

(English Puritan), Ferdinand Christian Baur (and Adolf Hilgenfeld), Joseph Barber Lightfoot and various recent commentators. Of the recent commentators, Bultmann, E.P. Sanders, J.D.G. Dunn, and J.L. Martyn are the most frequently discussed.

Building upon the ideology of Hans Robert Jauss, Riches gives a substantive introduction to each commentator in order to help the reader to understand the 'horizon of expectation' of each. With the number of points of view Riches incorporates, he obviously cannot focus upon each exegetical issue. Riches divides the letter into 10 sections (1.1-9; 2.10-24; 2.1-10; 2.11-21; 3.1-14; 3.15-29; 4.1-20; 4.21-31; 5; and 6). Within each section he gives a brief summary of the text and central questions and debates that rise from it. He then summarises the views of the different commentators in chronological order.

While Riches focuses on certain interpreters, he integrates comments from a wide variety of other writers and sources. Though he has his list of significant commentators, he does not let this list limit his discussion. He also incorporates a wide number of other relevant commentators depending on their importance to the topic at hand. At times he presumes some, but not a detailed, knowledge of Protestant debates not covered in the introductions. In case the reader is unfamiliar with a particular interpreter or theological position, Riches has provided a glossary in the back giving a brief description and dates for authors.

Different from traditional commentaries on biblical texts, Riches does not give his 'own' interpretation of the text along with the other commentators (p. 64-65); however, this does not limit him to merely summarising the different authors. He also provides evaluative comments of commentators, which sharpen the debate but can also periodically reveal his personal perspective. For example, in his discussion of chapter 5 Riches notes how Chrysostom's interpretation 'is achieved at the cost of screening out the darker, dualist side of Paul's thought' (p. 270) while 'Calvin shows himself to be a sensitive reader of Paul' (p. 276) in this chapter. Thus, Riches carefully highlights different strengths and weaknesses of the readings which he explores, while treating each on its own terms.

Riches' list of principle commentators, along with his freedom to interact with those not on the list, allows him to address central theological issues. In particular, his inclusion of Marcion and other 'dualists' (e.g., the Valentinians) captures the voice of primary Pauline interpreters in the second and third centuries, who are often neglected by others. At the same time, Riches' selection of interpreters betrays primarily western and specifically Protestant readings of Paul. Chrysostom is offered as an eastern voice, but his interpretive method tends to align more closely to those of modern Protestants than someone like Origen, whose method might strike readers as more challenging. Examples of modern Orthodox interpreters (e.g., Paul Nadim Tarazi) are not numerous,

but I did not notice any cited in Riches' discussion. In the same way, Roman Catholic interpretations were also not explored other than Aquinas, though the interpretations of the Council of Trent are noted a couple of times. Any number of Roman Catholic interpreters could be included to give more balance to the discussion (e.g., John Bligh). In addition, the protestant interpreters that Riches has chosen fall within the Calvinist and Lutheran traditions, rather than those following Arminian or Wesleyan interpretations. While the addition of Perkins is refreshing because he stands outside the normal list of those consulted, Riches' project would have been strengthened had he included Orthodox and Catholic interpreters.

Riches provides an in-depth, clear, and interesting study of Galatians by highlighting debated issues within the letter. Those studying Galatians would find this commentary well worth their study in order to understand better the basis of interpretive decisions inherited, often unknowingly, from others.

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### *Theology and Film:*

#### *Challenging the Sacred/ Secular Divide*

**Christopher Deacy and Gaye Williams Ortiz**

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#### SUMMARY

This textbook outlines the potentially stimulating dialogue between Christian theologies and so-called secular film. A first part samples various methodological approaches whereby theology can engage films with respect rather than reading in its own themes. A second part offers useful examples of dialogue with films which address themes of interest to theology: women, the environment, violence, justice, war and eschatology.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Textbuch skizziert den potentiell stimulierenden Dialog zwischen christlichen Theologien und dem so genannten säkularen Film. Ein erster Teil bringt beispielhaft verschiedene methodische Ansätze, mit deren Hilfe die Theologie Filme mit Respekt behandeln kann, anstatt sie durch die Linse ihrer eigenen Themen zu sehen. Ein zweiter Teil bietet nützliche Beispiele von Dialogen mit Filmen, die Themen behandeln, die für die Theologie von Interesse sind: Frauen, die Umwelt, Gewalt, Gerechtigkeit, Krieg und Eschatologie.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage montre comment la théologie peut entrer en un dialogue stimulant avec la production cinématographique séculière. Une première partie indique des approches méthodologiques pour considérer les films d'un point



de vue théologique, mais en respectant leur perspective propre sans vouloir y retrouver nécessairement les thèmes habituellement abordés par la théologie. Une seconde partie donne des exemples de films présentant un apport utile sur des thèmes touchant aux préoccupations de la théologie: la place des femmes, l'environnement, la violence, la justice, la guerre et l'eschatologie.

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Deacy and Ortiz continue to advance the emerging discipline of 'Theology and Film'. They show that films and theology often treat similar themes and questions, and that there is value in conversations between the two. They have succeeded in producing a stimulating introductory textbook, accompanied by useful online resources.

Part I, 'Methodological Considerations', aims to move beyond subjective readings towards consistent methods of understanding film, and not just traditionally religious films but those with 'secular' concerns (that term is challenged after Bonhoeffer's explanation of the Incarnation as God participating in the world) and films that challenge and subvert theological paradigms. Here is a valuable sampler of a range of current approaches to Theology and Film. Reinhold Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* (1952) provides the overall organising categories: Christ against Culture; Christ of Culture; Christ above Culture; Christ and Culture in Paradox; and Christ the Transformer of Culture. At times Niebuhr's categories can seem to strain to contain the theorists assigned to them, and a half-century of critiques and adaptations of Niebuhr are not deployed. A section considers the axis between so-called high and low cultures after Neil Postman, and how theology could respond.

A key caveat is that films must be read on their own terms rather than selectively interpreted to support a theological agenda, and films can suffer at the hands of uncritical, too-convenient theological readings: for example, seeing Christ-figures behind every cinematic hero can distort what is really on the screen. Robert Jewett is used as a contra-example for allowing Biblical texts more authority in the dialogue with film (as 'first among equals') but it is not demonstrated that this necessarily makes him less attentive to films and the themes expressed in their details, even if he may find Pauline concepts richer. Jewett's frank acknowledgement that he is not a trained film critic is rather used in evidence against him when, in fairness, many pioneering writers in this discipline are formally trained theologians but enthusiastic amateurs or at best autodidacts in film theory.

Part II, 'Theological Perspectives and Filmic Themes', considers films which address subjects relevant to systematic theology (with the admirably self-critical acknowledgement that one's theological agenda may show in one's very choice of films). Chapter 3 briefly applies feminism to film and theology, showing instructive parallels. Chapter 4 considers environmental films. Chapter 5 considers violence as anathema to Christianity

but questions whether it may be redemptive, analysing Mel Gibson's Christ as victim of violence, and provocatively regarding the Bible's eschatological Christ as warrior-judge, conqueror and violent destroyer of enemies; here are penetrating questions about violence inherent in heroes and Christ-figures, and in religion. Chapter 6 explores links between human justice and theodicy. Chapter 7 examines the mythology of war, sampling war films (and 'peace films') which reflect a range of eras and political stances. It distinguishes the Christian notion of 'just war' from the empire war to sustain a lifestyle exploiting other people's resources, and controversially applies this to George W. Bush's 'theology of war', examining documentaries which critique the 'war on terror' and its worldview, and drawing disturbing parallels to historical films on oppression. It discusses *Paradise Now*, a film depicting a Palestinian's decision to become a suicide bomber and claiming root causes in the lack of economic prospects, human rights and hope. Whether or not a reader agrees at all points – or at all – this chapter is theology at its provocative, catalytic, relevant best. Chapter 8 samples a fascinating range of eschatologies, from subjective and other-worldly (*What Dreams May Come*) to virtual (*Vanilla Sky*) to this-worldly (*Terminator II*) even to beachside after-years as earthly reward (*Shawshank Redemption*). Chapter 9 considers narrative itself, and its role in the search for meaning.

Overall, Deacy and Ortiz demonstrate their thesis that cinema is a rich site for theological exchange. The selection of films is commendably catholic: the treatment of Iranian women's films particularly will open up new areas for Western readers.

They also suggest ways forward for research, observing that the discipline often neglects 'the rich resources of film criticism and theory' – sound, editing, cinematography and *mise-en-scène* (the artful use of visual details), and theoretical approaches including psychoanalytic, semiotic, formalist, impressionistic and poststructuralist, Marxist, feminist, and gay and lesbian. Their book delivers chapters on some theoretical areas but others are still open territory, and detailed aesthetic analysis of how individual films work to produce theology is left to others. The discipline could profitably take up their challenge.

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