

presenting it in a masterly way but in accessible language. An English translation is much to be desired.

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NO RISING TIDE: THEOLOGY, ECONOMICS, AND THE FUTURE. By Joerg Rieger. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009. Pp. xi + 191. \$20.

Rieger brings Christian theological perspectives to an evaluation of our current market economy. He argues that unfortunately “religion is frequently the ally of free-market capitalism” (100), and he condemns the “hidden religiosity” that leads to faith that the unregulated free market can guarantee human welfare (68). Contrary to Adam Smith and popular belief, there is no evidence, in R.’s view, that capitalism can harness the self-interest of all to promote effectively the common good. He deals a serious blow to those hoping that the present economic crisis will give way to a healed capitalist economy, demonstrating that an economic system undergirded by large imbalances of power forces greater and greater numbers of people to accept a lower standard of living, even during times of robust economic growth. The middle class no longer remains unscathed. “Abject poverty is only one part of the problem[;] . . . the economy affects more and more of us in negative ways” (3).

R. adroitly unmasks the nefarious fallacies of “value-free” economics and the fact that theologies fail to see their own connection to economic realities. This unmasking then encourages him to move toward alternatives to the status quo. He sees the disempowered, those who can see the problems endemic to the market economy with greater clarity, as the primary potential source of change. And surely he is correct that “in economics, the question of what is ultimate is only gradually rising to the level of awareness and will need to be developed much further” (86). Less persuasive is his attempt to disprove the claim that “there is no alternative to the capitalist free-market economy” (vii). He criticizes Keynesian remedies to the present crisis, Barack Obama’s attempt to nurse capitalism back to its healthy state, and many of the standard proposals made by Christian theologians to “moralize” the market. But beyond scant references to socialism, R. does not show what an alternative to capitalism might look like. His concrete, practical remedies to the present evils largely remain ways of promoting reform *within* some version of the capitalist system. For example, he commends workers’ rights boards, stronger unions, reconnecting production with “the real needs of people” (108), emphasizing the creative role of workers as opposed to CEOs and managers, just wages, worker ownership, and requiring “property to serve the common good” (146). R.’s plea for such changes is appropriate and timely; without them capitalism will continue to fail large swaths of the human population and our planet as a whole. But it is not clear whether this necessitates a wholesale rejection of capitalism or just dismantling the currently dominant neoliberal model of it.

R.'s prophetic and biblically-grounded argument contains cogent evidence and examples, and exhibits admirable knowledge of economic theory (which he explains lucidly). Yet he does not fully appreciate that the market economy has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty in, for example, Eastern and Southeastern Asia. Nonetheless R. provides a compelling challenge to Christians to understand their religion's complicity in sustaining a global economic system that does not "lift all boats." His book goes a long way toward explaining how and why this is the case, including his crucial and often overlooked insight that power and class are deeper problems than economic inequality. Yet he leaves other intriguing questions unanswered, such as how the deleterious ways of economics influence Christian theology and belief, and how economics functions akin to theology and belief in a transcendent reality. R.'s book will be useful in graduate and advanced undergraduate courses and should be read by all who want to understand the relationship between faith, theology, and economics.

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THE MYTHOLOGICAL TRADITIONS OF LITURGICAL DRAMA: THE EUCHARIST AS THEATER. By Christine Schnusenberger. New York: Paulist, 2010. Pp. xx + 359. \$44.95.

Charles Magnin coined the expression "liturgical drama" (or *drame liturgique*) during a course on the origins of modern theater given at the Sorbonne during the academic year 1834–1835. Magnin's course galvanized the incipient community of Parisian medievalists and literary scholars. French drama, he argued, did not originate *ex nihilo* during the 14th century, as his predecessors had maintained, but developed from earlier forms of drama born within, and borne by, the ritual of the medieval church. Thus the development of modern drama, he argued, had followed a path similar to that of ancient, classical drama; each had progressed from "ecclesiastical" to "aristocratic" to "popular."

In the first two parts of her book Schnusenberger has now taken a further step by demonstrating that the origins of liturgical drama are found within the mythological traditions of the ancient Near East, beginning with the royal theaters of Egypt, Babylon, and Syria, rather than the usual starting point of Greece or Rome. The title of S.'s concluding chapter (12) says it all: "In the Beginning There Was Theater"; she contends that theater was worship and worship was theater in which participants enacted the mimetic repetition of the drama of cosmogonic myths. Building on the fundamental works of her mentors at the University of Chicago, Mircea Eliade and Paul Ricoeur, she argues that Christian theater was embedded in the cosmogony of the Christ-event and developed out of the same mimetic cosmogonic stream as other, more ancient manifestations of theater. Exploring the polemics of the patristic age against the Roman theater, she demonstrates that the subsequent developments of Western liturgical drama were a continuation of the Roman theater up to the ninth century.