

vivid humanness with which he contextualizes the work of both Dominicans (e.g., “Aquinas left Cologne in 1251 or 1252, his notes of Albert’s lectures on the Dionysian corpus in hand. Thomas walked to Paris . . .” [215]). The study should not, therefore, be mistaken as a book for beginners. B. most often assumes a certain familiarity on the part of his readers with basic categories and concepts of medieval scholastic philosophy and theology. In treating Albert’s anthropology in *De homine* and the *Sentences Commentary*, for instance, B. dives immediately into the deep waters of Augustinian illumination theory, Aristotelian active and passive intellect, the soul’s *quo est* and *quod est*, etc. without introduction. Often B.’s analyses are sophisticated and his prose dense, and his “signposting” sometimes confusing (see, e.g., his discussion of “Grace, Faith, and Charity in Albert’s *Sentences Commentary*,” 75–90), requiring even the seasoned scholar to read with vigilance and care. In spite of such minor imperfections, however, this outstanding study contributes much to our understanding of the medieval Dominican tradition of mystical theology and will bear rich fruit for years to come.

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Brain, Consciousness, and God: A Lonerganian Integration. By Daniel A. Helminiak.
Albany, NY: SUNY, 2015. Pp. xi + 417. \$95; \$27.95.

Present interest in neuroscience and questions about the brain make Helminiak’s supremely readable new book especially timely. In it questions related to the problematic of “God in the brain” and religious or so-called “transcendent” experiences are put on a solid methodological foundation, giving readers of all stripes the tools for a more intelligent inquiry.

Inasmuch as such questions are now approached in an interdisciplinary manner—implicating the study of science, psychology, and religion—H.’s task involves him with many disparate disciplines. Accordingly, chapters 3 through 6 treat respectively neuroscience; psychology; what he calls “spiritualogy”—the academic study of human consciousness as distinct from other themes traditionally treated in psychology; and theology. To properly differentiate and interrelate these fields, chapter 2 offers what H. considers the key to the entire problematic: Bernard Lonergan’s account of human knowing.

For H., the primary cause of oversight is the variety of “inadequate epistemolog[ies]” (84) operative in the works of otherwise perceptive thinkers on the topic. The suggested solution is the replacement of Lonergan’s more adequate account of human knowing: a tripartite scheme involving a cognitional theory that outlines the *de facto* process of human knowing; an epistemology (in the strict sense) that validates this concrete process of knowing; and a heuristic metaphysics to which this process corresponds. For Lonergan, human knowing is not merely a matter of palpable experience but is in addition a question of inquiring intelligence and rational judgment. Correspondingly, reality does not simply consist of materially perceptible “stuff taking

up space” but in addition “participates in the spiritual—a non-spatial, non-temporal, intellectual content,” (77) that is, intelligibility or meaning. For H., the problematic regarding “God in the brain” has hitherto suffered from the failure of its interlocutors to grasp the true nature of knowing and reality; his relentless use of Lonergan’s philosophy to diagnose and reorder the field makes the book’s subtitle especially apt.

Among the relations that Lonergan’s epistemology helps to clarify are the relation of the mind to the body, the relation of the human psyche to human consciousness, and the relation of theology to scientific explanation. Chapter 4 on psychology offers Lonergan’s notion of emergence—a process of development “whereby ... a higher order systematizes what on a lower order was merely a coincidental aggregate” (171–72)—to explain the mind’s relation to the body more adequately than Descartes’s radical dualism or the many modern monisms (e.g. physicalism, naturalism, and other construals of “emergence” that are just reductionisms in disguise) have been able to do. Chapter 5 on spirituality further differentiates this emergent “mind” into *psyche* and *consciousness* (or *spirit*, in H.’s sense) as a way of isolating that aspect of human psychology which is most relevant to the problematic in question: the complex nature of human experience as involving the awareness (intentionality) of objects *through* the self-presence (awareness or consciousness in a stricter sense) of the experienter.

A proper grasp of human consciousness as both intentional and conscious at last sets the stage for H. to identify in chapter 6 the precise relation of theology to the main question of the book. Negatively, because human consciousness has been recognized as an aspect of the human mind, a basis has been provided “on which psychology [and the other sciences] can treat spirituality as constitutively human without . . . appeal to God” (254) or theology. Further, transcendent experiences—which H. understands as “experiences of the outward-oriented, open-ended, dynamic human spirit”—pertain not to a consciousness of God, but to a “consciousness of consciousness” (3). This is not to say that theology as an enterprise has nothing to contribute to the question. Inasmuch as the word “*God* names the ultimate explanation of the existence of all things” (346), theology clarifies the question concerning why there is anything at all, a question either overlooked or poorly answered by modern scientific disciplines. More narrowly, but not at all relevant to scientific concerns, theology as grounded in faith and revelation seeks to understand grace as the experience of God believed to begin already in this life.

The book’s weaknesses are balanced by corresponding strengths. If H. is at times overly sanguine about the solutions he presents, he treats his interlocutors with the respect of an Aquinas, finding the best in each of their arguments. And if the monograph turns over more stones than perhaps it needs to in order to make its point, it is also to be praised for its mastery of the material and ingenuity in communicating through illuminating examples. H. is an expert teacher, and his book offers an important lesson to a field badly in need of instruction.

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