and largely delivers a solid discussion of transatlantic religious politics in the late Stuart and early Hanoverian eras.

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Where Paralytics Walk and the Blind See: Stories of Sickness and Disability at the Juncture of Worlds. By **Mary Dunn**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022. xii + 211 pp. $32 cloth.

Mary Dunn's latest book on New France and early modern Catholics who inhabited it is a highly personal work. In her introduction, she shares in moving terms about her own battle with cancer and her child's diagnosis with a disability. She wanted with this book "to tell a different kind of story" about sickness and disability than the one our modern, rationalistic culture tells: that they are primarily problems needing fixing and that the only good ending to stories about them is a full recovery or at least restitution to a "normal" life by means of medicinal or prosthetic aids (4–9). Dunn does not, however, seek to replace this narrative with an early modern one. Rather, she seeks "to widen the range of options for . . . making sense of embodied difference" by reflecting on alternative narratives found in sources with which she is familiar as a historian (9).

The sources she chooses for this simultaneously personal and scholarly exercise include the Jesuits' famous, annual *Relations de la Nouvelle-France* (1632–1673) that recount numerous missionary interactions with Native American and French people suffering from illnesses such as smallpox. Dunn also examines the *Histoire de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec* (1751) by the Augustinian Hospitaller nun Jeanne-Françoise Juchereau de la Ferté; the *Vie de la Vénerable Mère Catherine de Saint-Augustin* (1671) by the Jesuit Paul Ragueneau, who attempted to establish the sanctity of a Hospitaller nun who had experienced spiritual and physical ailments connected to mystical visions; and the early-eighteenth-century manuscript *Actes du très dévot Frère Didace Pelletier* by the Franciscan Recollet friar Joseph Denis, who also tried to establish the sanctity of a confrere who had died from pleurisy and then had an active career as a saintly intercessor for others suffering from diseases and impairments. Dunn devotes one chapter apiece to these sources while putting them into conversation with secondary sources on the colonial period, on Catholicism's cultural history, and in disability studies, narrative studies, and the history of medicine. She also occasionally employs some of her own imaginative constructions where there are gaps in the historical record.

In the process, Dunn adds to our understanding of how early modern Catholics in the French Atlantic world thought about ailments and bodily difference and integrated experiences with them into larger narratives about God's and other heavenly beings' relationships with mortal men and women. In Chapter 1, we learn how central sickness and disability were to narratives that Jesuits constructed for themselves and their French reading public. For the Jesuits, "embodied difference" became "the handmaid of mission—an opportunity for baptism, an invitation to virtue, and a summons to divine intervention," to the point that sickness and disease in New France came to feel

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different, as well as to mean something new, to many who suffered from them or tended to those who suffered in the mission context (39). In Chapter 2, we learn that Hospitaller nuns chronicled stories of how their community tended to the sick and the impaired partly to clarify for themselves that their religious vocation in New France was genuinely missionary in character and similar to that of uncloistered, highly mobile, male religious such as the Jesuits. Their ministrations within their convent walls sometimes resulted in conversions, including among Protestant British soldiers they generously tended to.

In Chapters 3 and 4, Dunn clarifies ways in which bodily suffering and occasional miraculous healings factored into efforts to establish not only God's manifestation of his presence among us, but also the sanctity of figures such as Catherine de Saint-Augustin and Didace Pelletier. Especially compelling is Dunn's analysis of how Catherine's Jesuit biographer constructed a narrative for his metropolitan audience that was intended to normalize some of the stranger stories of her struggles with demonic presences: Ragueneau employed tropes from conventional hagiography as a narrative "prosthesis," so to speak, so that Catherine's cause for canonization could advance and be unhindered by controversies that swirled around her memory.

Beyond all this, Dunn provides her readers with alternatives—however qualified by critical self-distancing—to the contemporary dominant narrative about sickness and disability. Her book encourages us to consider sickness, disease, disability, and our struggles with them within frameworks that posit transcendent horizons and sacred presences and allow us to find more meaning in suffering than our rationalistic culture generally encourages. Additionally, Dunn makes a case for historians to be more open about their personal reasons for working on projects they do and about their participation in the universally human quest for meaning that their subjects also participated in. She demonstrates that more rather than less self-conscious or unembarrassed presentism can sometimes help us avoid more effectively the uncritical imposition of our own contemporary pieties on our historical subjects' experiences and worldviews.

Dunn could have made this case even more confidently. Many pages of her introduction, as well as additional segments in the book, are devoted to arguing, in qualified and defensive terms, for the sort of history she offers. Dunn's efforts to fend off various possible criticisms from academic peers weigh down her otherwise lucid and at times beautiful writing and scholarly demonstrations. Partly to make book more accessible to the range of nonspecialists as well as specialists that Dunn's ideas deserve to reach, her editors could have done more to help the latter shine through, perhaps by relegating more of the historiographical and theoretical positioning to the endnotes.

Something specific to the study of early modern Catholicism that Dunn might have given us more of would be her considerations on ways some of the figures she examines may at times have been laying foundations for modern, rationalistic narratives, even while writing within and constructing narratives generally very different from our own. There are interesting tensions in the *Relations*, for example, to be explored in this vein.

Overall, *Where Paralytics Walk and the Blind See* is an exceptionally sincere, multifaceted, and thoughtfully composed book. Given its range of scholarly interventions, it would serve well for provoking discussions among graduate students and advanced undergraduates on how to engage with early modern religious texts and how to approach scholarly writing *per se* in history and religious studies contexts. Finally, this book has the unusual quality of connecting directly with the basic humanity its readers share with the author

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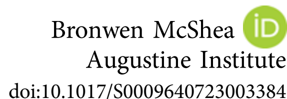
while maintaining a responsible and critical scholarly voice throughout. Dunn should be thanked for her labors and generosity in offering this book to us.

Bronwen McShea 
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The Old Faith in a New Nation: American Protestants and the Christian Past. By **Paul J. Gutacker**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. x + 247 pp. $29.95 paper.

Since the Founding Era (1775–1789), Americans have waffled between conceptions of their nation based either on novelty or tradition. The dollar bill, for instance, boasts of America as a *novus ordo seculorum*. Juxtaposed to this is a George Washington or Thomas Jefferson invoking the Roman republic's ideal of the yeoman farmer who could serve his country as a soldier; Jefferson was a self-conscious agrarian (on the order of Cato), while Washington's greatest admirers remembered him as Cincinnatus (the Roman patrician statesman who came to Rome's rescue only to resign his commission once the military crisis was over). Similar discrepancies emerge in antebellum America where Protestant denominational colleges, founded almost as fast as Americans settled the frontier, used a classical curriculum even as the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson or advocates of Manifest Destiny told Americans to cut their ties to Europe in order to develop a national literature. Even the Free Will Baptists who founded Hillsdale College (1844) took the novel step of admitting women and blacks (sometimes into non-degree programs) while using a curriculum, heavily weighted toward Greek and Latin, that followed the best colleges in the East.

It turns out, thanks to Paul J. Gutacker's new book, that American Protestants (primarily what historians have come to call *evangelical*) were also double-minded about the past and the present. As much as low church and revival-friendly Protestants adopted practices and employed arguments that seemed to repudiate the Christian past, they were, as the author argues, deeply attentive to historical precedent. This interest was not simply a form of primitivism—looking to the apostles and early church as the time of a Christian faith untainted by bishops and emperors. American Protestants also appealed to Christian and secular history, often mediated through authors such as Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (*Ecclesiastical History*), David Hume (*History of England*), William Robertson (*History of Scotland* and *Charles V*), Edward Gibbon (*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*), and Joseph Priestly (*History of the Corruptions of Christianity*). Gutacker covers Protestants running from Unitarians to Disciples of Christ, and includes Roman Catholic sources at times. This means that *Old Faith in a New Nation* is not simply a rejoinder to the sort of biblicism, anti-clericalism, and anti-traditionalism that Nathan O. Hatch documented in *The Democratization of American Christianity* (1989). Gutacker does not claim that low-church Protestants thought of themselves as firmly rooted in tradition. What he does show, quite effectively at that, is the numerous ways that American Protestants, despite being stripped of the institutional trappings (churchly

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