

Florovsky emerges from this study as far more than a chronicler of the Greek and middle Byzantine doctors, or an historian of 'the ways of Russian theology', to utilize the title of his *magnum opus*. Had he remained in his native Odessa, absent the October Revolution he would most likely have become, Gavrilyuk shows reason for believing, a professional philosopher: certainly a philosopher of culture, and perhaps a philosopher of science as well. There is a powerful philosophical undertow to his writing, not only in his insistence on the metaphysically innovatory character of the notion of creation, but also in his theory of history, which is strongly anti-deterministic and with a marked emphasis on personal agency as the true carrier of cultural creativity. Those two concepts have an obvious application in a critique of Bolshevism but they are also pertinent to disagreement with the sophiologists as well.

Gavrilyuk regards Florovsky's intellectual commitments here as owed almost as much to 'Renaissance' or other contemporary writers as to the Fathers themselves. Conversely, it was, he thinks, unfair of Florovsky to speak of Bulgakov as if he were a theologian working in ignorance of, or indifference to, the patristic witness. (It was Bulgakov who urged Florovsky to make patristics his life work, and secured his chair at *Saint-Serge*.) For Gavrilyuk, Florovsky's was a voice within the 'polyphony' of the Renaissance, not one that came from outside. In due time, however, his voice, unfortunately, drowned out that of others. His intervention in the world of Russian theology altered the balance of Orthodox theological life worldwide. He was victorious through his students and heirs. In describing the revisionism which is now seeking to revisit the issues and produce a new balance-sheet, Gavrilyuk makes it plain he would like to see the theologians of Orthodoxy move beyond both neo-patristics and a Bulgakov-like sophiology, so as to develop fresh forms of theological reflection taking their cue from such issues as politics, gender and the body. I think a Catholic commentator sympathetic to Orthodoxy would want to sound a warning note here. Learn negatively as well as positively from the experience of the West. Consider these themes theologically, by all means, but do not draw from them principles of order for theology at large. Do not erect them into alternative theologies in their own right, as some in the Catholic West have done in recent decades, to the confusion of hierarchs, intelligentsia and faithful. It is, surely, by entering with the help of a congruent metaphysics into the realm of revelation first fully registered by the Fathers that a theological life suited to the Great Church will make its way aright in the wider world.

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GRATITUDE: AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY by Peter J. Leithart *Baylor University Press, Waco, Texas, 2014, pp. ix + 340, £41.99, hbk*

In so far as all things, visible and invisible, owe their existence to God's gracious generosity, theology is, first and foremost, a consideration of God, but thereafter of everything else in its relation to God; all is fair game. Hence, a feature of some recent theology is its focus on everyday categories, such as place, human affections and spiritual emotions, such as forgiveness, or faculties, such as the intellect or imagination.

Another important category is gift. 'No one disparages gifts. Gift – especially in the singular, especially capitalised – is a hurrah word' (p. 195), but the human response of gratitude has it seems hardly ever been singled out for special theological attention. Peter Leithart's key and correct insight is that this is worth

doing. In offering a rich and detailed intellectual history of gratitude his book contributes, therefore, not only to its broader cultural and intellectual understanding, but also to a burgeoning theological literature. The author is clear, however, that this is *an* intellectual history and not the last word; he takes good care to deflate the subtitle, as this is not a global history but a Western one, and will be content even if many of the book's claims are subsequently challenged, so long as 'it puts gratitude more frequently into the indexes, search engines and syllabi' (p. 16).

But what are gratitude's characteristics? This depends when we are talking about. Hence, the book is organised chronologically from Greece to Rome, backtracking via the biblical tradition and through the New Testament, to modern philosophy and political theory, ending in the late modern. Summarising 2500 years of intellectual history in a manageable way is no mean feat, however, particularly when this is marked by three disruption: 'the disruption of early Christianity, the disruption of the Reformation, and the disruption of the Enlightenment' (p. 5).

To help bring some order to all this Leithart usefully appeals to circle versus linear approaches to gift giving in which gratitude is implicated. Circle accounts imply reciprocity or indebtedness of some sort: X gives A to Y, therefore Y is obliged to give B to X. Linear accounts, on the other hand, imply no closure or return, but simply a transmission of gift. Another conceptual frame is whether gratitude is culturally expected or not, and, indeed, the extent to which cultures can be considered cultures of ingratitude. Christianity is curious in both these regards according to Leithart. First, because the circle of indebtedness in which givers and recipients are caught up is an infinite one in which all giving, receiving, and thanking are ultimately carried up into the infinitely gracious love of God. Second, because the early Christians were accused of *ingratitude* by the authorities, who resented Christians' refusal to give thanks to gods or to value worldly goods and favours. Ingratitude, then, ironically begins with a misunderstanding of the Christian, if Leithart is correct, and intensifies until the late modern which is, in his view, a quintessential culture of ingratitude. Key moments in this story are the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when following the disruption of 'ancient and mediaeval circles of reciprocity... It was not clear what exactly had been unleashed on the world' (p. 120), and, of course, the Enlightenment when '(i)n place of traditional and infinite Christian circles, they offered an empty space for rebuilding or a pure line of duty' (p. 160).

Throughout its historical survey, the book ranges sure footedly across disparate literatures and readily achieves its aims, and could easily become the standard primer for the field. Reflecting a successful course taught by its author, I can imagine it being easily pressed into similar service by others. The text's pedagogic feel is further heightened by a clever and appealing thought experiment: 'grandma's soup tureen'. Suppose grandma has given you an ugly (to your eyes) wedding gift of a soup tureen. What should you do with it, and how should you express gratitude? Do you feign liking? Would it be right to store it away? To bin it? To use it to feed the cat? Leithart sets up his worked example at the start of the book and invites the reader to bear the infamous tureen in mind as she reads through the various epochs of gratitude. Then, like the unmasking of an Agatha Christie mystery, he quickly and light-heartedly assesses the epochs' responses at the end of the book - not without considerable humour, as I shall leave the reader to discover.

There are many rich sections of this book worth careful reflection. I especially appreciated its clear treatment of late modern discussions of gift and gratitude by Derrida and Marion, and Milbank's theological response. Derrida deconstructs gift until it become *the* impossibility, while Marion reduces gift to pure givenness. For Milbank, by contrast, the paradigm case for gift giving is the gift exchange of (romantic) love, where reciprocity is delayed as a form of non-identical repetition. Part of the reason Milbank is able to make this claim is that he treats

erotic-agapeic love, desire, and being as intimately entwined, whereas for Marion they are separable. Milbank, however, does not engage fully with the infinite circle if Leithart is correct.

Despite its many strengths I found the book's idealistic conclusion, '(t)o retain, and to build on, modernity, atheistic modernity must be replaced by its only real alternative – a theistic modernity' (p. 230), more aspirational than readily achievable. My guess is we shall need to live and express gratitude in a less coherent, plural, and human world than this for some time yet! That said, this is bound to become the benchmark for and beginning of further investigations of the topic. One aspect that could be easily developed is the existential-experiential dimensions of all this. Leithart does not explore this in any great depth, his is not that sort of book, and to do so would most likely involve not only a further theological, but also a well-developed psychological, and possibly literary excursion. But such an exploration could now be most useful.

PETER HAMPSON

KNOWING WHAT TO DO: IMAGINATION, VIRTUE AND PLATONISM IN ETHICS
by Timothy Chappell, *Oxford University Press, Oxford*, pp. ix + 339, £45.00, hbk

In this very fine book Timothy Chappell confronts a tension at the heart of moral philosophy: the tension between the systematic and the anti-systematic. As Chappell explains early on, the systematic approach emphasises generalizable patterns and favours comprehensive moral theories, whereas the anti-systematic approach emphasises the particularities of moral cases and so is suspicious of comprehensive moral theories.

In addressing this tension, it seems to this reader at least that Chappell has two principal related aims, the first of which is overarching and perhaps somewhat implicit and the second more explicit. In order to try to do justice to them, I will deal with them singly and then show how they are related. The first principal aim is to make a case in favour of the anti-systematic approach and against the systematic approach in moral philosophy.

I doubt, though, that Chappell succeeds in this. For starters, Chappell attributes to the systematising philosophers more than many of them would ever claim. Take, for example the following sentence: 'If the systematicians are right and there is a formula for making right decisions, then the only thing that counts ethically speaking will be that, in practice, I should follow that rule or formula' (p.16). First, many if not most philosophers write about procedures in decision-making, not formulas. Procedures suggest, to me at least, something more open-ended and possibly incomplete than formulas. Moreover, all but the most hard-line and reductionist systematicians would accept that the correct implementation of moral rules or procedures still requires at least some judgement, insight and imagination. Second, the word 'only' in the quoted sentence is problematic. Systematising philosophers need not always claim that their theories must provide *both* necessary and sufficient conditions for correct moral reasoning. They could, for example, make either a sufficiency or a necessity claim without making the other, thereby leaving open the possibility of other sources of practical normativity beyond those expressed by the rules or formulas or procedures of the theory. Such concessive positions are open to the systematician.

That said, Chappell's critique of the systematic approach is not without appreciable force. This becomes clear when it comes to what I think is the second