

and predation in “nature red in tooth and claw” (4). On the bad side, new understandings of how animals share with us not just the experience of pain but also the capacity for suffering vastly multiply the scope of the classic question of how a good God can permit such horror. In this splendidly interdisciplinary work, C. brings together synopses of many of the biologists and theologians currently reframing and reengaging related questions. Topics range from consideration of the theological implications of human evolution, to explorations of animal sentience, to a tour through philosophical and theological approaches to animal suffering, to epigenetics and emergence, to what a notion of “fall” might be in light of contemporary knowledge of the natural world.

C. posits a “wheat and tares” understanding of the biosphere: “nature is indeed shot through with beauty. . . . [At the same time] if we dig deeper we will find disease and suffering and predation and precarious lives lived on the edge of survival” (6). While we are called to collaborate with the good, we cannot always distinguish between wheat and tares; indeed some tares are necessary for wheat to grow. The concluding ethical considerations are accordingly tentative, but still a good start for conversation.

This is an extraordinarily thought-provoking book, remarkable for its intellectual scope and lucid style. Few writers engage both scientific and theological literatures as well as C. does here. She candidly dismisses facile solutions, ultimately concluding that God is both revealed and obscured, and we are not “compelled to affirm the mixed picture as good” (137). Wheat and tares veer close to the mystery response to theodicy, but C.’s aim is to offer that parable as a worldview, a reading of nature, not a proof, inviting believers to affirm the rationality of belief in the biblical God of love in the face of a clear-eyed recognition of darkness as well as light at work in the natural world.

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*Civil Disagreement: Personal Integrity in a Pluralistic Society.* By Edward Langerak.  
Washington: Georgetown University, 2014. Pp. ix + 170. \$29.95.

Treating disagreement as a fact of contemporary pluralism, Langerak persuasively argues that mutual toleration is both theoretically justified and pragmatically appropriate when conflicting claims arise. With an accessible style and cogent progression of ideas, L.’s book would be particularly well suited for an undergraduate classroom, although perhaps primarily at the introductory level, for L. seems to assume an audience without much prior exposure to political philosophy or theology. At the same time, lengthy discursive notes situate many of L.’s claims within more nuanced debates in both fields, providing additional resources for those inclined to pursue further research.

Some of L.’s best work is found in the first two chapters, where he discusses the emergence of competing truth claims and defends “perspective pluralism” (51) as a balanced response that allows one to maintain one’s own convictions as true (contra epistemic relativism), while simultaneously accepting that another person might reasonably, albeit wrongly, arrive at an opposing position. Throughout the work, L. demonstrates a genuine

facility with a wide range of sources, and in these early sections in particular, he deserves commendation for adeptly offering concrete examples to clarify abstract ideas.

In the second half of the book, L. considers how the perspective pluralist should respond to opposing viewpoints. He presents six different options, ranging from simple toleration, to active cooperation, to coercive resistance. While this general framework is useful on a speculative level, it lacks sufficient practical guidance to help an individual adjudicate between the various responses in real life. In contrast, L.'s ten criteria for deciding when one can advocate for legislation using an overtly religious rationale—despite a *prima facie* duty to use exclusively public reasoning in pluralistic contexts—is much more serviceable. Overall, the volume is a worthy and timely contribution, arguably most laudable for its efforts to offer an alternative to the rash demonization and apathetic polarization that typically define contemporary political discourse in the United States.

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*Filled with All the Fullness of God: An Introduction to Catholic Spirituality.* By Thomas McDermott, O.P. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Pp. 115. \$22.75.

McDermott offers a well-written, classical Catholic spirituality. He asserts that the key to spiritual growth is “more knowledge of the truth” (89). One cannot love unless one knows the beloved. This emphasis on knowledge and on the will moved by knowledge toward love is typically Thomistic and Dominican.

M.'s subtitle is deceptive. The book is anything but an “introduction.” It draws on insights from the rich heritage of Christian Scripture and the spiritual tradition, especially that of Thomas Aquinas and Catherine of Siena. This vantage point is not surprising since M.'s earlier scholarship has been devoted to the spirituality of Catherine.

Readers familiar with the Dominican tradition will not be surprised that M. begins with a chapter on self-knowledge, followed by a chapter on knowledge of God. He does not describe prayer itself and its stages of development until he is two-thirds into this compact, intelligent treatise. Thereafter, M. traces spiritual growth in grace by exploring the image of Christ as bridge, a metaphor Catherine of Siena had used for the three traditional stages of prayer: purgative, illuminative, and unitive.

M. deftly treats traditional topics such as the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance that bring healing to the “the four wounds of the soul left by original sin” (11), namely, ignorance, malice, weakness, and concupiscence.

I found the book consoling. It reintroduced me to old friends on the spiritual journey whom I had too long neglected. But someone looking for an introduction to prayer or for a contemporary spirituality that grapples with social justice will need to look elsewhere.

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