

is the less persuasive because of what would in a modern social media age have to be described as ‘trolling’.

The conclusion asks whether Lawrence’s preaching to the protestants brought about any conversions. There is evidence that there were some. Perhaps that is not where his influence lay in the long-term. Drenas suggests that his great achievement lay in his effect upon the landscape of the Roman Empire. This is a book of profound scholarship, though sometimes less than felicitous in style, with a Bibliography, a Chronology and a list of the ‘polemical themes addressed’ in Lawrence’s homiletic works.

G. R. EVANS

THE SEDUCTIVENESS OF VIRTUE: ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL AND JOHN PAUL II ON MORALITY AND PERSONAL FULFILLMENT by John J. Fitzgerald, *Bloomsbury, T and T Clark*, London, 2017, pp. xii + 213, £85.00, hbk

Is it good to be good? In this book, John J. Fitzgerald explores this question through a comparison of two charismatic religious thinkers of the twentieth century: the rabbi, philosopher and civil rights activist Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) and Pope St. John Paul II (1920-2005). In chapter one Fitzgerald carefully specifies his question. He sets out to examine:

‘whether doing good (or evil), in particular, leads to increases (or decreases) in happiness, meaning, freedom, and/or personal fulfilment’ (p.3).

Fitzgerald then goes on to specify exactly what he means by happiness, meaning, freedom, personal fulfilment and so on in this context. One of the strengths of this book is its clarity and precision: Fitzgerald’s prose is economical and accessible, the argument is always well sign posted and Fitzgerald is careful to acknowledge where, due to the nature of the comparison he is attempting, he has felt obliged to diverge in his understanding of key concepts from one or both of his interlocutors.

With these foundations in place, Fitzgerald moves on in chapters two and three to introduce the thought of Rabbi Heschel and Pope St. John Paul II (including his pre-papal writing) in a little more detail. Here Fitzgerald is constrained by space: I am unfamiliar with Rabbi Heschel’s work and found Fitzgerald’s exegesis piqued my interest in several directions which space did not allow Fitzgerald to develop. I am more familiar with the writings of the pope and on occasion regretted that the need to distil some very precise and concise answers from a wide and sophisticated body of work led to a loss of nuance and perhaps on occasion a misplaced emphasis. But such disagreements

are inevitable, especially given the need to co-ordinate the number of voices that Fitzgerald will eventually bring into this discussion and his commendable commitment to brevity of expression.

In chapter four Fitzgerald begins to draw some of his themes together. He notes that both Heschel and St. John Paul II defend a universal search for meaning and both perceive a connection between fidelity to God's law and personal fulfilment: according to Abraham Heschel and St. John Paul II, then, moral goodness leads to fulfilment. However, Fitzgerald is careful to emphasise that within this broad agreement there lies important differences. For example, when it comes to the question of whether goodness makes one happy the pope is more willing than the rabbi to frame his discussion against the backdrop of eternal life. In contrast, the rabbi prefers to focus on the here and now and worries that 'angst' and dissatisfaction may well be at the heart of true religion. Neither, Fitzgerald argues, clarifies the connection between doing good and freedom as defined by Fitzgerald earlier in the book which is revealing of the difficulties involved in comparing thinkers whose concepts are overlapping but not identical.

With this broad summary in place Fitzgerald moves quickly to bring other thinkers into the discussion. Aristotle, Maimonides, Aquinas and Kant are all summoned to flesh out some of the ideas and principles underpinning Heschel's and St. John Paul II's writing. Then the fourteenth Dalai Lama, Peter Singer and the psychologists Jonathan Haidt and Sonja Lyubomirsky are brought in to offer a more contemporary perspective on the interrelationship of morality, happiness, meaning and fulfilment. Fitzgerald finds in this wide range of historical and contemporary voices corroborating evidence to the broad outline of Heschel and St. John Paul II's arguments and therefore concludes that it is, indeed, good to be good: virtue is 'seductive' (p.15).

Now there would be something obviously unsatisfactory about anchoring such a conclusion solely on a broad consensus among a carefully selected group of thinkers. We might also wonder whether such a consensus really exists given the gulf on so many issues between so many of the thinkers discussed in chapter four, for example, Peter Singer and St. John Paul II. We might also be wary of the danger of imagining that it might be possible to subordinate the ideas of Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and various non-religious traditions to empirical examination in some kind of neutral intellectual space in which insights might be synthesized and universally applied. These are not, however, accurate descriptions of Fitzgerald's project, and this becomes clearer in the conclusion to chapter four.

Here Fitzgerald argues in favour of an interdisciplinary and inter-worldview approach to morality and personal fulfilment. He suggests, for example, that whilst philosophers and theologians do indeed assist us in understanding more precisely the moral life and its fruits, these disciplines 'can only take us so far' (pp. 188-9). In short, Fitzgerald

seems to be proposing that if we really want to make the world a better place we need to build a coalition. This will mean going beyond conversations with people that we already agree with to find common ground with those whose vision of life may well be very different but with whom perhaps we can find common goals and ideals. Against this backdrop, Fitzgerald's choice of Abraham Joshua Heschel and St. John Paul II becomes more interesting.

Both Heschel and St. John Paul II were deeply rooted in the Scriptures and in their respective religious traditions and yet both were convinced that their ideas had profound implications for the public sphere. For Heschel, this conviction led him to march with Dr. King at Selma and to campaign against the Vietnam war. For St. John Paul II this conviction led to the famous sermons in communist Poland and his vigorous promotion of the Gospel of life. Both, then, represent a model of the kind of interdisciplinary and interworldview dialogue advocated by Fitzgerald: Heschel and St. John Paul II were able to imprint their ideas on history precisely because they were willing to reach out beyond their respective traditions and engage with men and women of good will.

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GOD AND CREATION IN THE THEOLOGY OF THOMAS AQUINAS AND KARL BARTH by Tyler R. Wittman, *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019*, pp. xiv + 315, £75.00, hbk

When Pius XII promulgated *Humani Generis* in 1950, Karl Barth shared with the dominant voices of the Thomistic tradition a trajectory away from Catholic modernism and Liberal Protestantism. It is less clear, however, whether the growing number of Thomistically-inspired-Barthians and the smaller cluster of Barth-inspired-Thomists share anything like an isomorphic orientation to postmodernity's deconstruction of meta-narrative. At stake are divergent accounts of creatureliness and—more foundationally—the relationship of created intelligence to the uncreated divine action that grounds it, whether understood primarily as divine self-determination or creative intellection. For this reason, Tyler Wittman's magisterial study of Aquinas and Barth on the coherence of the creator-creature relationship with divine self-consistency is an outstanding and timely contribution to a most important theological discourse. Wittman's work will serve as a landmark for other emerging scholars who find in the creative conjunction of Barth and Aquinas a promising seam that is yet to be fully mined of its theological ore. A modified version of a doctoral thesis written under the late John Webster's supervision, Wittman's book exhibits all the hallmarks of Websterian 'theological theology':