

which it appears, most of which, scholarly though they often are, are mind-blowingly boring to read) does as much as his scholarship to indicate that what he writing about is not to be treated lightly. Just because his book has this virtue, I think it worth adding a criticism related to the virtue. This amounts to wishing that O'Rourke had done more than he has to show how what Denys and Aquinas say can be said in a different way to readers unfamiliar with theses familiar to experts on medieval texts. I am thinking, for example, of ideas (ascribable to Denys and Aquinas) like *omne agens agit sibi simile* (which O'Rourke renders as 'every cause necessarily produces an effect bearing a resemblance to itself'). The thesis seems *prima facie* false. Glaringly false. But, as O'Rourke knows very well, the most likely objections to it based on the *prima facie* appearance will not engage with what the thesis is propounding. Commentators on Denys and Aquinas therefore owe their readers an explanation of why this is so. O'Rourke, I fear, does not have as much of an eye as he might on the debt in question here. And, more often than I would wish, he settles for repeating, without acknowledgement of difficulties concerning them, formulae common to Denys and Aquinas.

This, however, is a criticism which is probably irrelevant given the readership of the book which I presume to be intended by the publisher. I presume that Brill expects it to sell to teachers who specialize in medieval theology and philosophy (whose needs will force them to beggar themselves and spend £53.00 on it) and to libraries, in which students of what is now a very specialized field may consult it (though, doubtless because of publication procedures, they will find its bibliography lacking some relevant books published in the last few years—e.g. Louth's *Denys the Areopagite* and Wayne Hankey's *God in Himself* [Oxford, 1987]). But the criticism I make is relevant if, as I think, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* is a generally splendid book which, to a high degree, is more than a merely historical and scholarly essay.

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LONERGAN by Frederick E. Crowe S.J. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1992. xiv + 146 pp.

Fr. Crowe is not only the most lucid of Lonergan's expositors, but also the most well-informed, having had a close personal acquaintance with his subject for more than forty years, as well as possessing an unrivalled knowledge of his writings both published and unpublished. In this book he outlines the progress of Lonergan's thought against the background of his life. One can see good reasons for this procedure, as it was Lonergan's way to stress the mental processes with which the scientist or scholar worked rather than finished results; and yet I cannot help feeling that it was in some ways regrettable, given that the main focus of

interest was the work and not the life. To present a systematic account of Lonergan's thought was not the only alternative; a third option would have been to relate it pressing contemporary problems. How is knowledge to be vindicated and radical scepticism avoided? What differences are there, if any, between the methods appropriate to the natural and human sciences? What would a comprehensively critical psychiatry or political theory be like? Are there sound reasons for believing in God and in Christ which are not question-begging? And so on and so on.

But it is a shame to find fault with a book which is so full of good things. The wealth of biographical detail, particularly in the early part of the book, may indeed prove tiresome to readers who are not addicted Lonerganians. But they should persevere; few things could be more helpful than the later chapters to anyone who is faced with the task, which can be daunting, of understanding just what is going on in the two great studies of Aquinas, in *Insight* or in *Method in Theology*. It is of interest that Aquinas was rather a late interest for Lonergan, whose first philosophical enthusiasms were for Plato and Augustine's *Dialogues*. When at last he started studying the *Summa* at first hand, he began to suspect that 'St. Thomas wasn't nearly as bad as he is painted.' In no time after that we find him making a remark, in a letter, which is suggestive either of budding genius or overweening conceit: 'I can put together a Thomistic metaphysic of history that will throw Hegel and Marx, despite the enormity of their influence on this very account, into the shade.' Not that he had much use for the school metaphysics that he was put through at Heythrop College. Fortunately the professor of metaphysics was absent when Lonergan took the course, and his stand-in gave only three lectures on the subject during the entire year; 'so I never had to unlearn all that nonsense.'

It is suggested that one cannot understand Lonergan properly without taking into account the very negative view of the state of Catholic education that he held throughout his life; he was fond of quoting Gilson's remark, that he gave his children a Catholic education, but it was a great sacrifice. He said he owed what scholarly application he had to his initial schooling by the Brothers of Christian Instruction, whereas the Jesuits had taught him how to loaf. (Of all the allegations I have heard against the Jesuits, I find this the most surprising.) It is intriguing that, as a child, Bernard was neither an early nor an enthusiastic reader. Later he developed a special fondness for Chesterton and Lewis Carroll; Tacitus was a favorite Latin author. It is good to hear that after twenty-four years of aridity in the spiritual life, Lonergan moved into a state of spiritual joy which lasted for at least thirty years.

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