

are not opposed to each other. She believes that there are many young, bright Christian students who need to be encouraged to enter the sciences as a profession, and to keep in mind how both worlds actually complement each other. For this particular thought strand throughout the book, Ecklund deserves due credit. She makes a fine argument that the unknown must be embraced, explored, and reconciled--which is possible with science while retaining one's Christian faith.

Overall the book is well-written. The third part of the book becomes somewhat more "political" when discussing issues such as the environment, equality, and social justice. Yet, they are rather lively debated topics in many Christian communities today. In order to aid Christian ministers and congregations who might utilize the book for discussion, each chapter concludes with a set of well-posed questions for further reflection and discussion. Finally, there is a "Further Readings" section, and a fine set of bibliographical citations entitled "Notes" for each chapter. In sum, Ecklund has produced a sound, thought-provoking work on faith and science from a sociologist's perspective.

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Dante's *Paradiso* and the Theological Origins of Modern Thought: Toward a Speculative Philosophy of Self-Reflection. By William Franke. New York: Routledge, 2021. Paper. 344 p. \$160.

In his latest book, William Franke takes up the question of self-reflexivity in Dante's *Paradiso*, a theme which he variously explores as a poetic strategy, a form of cognitive activity, and the fundamental link between humanity and divinity in Dante's poem. Across the book's five parts, Franke pursues two interrelated claims, one historical and the other philosophical. At the historical level, Franke aims to show how Dante's *Paradiso* establishes a modern form of self-reflective cognition traditionally associated with later figures, chiefly René Descartes and the architects of the Protestant Reformation. As a philosophical argument, Franke develops a speculative theory of self-reflexivity that he observes in Dante's poem. Through the joint elaboration of these arguments, Franke identifies and defends a Dantesque form of self-reflection that resists the solipsistic tendencies associated with Cartesian and other modern forms of self-reflective thinking.

Part I focuses on formal and structural features of the *Paradiso*'s lyrical poetics. Franke explores Dante's debt to the medieval troubadours' practice of crafting poetry that avoided representative language, sometimes producing verse that radically signified nothing other than its own status as language. Working within this tradition, Dante deploys similarly reflexive poetics in the *Paradiso*, instantiating a modern practice of language that shows a self-conscious interest in the mechanics

of its own linguistic parts and processes. Discussions of the *terza rima* chiasmic structures and varied forms of repetition all lend support to Franke's construal of the *Paradiso's* poetics as a verbal project that is constantly reflecting back on itself. One of Franke's chief aims here is to draw a connection between Dante's formal practice of self-reflexive poetic language and the self-reflection that defines medieval Christian accounts of God's Trinitarian life as illustrated in the final cantos of the *Paradiso*. The self-reflective poetic language of the *Paradiso* draws attention to its own status as language, which in turn reflects God's intrinsic habit of turning back on the divine self as God's own Word or *Logos*. Yet the symmetry between divine and human self-reflection reveals the sheer contingency of human language and life. Unlike Dante's God, whose self-reflection is wholly adequate to itself, any human effort to reflect upon the self eventually reveals the startling dependence of the self on the ineffable God Who precedes the self and makes it possible. From a range of disciplinary angles, Franke emphasizes how this feature of Dantean self-reflexivity has the effect of opening the reflective self onto a whole world of others. In Franke's view, these features of the *Paradiso* allow Dante to avoid the solipsism typical of the Cartesian *cogito* and other alternate strategies of self-reflexivity.

Shifting to a genealogical approach, Part II traces the influence of Dante's specific mode of self-reflection across centuries of artistic, philosophical, and theological cultures, from Nicholas of Cusa to German idealists like G.W.F. Hegel and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Scholars and non-specialists alike may be particularly interested in Franke's positioning of Duns Scotus and Dante as intellectual foils. Specifically, Franke contends that Dante and Scotus share the premise that human reason is unable to investigate the divine, the ineffable, and the Infinite, all of which lie beyond the limits of finite rational intellect. Whereas Scotus remains within those limits by fashioning formal concepts that are merely representative of an inaccessible Reality, Dante rallies metaphorical language to imagine the unimaginable. Given that Dante studies have more often considered Dante's relation to Thomistic theology, it is a welcome turn to see Franke engaged with Scotus in such a constructive approach.

In Parts III, IV, and V, Franke summons a range of interlocutors (from Russian formalists to Søren Kierkegaard to psychoanalytic thinkers) to clarify the specific ways in which Dante's lyric self-reflexivity provides various paths out of egoistic self-enclosure. Central to this claim is Franke's distinction between poetic repetition and conceptual representation. Whereas purely representative language aims at a kind of knowledge that erases the subject's involvement in knowing, Dante's practice of poetic repetition inherently recognizes the subject's perception of the objects that poetry describes. In this way, the *Paradiso's* self-reflective lyricism "fundamentally performs its meaning rather than just representing it" (225).

By exploring the afterlives of this Dantean self-reflexivity among such varied schools of thought and art, Franke's methodological approach works in two directions: Dante's *Paradiso* becomes a lens by which Franke interprets intellectual history as much as an object of literary criticism in itself. Through this interdisciplinary method of reading the *Paradiso* through cultural history, and that same history through Dante's text, Franke builds a philosophical case for the enduring value of a Dantean form of self-reflexivity. In contrast to Scotus' reliance upon a mechanistic form of reason that refuses to speculate rationally about the divine, Dante honors the limits of reason while still approaching the divine through the inventions of self-reflexive poetic language. The reward, in Franke's estimation, is a distinctive form of poetry that preserves the unsayable ground of human cognition, resists the instrumentalization of technocratic reason, and maintains Dante's vital involvement with others within the self's meditation on itself.

Franke's book offers an instructive and creative development in Dante studies, but the book's relevance and impact stand to extend much further into contemporary philosophy of mind, theological studies, and literary history. Those less familiar with the many eclectic voices that Franke invokes may find themselves hesitant at times, but such concerns are quickly set aside by the carefully scaffolded structure of Franke's argument and the precision of the book's prose. The breadth of the book's engagement with such varied fields and scholarly traditions only sharpens the clarity of the argument. With each incorporation of a new intellectual voice, Franke's tapestry of interlocutors enriches the details of the overarching project and its original contributions. In that spirit, Franke's book is especially valuable as a rallying cry to take Dante seriously as a conversation partner for some of the most vital philosophical questions of our time. If Dante is indeed one of the architects of a distinctively modern form of self-reflexivity as Franke persuasively maintains, then this book suggests how Dante can nourish contemporary reflections on how we think about our thinking, reflect upon our reflection, and look at the mechanisms by which we may discover others in discovering ourselves.

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Science and the Doctrine of Creation: The Approaches of Ten Modern Theologians. Eds. Geoffrey H. Fulkerson & Joel Thomas Chopp. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2021. Paper. 255 p. \$28.

The goal of Fulkerson and Chopp's *Science and the Doctrine of Creation* is to explore the question, "Can Christians take seriously the claims of modern science without compromising their theological integrity?" This is not another book on the intersection of science and religion; rather, it is a review of Christian thought on the creation-evolution issue by influential modern theologians from the nineteenth