

The Paradox of Authenticity. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. 2015. By Eric E. Hall. Pp. xiv + 224. €64.

This book offers an intriguing theological-philosophical investigation into the notion of authenticity. Hall begins by examining Charles Taylor's ethical notion of authenticity and concludes that it fails because it appears to rely too much on other members of society. H. then explores Martin Heidegger's ontological conception of authenticity. Much of the book is devoted to the related notions of "thrownness" and death, and H. decides that while Heidegger's conception is free from Taylor's ethical constraints, it also is deficient. That is because it seems focused on the language of "Being" rather than on a notion of authenticity. H. next examines the conception of authenticity found in the works by the theologian Eberhard Jüngel. H. finds Jüngel's approach more promising than those of Taylor and Heidegger, but it still does not encompass what H. believes authenticity to be. While Jüngel properly emphasizes the Trinity, he seems too indebted to Heidegger's notion of language. H. contends that all three thinkers maintain that being authentic is to be faithful to one's inner core; but he believes that it is something given to us by God. H. suggests that instead of cultivating the self, one should ignore it and authenticity will come to the individual—thus "the paradox of authenticity."

The book has some problems involving philosophical and theological issues: H. misunderstands Socrates's search for definitions misinterprets Descartes's "evil genius," and misrepresents Kant's epistemological project. H. dismisses Calvin's notion of double election, sidesteps the conception of the "wrathful" God, and ignores the problem of theodicy. These problems are likely the results of a cursory understanding of the history of philosophy and of an obvious preference for the Lutheran conception of the "fatherly" God. However, H.'s understanding of Heidegger is rather impressive and his argument for Luther is almost compelling. H. may not have proven that authenticity is being true to one's core and that it is instead conferred by God; however, he has provided a much-needed examination of the standard notion and has replaced it with a thoughtful account of the paradox of authenticity.

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There Is No Rose: The Mariology of the Catholic Church. By Aidan Nichols. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015. Pp. x + 187. \$24.

If one wanted to revisit a past when there were plenty of arguments pro and con about who Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was and is, they couldn't have a better tool to conduct such conversations today than this book. Nichols, who has written a number of theological tomes, brings Mary and the vast subject matter about her to the fore and up to date in ways that are fair-minded and thought-provoking. He is not an apologist, however. He is not arguing for the truth of the multiple beliefs that Catholicism has promulgated about her.

The value of the book is N's erudition and its conciseness plus the vast knowledge he has about the texts that were germane to each of the doctrinal elaborations the church used in arriving at the doctrines it taught. What is also remarkable about the book is that it is scholarly while at the same time not off-putting to and for non-scholars. B. doesn't go further than the Mariology of the present-day church but points to several of the directions it might still take.

If it wouldn't seem inappropriate I would respectfully dub this theologian "cool" because he makes so much complex material understandable. For those curious about the title, it comes from a medieval Christmas Carol, "of such virtue as is the Rose that bare Jesu."

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The Marian Mystery: Outline of a Mariology. By Denis Farkasfalvy. Staten Island, NY: St. Paul's, 2014. Pp. x + 314. \$24.95.

Intended as "an adequate textbook for college-level courses and formation programs for priestly and religious life" (ix), this volume will certainly serve those readers as well as others, and fully deserves a place on reading lists for courses on Mary. Its subtitle, "Mariology," evokes what is an unfashionably maximalist emphasis on Marian dogma and Marian "privileges" rather than the minimalist "Mary of history" approach conventional in many US Catholic universities. The book provides a chronological, rather than thematic, treatment of the development of the Marian dogmas. The author eschews (and frequently criticizes as intellectually insufficient) a unilateral application of historical-critical method to the biblical texts that mention the mother of Jesus, and has as its center of interest the patristic era. From the point of view of elucidating the development of doctrine, the choice to devote half of this study of Marian theology to those key scriptural passages and the period up to late antiquity makes sense. That focus, however, also makes a claim for considering Mariology—with a dogmatic emphasis—as an important, indeed essential, topic of Catholic systematic theology.

Not the least of the contributions of this book are its insights into the genesis, contributions, and limitations of a range of theological schools, considerations that are of value beyond the particular context of Mariology. This is, however, an "outline," and the "Marian mystery" as F. delineates it far exceeds dogmatic considerations. A comprehensive college-level study of the topic would also need to consider post-conciliar contextual theologies focused on gender or culture, to study more deeply the potential imports of biblical studies as well as their limitations, and to offer broader ecumenical and liturgical considerations—all of which topics and perspectives F. does not enter into here. His dense literary style requires some concentration on the part of the reader. Nonetheless, the effort is repaid tenfold by the book's historical purview and notable theological depth.

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