

divine and human. In this way, he appears to bring a Christological reading to Mark that is framed by Nicaean and Chalcedonian lenses. He even speculates (but not does firmly conclude) about whether Mark views Jesus as pre-existent (188–90, 195). Robinson recognizes that debates about Jesus’s “divine or human nature” “use categories which are alien to Mark’s text” (195), but this doesn’t prohibit him from spending significant time on them.

Given that the overall significance of miracles is downplayed in Mark (especially compared to Jesus’s suffering and death), it is unclear why Robinson uses the miracles as his primary means of unpacking and understanding Mark’s Christology. *What does Jesus’s death and suffering mean for our understanding of his Christological identity?* is the question that the author of Mark seems intent upon asking.

The absence of topic sentences at the start of many/most paragraphs made several parts of the book read more like a collection of initial exegetical notes on Mark rather than a sustained and well-flowing argument.

This book is best suited for doctoral students and professors interested in typological and/or Christological readings of Mark’s Gospel.

MATTHEW S. RINDGE
Gonzaga University, USA
rindge@gonzaga.edu

Phenomenology of the Icon: Mediating God through the Image. By Stephanie Rumpza. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. xiii + 295 pages. \$110.00.
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Stephanie Rumpza has provided a unique and important text for scholar and student alike. *Phenomenology of the Icon* is an exploration of the concept of mediation between the finite and the infinite that concentrates on the icon as the primary form of such an encounter. Drawing on phenomenology as the primary methodology, her approach to the icon is through the lens of prayer rather than through the abstract philosophical inquiry.

Rumpza’s arguments are disciplined and logical. Beginning with the patristic roots of the icon, she traces its history as an object of prayer as well as an art form. With this foundation established she then explores the icons’ capacity to function as a medium for the divine during finite encounters of faith. Choosing the hermeneutical phenomenology of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jean-Luc Marion as her two dialogue partners, she provides valuable insight into the icon where the medium is the place of event, where encounter with

the icon is encounter with the kenotic self-gift of Christ, where prayer before the icon becomes a glimpse through visual symbol towards the presence of God's love, and much more.

This rich use of Gadamer and Marion to explore the icon as a medium of divine and finite encounter is developed in the text in four parts. She begins first with Gadamer's use of art as "Representation," even though his work never deals directly with the icon per se. Gadamer does open the world of art as a form event or medium for mediation that can then be applied to the icon. Building on this, Rumpza then presents Marion's understanding of "Presence" wherein Marion explicitly presents the encounter between believer and God, but he does so by presenting a reversal of the expected pattern of this engagement. In presenting themselves to the icon, the believer in prayer finds that God is already present and awaiting the believer's loving expectation. In the third part of the text, Rumpza, through Marion, uses the concept of "Substitution" as understood in the context of prayer to offer up new possibilities of relational communication with the icon, thus avoiding any charge of the icon being seen as an idol. Finally, the fourth part focuses on the icon and mediation through "Performance" in the context of the liturgy, here understood narrowly as primarily an encounter with divine presence leaving aside the quality of the "aesthetic forms" of the liturgy as of lesser concern.

Given the cost, this text would best be purchased for library reference use and will make an excellent choice as material for graduate studies in theology and philosophy. It will be especially helpful in courses where students have had some foundational reading in hermeneutics and are familiar with but not limited to the work of Gadamer and Marion.

There are two sections in the book which, if used as part of coursework, would benefit from engagement with other theological dialogue partners. First is the last section on "Performance" in the context of liturgy. It is here where ritual structure and liturgical quality are largely dismissed in light of a greater focus on encounter with the divine. Liturgical theology and ritual studies would utilize quite different arguments regarding the role of ritual structure and its importance in communicating the divine in communal prayer. One alternative perspective from someone who also draws on phenomenology as a dialogue partner is the French sacramental theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet, who would be an excellent choice to include in conversation. The second area is a passage in the "Presence" section (184–187), where Rumpza attempts to draw parallels between the Western understanding of real presence as encountered in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and iconic presence. Here students would be well served by further theological engagement beyond these brief arguments. This topic treated so summarily here could be a text unto itself given the complex and nuanced history of the theology in the West.

As presented by Rumpza, the material does not lend itself to the comparison in the few short pages allotted to it. Supplemental materials by Nathan Mitchell and David Power, OMI, to name just two possibilities, are readily available.

Rumpza shows herself to be a truly gifted scholar. Drawing from the phenomenology developed in the text, she presents a uniquely powerful understanding of the icon as mediation of a relationship of love using the image of a love letter. Initiated by God beyond our understanding, place or time, this relationship, mediated by the icon (the love letter), is one in which we can but offer our own response of love. “In sum, an iconic mediation is one of *both superfluidity and abundance*, as grounded in a *relationship of kenotic love*.”¹

This text is a worthy addition to any university library and adds an important and thought-provoking perspective for all who engage in theological and philosophical hermeneutics of image and icon.

RODICA M. M. STOICOIU
Independent academic, USA
rodicastroicoiuphd@gmail.com

Race and Rhyme: Rereading the New Testament. By Love Lazarus Sechrest. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2022. xv + 398 pages. \$39.99.
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Love Lazarus Sechrest’s *Race and Rhyme: Rereading the New Testament* is a rigorously argued and insightful book about how the Bible can be read in a way that takes the historical situation of the biblical text and current social realities seriously. The book’s underlying premise is that God revealed in the Bible has something relevant to say about the problems of race, racism, and White supremacy. To hear this liberative word, we must work through our own “cultural and perceptual biases” and build bridges between the world of the biblical text and our own (xiii). Her analogical method called “associative hermeneutics” attempts to identify appropriate harmonies or rhymes between these vastly differing worlds whenever possible but without making excuses for the text when it is not. It emerges from her formation and commitment as a Black womanist NT scholar to read the Bible with race, gender, and class in mind. It is also the product of her fruitful synthesis of theory and years of teaching in the classroom.

Sechrest applies associative hermeneutics to Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Revelation. For example, she reads Matthew’s

¹ Stephanie Rumpza, *Phenomenology of the Icon: Mediating God through the Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 265.