

thin accounts of work among evangelical Christians. As the intellectual heavy lifting of the project takes place in *A Theology of Work*, and as the general flow of the argument is parallel in both books, I will concentrate on the academic form of the argument.

As an opener, Cosden traces the theology of modern Roman Catholic encyclicals on work. Here he concludes that *Laborem Exercens* is overly foundationalist in its anthropology and conception of work, and so underplays the doctrines of nature (understood as a subject in its own right) and eschatology. An equally brief survey of Protestant conceptions of work is read as expressing an overemphasis on vocation and protology. These criticisms function primarily as ground clearing for Cosden's introduction of Moltmann's theology of work with its emphasis on human work's 'correspondence' to divine activity. Here Christ's 'labour' on the cross brings about the eschatological realization of creation, and (perhaps counter intuitively) grounds Moltmann's emphasis on the joyful and gratuitous nature of work over against its utility. Cosden's criticism of Moltmann is that he overplays justification and inconsistently explicates the cross as either play or labour, so rendering problematic the nature of work as actually satisfying in this life.

Cosden suggests that what is needed is a more detailed and appropriate ontology of work. He begins to construct such a theology in dialogue with Oliver O'Donovan, who allows him to validate creation as having a teleological order, though Cosden thinks O'Donovan still lets protology do more work than it should. An appropriate theological anthropology can have a more eschatological teleology, contends Cosden. In this quest Cosden draws together the insights of what he calls substance and function conceptions of the *imago dei* by imbedding them in a relational ontology. Here Colin Gunton is his main dialogue partner, despite his worry that Gunton draws the analogy between human and divine persons too tightly and so is not always able to sustain a proper place in anthropology for human stewardship of non-human creation.

The treatment culminates with an extended discussion of Moltmann's anthropology, which adds to these points a stress that work is not just a task commanded at creation, but is part of what humans are ontologically meant to be, as part of God's redeeming and eschatological purposes. The thrust of the whole book becomes clear when Cosden points to Isaiah 40:3-5 as the heart of a properly theological ontology of work: '...prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God...'

This theology of work raises at least two questions. First, Cosden is surely right that thinkers like Gunton so focus their reasoning about proper human relationality on the immanent trinity that it becomes difficult to imagine what light is shed on ethical questions in a broken world. Cosden's attempt to develop a more robust anthropology (ontology) with the condition of the ecological crisis in view seems a plausible response

to this deficit. Yet the question remains: How much work in the real world is done by getting one's ontology right? Cosden answers, 'what this concept of work's essential nature primarily guarantees is resistance to any reductionistic ethical prescriptions related to work. It provides a set of checks and balances that will simply not allow one particular concern, as legitimate as it may be in its own right, to run roughshod over other important concerns' (180). But is this avowal of 'balance' as an ethical prescription either practically illuminating or reflective of biblical examples? Here the avowal of 'Christian realism' and 'flexibility' further complicates matters. 'Practically, a work ethic may initially need to legitimatise a host of economic activities and structures necessary for the provision of resources for basic life support for the greatest number of people. In so doing it may even legitimatise certain kinds of work which under less extreme circumstances would be deemed unethical' (181). An ontology which legitimatizes the unethical is a relatively exotic beast requiring much more explanation than Cosden supplies.

The second point follows from the first. It is clear that this type of ontological account of work, especially when emphasising eschatology over protology, easily embraces activist or progressivist programs. What is missing is the idea that there is a rather large gap between our working and its success, a view which appears so clearly in places like Psalm 127. On Cosden's view, work is not a discipline that is good and from which we can learn whether it is met with success or not, but is concerted to show that our work 'matters in the grand scheme of things.' Here, by 'matters', Cosden does not mean as a sanctifying discipline, nor as a living out of an appropriate vocation (which he misunderstands in *Heavenly Good*) but as *actually* advancing the kingdom, or in his terms, heaven on earth. Cosden seems to conflate an appropriate discussion about what we ought to *aim* for in our work with an evaluation of its *actual* goodness, which Protestant theology at least, has been properly keen to keep distinctly separate.

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Nietzsche and Theology: Nietzschean Thought in Christological Anthropology

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Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, x + 195pp., £50, hb, ISBN 978-0-7546-5767-5

SUMMARY

This book assesses and responds to the use of Nietzsche's critique of modernity by Radical Orthodox theologians Milbank and Pickstock. Based on a close reading of the biological underpinning of Nietzsche's concept of the will-to-power, Deane shows how Milbank and Pickstock draw on Nietzsche in a manner that undermines the coherence of their own constructive proposals. Deane proposes that

Barth's christological appropriation of the semiotic polysemy of Nietzschean insights is superior to that of proponents of Radical Orthodoxy, and that Nietzsche's concept of the will-to-power lends important concretion to Barth's concept of the 'lordless powers'.

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur évalue la pensée de Milbank et de Pickstock, théologiens de l'orthodoxie radicale qui reprennent à leur compte la critique nietzschéenne de la modernité, et leur répond. En se basant sur une lecture attentive des fondements biologiques de la notion de volonté de puissance chez Nietzsche, Deane montre que Milbank et Pickstock ont utilisé Nietzsche d'une manière qui mine la cohérence de leur propre construction. Deane soutient que la reprise christologique par Barth de la polysémie sémiotique qui caractérise les apports nietzschéens est supérieure à celle des tenants de l'orthodoxie radicale, et que la notion nietzschéenne de volonté de puissance donne une consistance importante au concept barthien des « puissances sans domination ».

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch bewertet und antwortet auf die Verwendung von Nietzsches Kritik der Moderne durch die radikal orthodoxen Theologen Milbank und Pickstock. Auf der Grundlage einer sorgfältigen Wahrnehmung der biologischen Untermauerung von Nietzsches Konzept des Willens zur Macht zeigt Deane, wie Milbank und Pickstock Nietzsche auf eine Weise benutzen, die die Kohärenz ihrer eigenen konstruktiven Vorschläge unterminiert. Deane schlägt vor, dass Barths christologische Verwendung der semiotischen Vieldeutigkeit der Einsichten Nietzsches der Nutzung Nietzsches in der Radikalen Orthodoxie überlegen ist, und dass Nietzsches Konzept des Willens zur Macht dem Konzept Barths von den „herrschaftslosen Mächten“ Konkretion verleiht.

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Nietzsche and Theology is a revision of a thesis written at Trinity College, Dublin under Lewis Ayres and James Mackey. In it, David Deane utilizes the semiotic theories of Nietzsche and the Christology of Barth to offer a sympathetic but critical response to some basic claims of the proponents of Radical Orthodoxy.

The book opens by revisiting the old chestnut of Nietzsche interpretation, his assertion of the truth that there is no truth. Deane examines the most influential philosophical attempts to 'straighten' this contradiction (of Heidegger, Kaufmann, Sadler, Danto) and finds that each illegitimately accomplishes this straightening by reading Nietzsche through conceptual moves he explicitly opposes. Deane thinks Derrida's attempt to draw out Nietzsche's understanding of writing as a performative act rather than a straight expression of the author's identity moves in the right direction by illustrating how Nietzsche's outlandish contradictions are an expression of his desire to utilize the *form* of writing to deconstruct the content, the hallowed antithesis of western meta-

physics. By creatively misusing those concepts (most notably the law of non-contradiction) he locates himself within the metaphysical tradition to dynamite it from within. Yet Deane does not think Derrida fully grasped the full range of resources Nietzsche brings to the destabilizing semiotic functioning.

Those resources, Deane suggests, are found in Nietzsche's notion of the will-to-power. Deane shows how this concept develops out of inconsistencies in Schopenhauer's definition of the self, which unsuccessfully tries to hold together Kantian epistemology and modern physiological theories. In order to elucidate Nietzsche's conception of the self as an expression of multiple drives and cultural inputs (as Nietzsche puts it, 'the body has wisdom'), he compares Nietzsche's anthropological presuppositions with the biological and cultural theories of Dawkins and Dennett. His aim is to illustrate that Nietzsche writes texts that destabilize and attack the certainties of the western philosophical tradition from the relatively stable launching pad of a pseudo-mechanistic account of the self as a body comprised of multiple, conflicting, drives overseen by multiple, conflicting, cultural ideas, above which hovers an only apparently unified consciousness.

This account of Nietzsche's will-to-power draws more from certain Anglo-American versions of Nietzsche than the French post-structuralist Nietzsche who has become a standard-bearer in the modernity critique of Radical Orthodoxy. Deane's fore-grounded target of criticism of Milbank, with Hart in the background. On Deane's account, Milbank's approach is to rely on Nietzsche's genealogical method, but then to accuse him of relying on a conception of 'nature' which his perspectivism makes it impossible to provide. Nietzsche can then be dismissed as yet another modern voluntarist. This allows Milbank to snip out the violence of Nietzsche's will-to-power as grounded in its voluntarist underpinnings, which he supposes are structurally distinct from his non-voluntarist ontology of divine charity. Having argued for the 'biological foundations' (here Deane's language is revealing) of Nietzsche's critique of nihilism, Deane attempts to force Milbank to come up with more sophisticated reasons for dismissing the thinker who has so advanced his own project.

Deane shores up his account of Nietzsche's biological foundations by showing how, far from being an opponent of Darwin, Nietzsche felt the empiricist Darwin needed only to universalize his theory to see that struggles for supremacy are going on at every level inside and outside the human organism. Deane's point is that it is patently untrue that in Nietzsche the 'I' is voluntaristically chosen, because any 'I' we can name is an expression of this myriad of, ultimately biological, struggles. Milbank's dismissal of Nietzsche therefore elides the 'inextricable interdependence of genealogical method and the ontology it claims to unveil' (105). Nietzsche's will-to-power is inescapably an ontology of the *physical* world, with its appetites and metabolism, not just a 'mythos' we

can choose, reject, or 'outnarrate'. 'Nietzsche's understanding can no more be opposed by simply rejecting it, or out narrating it any more than Darwin's understanding of evolution through natural selection can' (107). Theology, therefore, cannot bypass serious engagement with 'the basic truth of Darwinian principles,' but must directly face their ontological implications.

The focus now turns back to semiotics, and here Deane trains his sights on Catherine Pickstock. Like Milbank, she also relies heavily on Nietzsche's criticism of semiotic nihilism (the idea that words have no meaning outside sole reference to us, the knowing subjects) only to discard him. Pickstock's *After Writing* points to the medieval Roman mass as the historical moment when modern and ancient metaphysical dichotomies were simultaneously overcome: between language and speech, space and time, signifier and signified, etc. In this perfectly balanced mass, all these dichotomies are united in doxological practice. Deane protests that this unification is understood as sacralising language, following the logic of transubstantiation. By sacralising language any appropriation of Nietzschean insights about the instability of language becomes impossible. Again, Deane concludes, you can have Nietzsche, or you can have the Radical Orthodox ontology of peace, but you can't have both.

Deane's counterproposal looks to Karl Barth's christologically-mediated appropriation and overcoming of Nietzsche as a preferable approach. In maintaining that fallen humans are in the ontological position of being both justified and sinner Barth is able to retain notions that our language is at once a mix of meaningful and meaningless references. Beginning in this manner allows us to account for the solipsism (the theory that self is the only object of real knowledge) of semiotic nihilism as an artefact of our being severed, not from liturgical practices, but from God's self-revealing presence. Barth's ontology is preferable to that of Radical Orthodoxy because his account of reconciliation, which is grounded in the conflict of the cross, explicitly bears a multiplicity of meanings and so can take Nietzsche seriously. It does not strive, as do proponents of Radical Orthodoxy, for a homogenous ontology. Homogeneous ontologies, in Deane's view, are pernicious in leading to weak accounts

of interpersonal and political reconciliation.

Because Barth's account of sin is thoroughly christological it is linked to the doctrine of election and has the conflict of the cross at its heart. Fallenness is that situation of rebellion that has been transcended in the cross, which establishes the conditions of human freedom. Barth seeks an account of the universality of sin that does not rest on a biological genealogy nor an account of concupiscence as causal. His main move is to frame the fall as humanity's turning away from God's Word toward the flesh, at once a free choice and a choice for unfreedom. In so choosing to follow the flesh the biological, intellectual and cultural forces which are given to humans are set free, becoming, in the language of *The Christian Life*, 'lordless powers'. Barth's analysis of these predatory human drives set free thus meets and is enriched by the Nietzschean anthropology outlined above, and has the additional advantage of flanking problematic accounts of sin in the Christian tradition.

Having shown Barth's superior capacity to keep essential Nietzschean insights in play, Deane concludes by (implicitly) comparing his approach to the strategies of Radical Orthodoxy. Barth and Nietzsche agree that perspectival epistemologies with all their problems stem from fundamental human drives to self-assertion. They also agree on the violence this creates and the necessity of a lordliness or nobility that can overcome it. Where they differ is in Nietzsche's validation of commonsense notions of power and overcoming, and in Barth's inversion of these in the figure of the royal man whose task is to serve 'the least of these'. This royal man is not idea, but concretely confronts and meets us in the configurations of our bodies and signs in order to invest himself in turning them towards himself. Deane concludes that the concreteness of this Christology is dynamic and dangerous, propelling Christians into active engagement with the world, and so Christian ethics and political theology.

Though rarely reaching the clarity or economy of expression of Nietzsche himself (or even Barth for that matter), Deane has made an important contribution to understanding the import of Nietzsche's philosophy for contemporary theology.

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