

I am sympathetic to K.'s argument and think he has done as well as anyone I know in making the case for the impoverished nature of the disengaged stance as well as for the richness of premodern Greek and Christian reflection on these questions. My only negative criticism concerns his treatment of Descartes and, to a lesser extent, Aquinas. Voltaire said that "if God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him"; and I sometimes think that for many contemporary writers in philosophy and theology, the same goes for Descartes. What would authors like K. do without such a perfect foil against which to direct their arguments? My problem with this is that Descartes becomes a straw man, and the deeply meditative, even Augustinian, character of some of his major work is downplayed, if not overlooked. Descartes was not being ironic when he titled one of his major works *Meditations*. My reservation with regard to K.'s approach to Aquinas is that he exaggerates the limiting consequences of Aquinas's epistemological stance. Where K. tends to see in Aquinas's view a human nature hampered in the pursuit of its final end by an intrinsic finitude, others might argue that Aquinas is emphasizing the joy of coming to know God's creation through sense and understanding. But these criticisms should in no way detract from the overall excellence of K.'s work.

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The Wisdom of the Liminal: Evolution and Other Animals in Human Becoming. By Celia Deane-Drummond. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. xii + 346. \$35.

Deane-Drummond indicates that the present volume "could be seen in some sense as a companion volume" to her earlier *Christ and Evolution* (2009) (30). As both biologist and theologian, she seeks to develop an inclusive interpretation of theological anthropology that holds together both evolutionary interpretations of the human condition and the Christian conviction that Jesus in his life, death, and resurrection reveals what human beings are to become. In the present volume, she engages "most closely with evolutionary theories that are of most relevance to anthropology, and as interpreted by anthropologists, rather than focusing more generally on evolutionary theory as such" (51). She is critical, however, of any theory that reduces Christian theology to evolution, as in the linear view of Teilhard de Chardin—"an understanding of the human through theological reflection can never be reduced to or contained within evolutionary biology in the manner that is sometimes portrayed in theistic evolution, even though there are family resemblances in both discourses that help us articulate in a richer way what it means to be human" (196). D.-D. seeks, then, a "convergence" between evolutionary theory and theological analysis (215).

Crucial here is Hans Urs von Balthasar's notion of *Theo-drama*. While critical of his anthropocentrism, virtual ignoring of other creaturely beings, and attitudes toward women, D.-D. finds theologically helpful Balthasar's view of God's infinite freedom

in relation to human freedom “as analogous to a theatrical performance” (103). In trinitarian terms, “God is the playwright, the Holy Spirit is the stage director, and the central act of the *theo-drama* comes to be expressed through the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ” (117). We are all actors in the drama, including other animals and creaturely beings, and have our parts to play (217). “The difference between a Christian acting in a *theo-drama* and social action resting on secular hope emerges from a distinct belief in the ongoing if inchoate presence of the Jesus event, which in some sense both guarantees the future kingdom and contains something of the fullness that is to follow” (218, referring to Balthasar). That the Word becomes flesh means that “God takes a place with human beings on the stage” (237). D.-D. emphasizes that she is not talking about “epic” in the sense of a grand narrative, but about the particularity of Jesus. Only in the intense experience of such particularity can universal meaning appear.

The book is not, however, primarily about Jesus but about “the wisdom of the liminal,” the intrinsic and inseparable importance of other animals in human becoming. Humans have distinctive characteristics, but they are not absolutely unique. Rather, humans are deeply rooted in the evolutionary process and so have a close association with some species more than others. Thus, D.-D. explores the encounter with other animals without losing a sense of human distinctiveness. Animal studies need to be integrated into theological anthropology. In a series of chapters, she analyzes reason, freedom, and morality and, as “prerequisites for the moral life” (124), communication, cooperation, fairness, and interspecies friendship (kinship). Paying close attention to contemporary evolutionary debates (with abundant references), D.-D. affirms that what is distinctively human could not have emerged in isolation from animal communities but only in close association with them. Animals have their own distinctive capacities that are species-specific in relation to their own ecological niche but are parallel in varying degrees to human capacities. At the same time, D.-D. anchors her theology in Thomas Aquinas, who in his vision of divine providence is more affirmative of other creaturely beings.

Chapter 6 explores “niche construction theory” as a new evolutionary approach that views the interrelationship and interaction between ecological, biological, and social niches rather than each being treated in isolation. This theory allows for greater plasticity and flexibility in understanding evolutionary process (219–22). Consequently, D.-D. proposes an “inclusive *theo-dramatics*, . . . a theological interpretation of evolutionary dynamics of cooperation” (234). The possibility here is of analogous relationships that avoid simple identification with what we say about God’s involvement in the long and gradual unfolding of complex relationships that include multiple variations in the evolutionary process.

Finally, the wisdom of the liminal opens out to an unknown future.

We are caught up *together* in a common society that we can hope will be transformed for the greater glory of God. That glory is certainly humanity fully alive, but it is a life enriched by an interlaced past, present, and future with other animals in all their marvelous diversity. (317, emphasis original)

I highly recommend this book, especially for anyone interested in current debates about evolution and how evolutionary understanding interfaces with Christian theology.

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Theology and the End of Doctrine. By Christine Helmer. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014. Pp. xiv, 417. \$35.

Helmer, a leading Schleiermacher scholar, has ventured into a more constructive mode with this volume, one that assesses the state and recent history of Protestant theology. Most centrally it is a work of mediation. H. wants to mediate the divide between church and academy, theology and religious studies, and, perhaps most ambitiously, between Barthians (including the Yale School) and Protestant liberal theology.

H. says the book's purpose is "to inspire a revitalized interest in doctrine after decades of contentious dispute that, among other things, has served to isolate doctrine from serious engagement beyond a small circle of theologians" (1). The twist in H.'s argument comes later: rather than accept neo-orthodoxy's narrative about the threat of modernity, H. lays part of the blame at its feet: "I will argue that those who sought to protect doctrine from what they deemed modernity's assaults have brought doctrine to its present-day challenge" (7). H. thinks that doctrine comes to an end when it cannot say anything new. Hence the need to revisit claims about the historical and cultural contingency of theological statements, and to suggest that Schleiermacher has something to give contemporary theology that Barthianism, especially the Yale School variety, cannot.

The book's most satisfying chapter, "From Ritschl to Brunner" (chap. 2), offers a historical reconstruction of the (mis-)reading of Schleiermacher that has come to dominate 20th- and 21st-century Protestantism. The standard Barthian narrative has it that modern theology, hatched by Schleiermacher in his 1799 *Speeches*, was not equipped to protect Christian theology from the dangers of modernity. This impotency was most starkly revealed on the eve of World War I, when leading Protestant theologians, including Barth's teacher Wilhelm Herrmann, could not distinguish the gospel from the culture. Beginning with his *Der Römerbrief* (1919), Barth particularly, and dialectical theology more generally, saved German Protestantism from being swallowed by the surrounding culture. H. adds significant nuance to this narrative by retrieving lines of argument from known but too often unread figures like Albrecht Ritschl, Max Reischle, and Emil Brunner. In H.'s retelling, Brunner, not Barth, "shaped the way Schleiermacher's understanding of religion and theology was viewed in the twentieth century" (55). Brunner, along with Barth, created the dialectical theology in which God's word was mainly understood in the negative: a nonhuman word, totally other than words humans encounter.

It is far from H.'s intention to write Barth out of the narrative. The first part of chapter 3 (62–88) takes up Barth's approach to doctrine. H.'s Barth is the prophetic, dialectical Barth: "Theology maintains that its primary reality is God; God's word remains the