

on this topic that one wonders whether anything of interest remains to be said. Amerini manages to do something new by doing something old: he offers a nuanced and careful examination of Aquinas's own claims about the beginning and end of life. Only after his examination is complete does he attempt to apply Aquinas's position to contemporary debates about the beginning and end of life. Even those who find the latter unconvincing will find much of value in the former.

Although the book is entitled *Aquinas on the Beginning and End of Human Life*, the vast majority of A.'s account concerns Aquinas's view of the beginning of human life, that is, the embryo. Scholars of Aquinas will find much that is valuable and little that is controversial in A.'s careful and detailed exposition of Aquinas's embryology. He thoroughly canvasses Aquinas's treatment of embryology, notes changes and discrepancies that occur in various texts, and carefully explains the metaphysical underpinnings of Aquinas's claims. He argues that although Aquinas did not view the embryo and the human being as numerically the same entity, he nonetheless recognized a continuity between the embryo and the mature human being. Such a conclusion is entirely reasonable.

A.'s application of Aquinas's view to contemporary debates about abortion and euthanasia is more controversial. He argues, for instance, that because Aquinas recognized a continuity of subject between the embryo and the mature human being, he would recognize the unique moral worth of even early embryos. Nevertheless, A. also believes that because Aquinas did not recognize a numerical identity between the embryo and the mature human being, he would not necessarily oppose all early abortions, and would perhaps be prepared to make exceptions in cases of rape and incest. A claim like this, it seems to me, needs a more sustained defense than A. offers. Nonetheless, this is an excellent book, which will be of great value even to those who disagree with its ultimate conclusion.

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*Dust Bound for Heaven: Explorations in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas.* By Reinhard Hütter. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012. Pp. x + 511. \$50.

Hütter, professor at Duke University, positions himself within the new wave of neo-Thomism, including others such as Romanus Cessario, Thomas Joseph White, Lawrence Feingold, and Steven A. Long. This book is a loosely connected series of essays that seeks to advance the argument that Thomas Aquinas is the common doctor of the Catholic Church, and that neo-Thomism is the privileged way of doing theology in the service of "an overdue theological renewal after a dire period of pervasive theological fragmentation and disorientation" (5). H.'s work here presents an accessible introduction to this school of thought, while at the same time evidencing its main weaknesses.

Several sections of the book—in particular, the first section, which offers a MacIntyre-influenced critique of modernity and a later section on free will and

hope—offer thoughtful insights and reflections. It is in the polemical sections arguing for neo-Thomistic positions and method that H. displays some of the more problematic aspects of this line of thinking. In particular, in an essay critiquing Henri de Lubac on nature and grace, H. argues that modern theology has erred in thinking that ideas “can only be conceived as defensible and intelligible in a thoroughly historical-contextualist and constructivist mode” (137).

Throughout the book, but particularly in a further section on how to do theology, H. offers a sweeping critique of modern trends without naming any theologians or even schools of thought that are guilty of them, charging, for example, that “typically theologians in the modern research university want to be nothing but excellent philologists, linguists, historians, archaeologists, and philosophers” (405). Such a critique delivered without supporting detail constitutes perhaps the biggest problem in how H. makes his arguments. Claims about the need to find a more coherent discourse beg for reasons that the present discourse is not coherent, and H. does not sufficiently offer these, displaying rather neo-Thomism’s overreliance on the authority of papal documents, unwillingness to seriously engage opponents on their own terms, and overall triumphalism about the superiority of its own method.

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*The Art of Painting in Colonial Quito/El arte de la pintura en Quito colonial.* By Suzanne L. Stratton-Pruitt and Judy de Bustamante. Bilingual edition. Philadelphia: St. Joseph’s University, 2012. Pp. 336. \$75.

Using a catalogue format, Stratton-Pruitt and Bustamante critically examine diverse topics, artists, and styles of Quiteñan colonial paintings. Without ignoring the earlier publication of José Gabriel Navarro, *La pintura en el Ecuador del XVI al XIX* (1991), we have here for the first time a scholarly publication on this topic.

This study surpasses previous efforts in three ways: (1) it uses broader criteria of selection, thereby impugning the prejudicial idea that all colonial paintings were religious. (2) Its use of new photo technology, supported by an impeccable printing technology, enhances the reader’s appreciation of the paintings. One can now view reproductions of many paintings that have never before been photographed or published. And (3) the critical commentary provided for each painting offers a deeper understanding of the works presented.

The introduction, “Reflections on Painting in Colonial Quito: The Artist, Subjects, and Styles” by Carmen Fernandez-Salvador, provides important contextual understanding of the art. The volume is a rich resource for the study of colonial art history at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

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