignore academic theology, condemning much of it with the silent recognition that it is useless. What A.’s critique points to is not liberation theologies at their best, but rather the assimilating power plays that distort liberation theology to legitimate Western academics. Postcolonial theory is not immune to such power plays, a fact that

A. clearly notes. Such moments of broad brushstrokes might be an understandable price to pay in exchange for the scope of the book and the abundance of authors considered.

Also at times A. seems to resist Rahner's unapologetic stance as a Christian theologian. She remarks, with some censure, upon his "stringently theological framework" (21) and his use of a "stringently Christian theological basis" (140) for ethics. I agree that Rahner's work is thoroughly theological and resoundingly Christian (some readers who emphasize his philosophy hold this in doubt). Yet I do not wish for Rahner to move beyond his own location in order to better engage issues of postcolonial theory and globalization that are vital to our era. That work is ours to do and A., in the constructive postcolonial theology of this book, is doing it extremely well.

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THE CHURCH: THE EVOLUTION OF CATHOLICISM. By Richard P. McBrien. New York: HarperOne, 2008. Pp. xxviii + 476. \$29.99; \$17.99.

This one-volume, historically based theology of the Catholic Church is addressed to several audiences, including the interested nonspecialist, the student, and the theologian. McBrien displays throughout a gift for clarity and an organizational wizardry that enable him to credibly engage these levels all at the same time. Rare is the scholar who can so ably manage such an immense task.

As a textbook in ecclesiology, this work provides the ecumenical, scriptural, and historical context for the study of Vatican II in itself and as it impacts ecclesiology today. Four chapters lay out this context. Then, a central chapter devoted to the council is followed by two chapters tracing contemporary theological trajectories and a final chapter that looks to the future. Vatican II gives the book its thematic unity and focus. Even the early contextual and historical chapters proceed by frequent comparisons of ideas and positions with those that would later emerge in the conciliar documents. Many topics are mentioned only briefly, as is characteristic of a survey text. The book achieves a kind of depth, however, through the consistency of its narrative, the trenchant judgment evident in many of its claims, and its ample footnotes and bibliography.

On the scholarly level, the book achieves another kind of depth in that it serves as an alternative to the ecclesiological works of Roger Haight. M. and Haight hold many similar positions and share many ideological opponents. Yet M. is critical of Haight's transdenominational ecclesiology as an approach ungrounded in a concrete historical community and as a project impossible to achieve adequately by a single author even in a multivolume work. Here M. offers a work both centered in Roman Catholic tradition and ecumenically open. It argues by illustration that one does not have to move to a transdenominational position to lend support to a progressive and ecumenical trajectory from Vatican II, through the present, and