

The Eclipse and Recovery of Beauty: A Lonergan Approach. By John D. Dadosky. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2014. Pp. vii + 255. \$45.50.

No contemporary theologian has diagnosed the eclipse of beauty more prophetically, Dadosky submits, than the Swiss thinker Hans Urs von Balthasar. Taking Balthasar's diagnosis as a context and point of departure, D. contends that the eclipse of beauty in the West "requires something akin to a philosophical medical procedure in order to establish a philosophy that is capable of affirming the existence of beauty and ameliorating the belief that it is merely in the eye of the beholder" (xii). One of Balthasar's limitations, however, was his unwillingness, according to D., to engage contemporary Thomists who sought to both appropriate and "correct the errors in the philosophical turn to the subject" (5). Whereas Balthasar specifies the starting point, Bernard Lonergan's transposed Thomistic perspective provides the fundamental epistemological framework for sufficiently meeting this challenge. D.'s aim is to establish a philosophy for a theology of beauty.

Prior to developing the constructive elements of this task, the first part of the book heightens the reader's sense of what is at stake in the diminishment of beauty by elucidating (1) the connection between the "loss of beauty" and the "perpetuation of violence" by considering Nietzsche's aesthetics via the critique of René Girard, and (2) Kierkegaard's negative view of aesthetics vis-à-vis the ethical and religious spheres of existence. Here D.'s generous hermeneutical style comes to the fore, though he is certainly at his most speculative. While granting problems—sometimes severe—in Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, he employs Lonergan's "transformations of consciousness" both to reorient Nietzsche's account of the Dionysian and Apollonian in the direction of authentic self-transcendence and to preserve "the genius of Kierkegaard's anthropology" without dismissing Balthasar's concern with the Danish philosopher's diminishment of the aesthetic.

Many readers are familiar with Lonergan's robust, yet easily clichéd, theory of the levels of consciousness in terms of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. In the second half of the book, D. breathes life into this framework by showing its explanatory power. If one is tempted to, for example, reduce beauty to perception, D.'s analysis enables a more differentiated account. The following passage illustrates the explanatory value of Lonergan's levels of consciousness and reveals his integration of the key principles of Aquinas's aesthetics (integrity, proportion, and clarity):

At the level of experience or presentations it is to delight in the sensitive colors, sounds, and patterns presented to the senses and the imagination. At the level of understanding, it is to delight in the unity or relations grasped in the forms that are integral, proportionate, and radiant. . . . At the level of judgment, it is to delight in the truth and existence of the beautiful and to further apprehend a surplus of meaning pointing one beyond what is affirmed as beautiful. At the level of decision one seeks to create beauty in every aspect of one's life and to contemplate the value of beauty as apprehended. (199)

D.'s grounding of his analysis clearly and consistently in Lonergan's thought enables him to engage a variety of thinkers (in addition to those mentioned above) to

varying degrees without needing to be exhaustive: Aquinas and Bonaventure, Kant and Heidegger, Gadamer and Schusterman, Gilson and Maritain, along with architectural theorist Christopher Alexander. Moreover, D. enriches the analysis with vivid examples, including the movement from aesthetic experience to the beauty of God in the conversion of Sergei Bulgakov, and more intimately D.'s own existential quest for and interest in beauty which began in 1994 as he "stepped out of a traditional Diné (Navajo) *hooghan* into the fresh dry air of the Southwestern desert" (xi).

The difficulty of D.'s task is heightened by the fact that Lonergan rarely treated the theme of beauty explicitly. Other scholars have developed Lonergan's account of the aesthetic pattern of experience in *Insight* (1957) and his pithy, yet illuminating, reflections on art in *Topics in Education* (1959) and *Method in Theology* (1972). But, to my knowledge, this is the first book-length appropriation of Lonergan's thought for the development of a constructive theological aesthetics. As such, it is a pioneering work that deserves significant attention from philosophers, theologians, graduate students, and all who share larger concerns about the deleterious eclipse of beauty in Western culture by the apotheosis of practicality and the glorification of violence amplified by new technologies and digital culture.

Having convincingly established the philosophical foundations for a theology of beauty, D. sketches further avenues for development, highlighting the need for critical engagement with non-Western notions of beauty, other Christian ecumenical traditions, ecological concerns, liberation and feminist theologies, and contemporary Mariology. One can only hope that D. continues to pursue these theological-aesthetic questions with the same creative, generous, and integrating style.

Randall S. Rosenberg
Saint Louis University

Icons of Hope: The "Last Things" in Catholic Imagination. By John E. Thiel. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2013. Pp. xiii + 223. \$35.

In this fascinating book Thiel considers the theme of hope and proposes how we might imagine our final destiny and its implications for Christian life today. He is motivated by two features of post-Vatican II Catholic faith and life that contrast starkly with previous teaching and piety: (1) the widespread reception of the council's teaching about the gratuity, universal scope, and effectiveness of God's saving grace and (2) the loss of anxiety about judgment and the disappearance of purgatory from the Catholic imaginary. While the first is an authentic development of doctrine, the second may be a sign that many take God's saving love for granted, thereby undermining the accountability of human freedom. T. argues persuasively for a reinterpretation of the last things that is faithful to an authentic hope that all will be saved, characterized by a "suspense" that takes human freedom seriously, and marked by a striking conception of all the saints, now and eternally at work at the practice of God's forgiving and reconciling love. In this, they are icons of hope for us all.