

Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologians. Edited by Ednan Aslan, Marcia Hermansen, and Elif Medenis. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013. p. 340. \$62.95.

This is an exciting anthology adding to the new academic discipline of Islamic feminist studies, although it starts by attempting to coin a new phrase, *Muslima Theology*. This does not help synthesize the uneven content and location of authors, despite references in the introduction to Islamic intellectual history as a point of origin for the phrase. What should have pulled together the individual chapters under a common umbrella failed. In particular, almost none of the chapters say anything about God. Can one “do” theology and say nothing about God?

Some chapters deal directly with Islamic sacred texts and jurisprudence, using a critical gender-inclusive analysis. Most chapters, however, analyze or summarize the works of others who have engaged in reading sacred texts. Interestingly, most of those whose works are thus summarized or analyzed are women. So, for example, I suppose the chapter about Ibn Taymiyya is included because author Carolyn Baugh asks, was he feminist?

The authors are all Muslim women themselves with the notable exception of the first chapter, written by a man. With both anthropological research and epistemological analysis, it is difficult to say whether theology connects them, but certainly gender analysis does. Despite the claims in the introduction, it is difficult to distinguish this book from other books on the general theme, Islam and women. Most of the authors are reformists who challenge centuries of Islamic patriarchal readings of texts, application in juristic developments, and implementation by cultures.

A few chapters offer new ideas about interrelated theological subjects: Lamptey on the ethics of religious pluralism, Anwar on Indonesian intellectual reading of women-led prayer, and Majeed on “naming” gender-inclusive activism and scholarship among African American Muslim women. The most exceptional chapter was the last, by Shaikh. She constructs an entirely new way of categorizing women-inclusive praxis and orthodoxy. Inspired by her critical reading of Ibn ‘Arabi, she takes the Islamic intellectual tradition to a new height.

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Waiting and Being: Creation, Freedom, and Grace in Western Theology. By Joshua B. Davis, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013. Pp ix + 143. \$59.

Part of Fortress Press’s Emerging Scholars Series, the book is a revised version of Davis’s dissertation. D. argues that the dominant paradigms we currently use to hold together the doctrines of creation and grace are inadequate, and this theoretical division “produces and reinforces” (10) the division between Protestant and Catholic churches. The “theological and historical separations are mutually reinforcing expressions of an actual absence of unity in our material and social relations,” and “this social disunity is repeated and conceptually secured by way of a purely abstract unity

that conceals and fortifies the social reality” (11). It is this “purely abstract unity” that D. tries to isolate “for the sake of moving decisively, clearly, and confidently beyond it” (10). He turns to Gillian Rose’s reading of Hegel to diagnose “the cause of the abstractness of contemporary philosophy and social theory (and theology, by extension) as the unacknowledged influence of bourgeois property right, which surreptitiously determines our experience of the world” (2–3). Chapters 2 and 3 depict Rose’s reading of Hegel through an overarching lens, which D. uses to analyze the union of the doctrines of grace and creation in Catholic (Henri de Lubac and Karl Rahner) and Protestant (Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth) theologies, arguing that the union achieved in these theologies is “illusory, because it is abstract and negative,” and this “serves only to perpetuate the separation” (91). Chapter 4 treats the historical sources (Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther) that “reinforce the fragmentation of this order and reproduce its illusions” (92). Chapter 5 argues that “in order to resist abstractness the thought of this union [of creation and grace] must include an awareness of its social determination” (5).

D.’s argument is dependent upon Rose’s interpretation of Hegel, yet D. provides a far too cursory account of Rose’s thought, thereby making D.’s overall argument difficult to understand and assess. In addition, D.’s prose tends to obfuscate rather than illuminate. This is not a text I would recommend for reliable readings of major figures in the history of Western theology on the question of the relationship of creation and grace (for example, D. misreads Rahner and seems unaware of Aquinas’s technical understanding of relations); rather, it is a provocative text by a creative thinker that in many places is insightful and can point to promising directions for thinking through the creation–grace relationship.

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The Theological Notion of the Human Person: A Conversation between the Theology of Karl Rahner and the Philosophy of John Macmurray. By Gregory Brett. New York: Peter Lang, 2013. Pp. 288. \$93.95.

This is the one book I would recommend to anyone seeking a lucid overview of Macmurray’s philosophical project as well as a perceptive explication of several key Rahnerian themes. More specifically, Brett’s well-crafted study initiates a conversation between Rahner and Macmurray as a theological way of examining their “convergence” on the notion of the human person as relational and as more a “who” than a “what.” Both thinkers, in B.’s view, emphasize that God/Mystery is the ambience of all human life but especially of human relationships.

B. rightly understands Rahner’s view of the human person as one able to “return to self” only because of being related to Mystery, to other persons, and to the world (thus a self-presence with an absence dimension). In B.’s view, Macmurray is the sole philosopher of his generation to place persons in relations at the center of his metaphysical