

it seems to demand too much, so that dogs, and even children (about whom the book says little) risk being lumped with thermostats as things whose ‘intentions’ can be explained purely causally. On the other hand, negotiation plus personal ties of piety seem insufficient to explain, for example, the response of the Good Samaritan. How does a proper reverence for the family and the nation relate to our membership of the whole human race? Again, to understand God as Creator is surely to claim Him as far more than an emergent property of the world. Questions remain, but a lucid, integrated, philosophical anthropology so open to the transcendent is a gift that Christian readers will welcome.

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RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND NEW MATERIALISM: MOVEMENT MATTERS
 edited by Joerg Rieger and Edward Waggoner, *Palgrave Macmillan, London/*
New York, 2016, pp. ix + 191, £60.00, hbk

In a world of competing discourses, it is not surprising that theologians speak different languages. However, that means that theologians working in different spheres may not understand each other. So while on the face of it, we might think that ‘New Materialism’ denotes either the return of ‘Greed is good’, or scientific materialism, in fact it has nothing to do with the former, and not much with the latter. This collection of studies, however, has a great deal to say about burning issues for the church and society: how religion actually functions in modern society; religious practice and the body; community organisation, ecology and the rich/poor gap. So my aim in this review is to put these New Materialism-inspired theologies in dialogue with the more classical Scholastic tradition, as this has influenced many current schools of theology. I am *not* aiming to ‘translate’ this book into Thomism, still less to shoe-horn it into scholastic categories. Rather, I am seeking to uncover points of common concern.

But what is New Materialism? The feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti is credited with coining the term. She says, ‘‘Neo-Materialism’ emerges as a method, a conceptual frame and a political stand, which refuses the linguistic paradigm, stressing instead the concrete yet complex materiality of bodies immersed in social relations of power’ (p. 28). Her target is ‘the linguistic turn of postmodern scholarship evident in the 1990s, which she regards, with its attendant relativism, as forms of earth-denying idealism’ (*ibid.*). Scholastic theologians, trained in the principles that all knowledge comes to us through the senses and that the human being is a social being, should be pricking up their ears, as should anyone who has read Pope Francis’s *Laudato Si’*.

The current volume comprises response from theologians and religious studies scholars working mainly from a basis of ‘constructive theology’, which redefines systematic theology to include elements which may have been ‘forced’ out. The contributors are based mostly in and around American divinity schools in the Reformed traditions. I say ‘around’ because one of them is a dancer-choreographer (Kimerer LaMothe), and readers may be surprised to find in dance a basis for religion and for ecological action. Indeed, LaMothe quotes Martha Graham as calling dance ‘absolute knowledge’. But behind this is the principle that real dance requires the dancer to be completely present to his/her body *and environment* – again, not far from the scholastic principle that all knowledge comes to us through the senses. LaMothe, who also draws on neuroscience, calls her approach *ecokinetic*, and movement is central to the concerns of all the contributors. Whether these movements are choreographic, social or political, movement is a very important principle in this volume (hence the subtitle, ‘Movement Matters’). It draws on particle physics to seek to demonstrate how the classical active (human) agent versus passive material object distinction is simplistic and harmful. Matter is shifting and changing: it is energy, acting on us even as we act on it. Failure to recognise this risks imposing unjust and ecocidal structures.

The radical critique of imposed structures throws up big theological challenges. Joerg Rieger, in particular, is concerned about a close relationship between neo-liberal capitalism and harder kinds of evangelical Christianity. What can replace this kind of religion? Several of the contributors are inspired by Deleuze’s ‘rhizomatic’ approach, where epistemological relationships are horizontal rather than vertical. So people’s actual religious experience and practice, rather than official doctrine, is emphasised, and how this might be useful for ecological and political action. But what does this mean for the revelation of faith – more fundamentally, for the priority of God? And is there not a risk of Christianity being instrumentalised by movements which can impose their own agendas? Is it not a universal tendency of fallen human nature to impose on others/on the earth?

While these studies draw on a rich range of resources, from process theology and affect theory to Balthasar and Pope Benedict XVI, they could benefit from dialogue with contemporary Orthodox theology. Especially in its liturgy, Orthodoxy/Eastern Catholicism has retained the strongly cosmological approach of early Christianity to salvation, and it is on this basis that Patriarch Bartholomew is a leading ecological activist.

But a potentially very fruitful aspect of these Christian responses to New Materialism is to be found in Karen Bray’s advocacy for a deep solidarity based on a faecal ontology. Not, admittedly, for the faint hearted, her article draws parallels between bodily elimination – which produces fertiliser – and the social riches to be found among those who are the rejects of society. Most notably, she calls for action: what

if, for example, full-time faculty members collectivised their incomes to support lower-salaried staff and unemployed PhDs (with the loss of financial security this would entail for the collectivisers)? Bray is surely gesturing towards intentional Christian communities in a secular age: it would be interesting to put her in dialogue with Rod Dreher and his Benedict Option.

So, a stimulating volume. Notably, Edward Waggoner argues in his conclusion that scholars need to keep in conversation with each other, keep in movement, aware of responding to the plethora of movements out there. More clarity is needed about what he means by 'Even God can be changed through affective solidarity' (p. 180): does he mean our theology or God himself? But there is surely great mutual benefit to be had between scholars in this field and Dominicans engaged in the Salamanca Process, which seeks to synergise theological research with action for change in the world. As I said at the beginning, theologians speak different languages: we may incline more towards some languages than others. But if we are to be one church uniting one world, we should look to dialogue, translate and synergise, and this book is a good place to start.

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THEOLOGY NEEDS PHILOSOPHY: ACTING AGAINST REASON IS CONTRARY TO THE NATURE OF GOD edited by Matthew L. Lamb, *Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2016, pp. 344, \$69.95, hbk*

This collection of seventeen articles originates from a conference held in Ave Maria University in 2011, 'Philosophy in Theological Education'. The editor, Matthew L. Lamb, notes in the introduction that some of the contributions honour Ralph McInerny's valuable legacy in the field of philosophy and theology (p. xv); who was due to attend the conference, but sadly died the previous year. Like McInerny most of the contributors to the volume write in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, and this is reflected in the content of the articles, which with one or two exceptions expound different aspects of Aquinas' understanding of grace perfecting nature by the crowning of human reason in theology. To this end several contributors follow McInerny in emphasising the influence of Aristotle's philosophy on Aquinas's theology.

The articles cover a wide range of topics ranging from the metaphysics of nature to reason and revelation and are organised into five parts. The introductory article by Charles Morerod OP, 'All Theologians Are Philosophers, Whether Knowingly or Not' sets the wider scene for the volume, before John O'Callaghan's article on the legitimacy of philosophy as an autonomous discipline prepares the reader with