faiths other than the Christian, finding in Zen a clue to that holy worldliness which forbids the dualism of nature and grace which has so influenced Western theologies of art. He looks forward to 'a more open theology in which the Church does not imagine itself as the sole purveyor or channel of grace, but as responding, with all sentient being, to the structural grace of life itself' (p. 189).

The heart of Pattison's case is summed up in these words: 'it is precisely the knowledge of God the redeemer which enables us to recognise the goodness and the beauty and the sublimity of nature, and it is in such a recognition and in no other way that we show our knowledge of God as redeemer' (p. 175).

Pattison is occasionally prone to unelucidated rhetoric whose impact is more on the ear than the intellect: 'Modernity is not simply an ideology or a programme to be refuted on the plane of ideas. It is a destiny to be lived, and only so "overcome"' (p. xi). On the next page he assails the eye with the coinage, 'utopistic'.

At times one wishes that he had cross-examined his subjects more closely, as when, for example, he expounds Merleau-Ponty as teaching that: 'Vision itself interprets vision' (p. 146).

Pattison properly draws attention to those points of distinction between Forsyth and Hegel which are the crucial spur to Forsyth's constructive theology (as well as to his aversion to monism). However, when the author asks: 'Can the thoroughly individualised faith which [Forsyth] commends, without the support of the solid ecclesiastical tradition on which, for instance, Neo-Thomism draws, weather the historical, cultural and intellectual storms of modernism?' (p. 98), one would wish to challenge the phrase 'thoroughly individualised' in view of Forsyth's high churchmanship, and to suggest that Forsyth thinks that in the Gospel of the Cross (construed in his portmanteau way) he has an anchorage more fundamental than the ecclesiastical tradition, which it transcends, originates and judges.

A recurring question is: Does a piece of visual art carry its own significance with it, or do we need knowledge gleaned elsewhere in order to decipher and interpret it? On the one hand Pattison declares that 'the visual image makes visible the invisible depth of God' (p. 149); on the other hand he grants that Thomas Merton was not ignorant of Buddhism when confronted for the first time by Buddhist art. Again, in what ways does understanding relate to aesthetic judgments of value, and to what extent is the artist's intention, so far as it may be known, relevant here? What is the status of an uninformed response to a work of art originating within a particular tradition? Do all aesthetic judgments, however diverse and even contradictory, have equal validity, or is it possible (as art criticism seems frequently to presuppose) to rank them; and if so, in accordance with which criteria?

Here is an author who both raises intricate philosophical questions and addresses issues which are fundamental to theology, worship, and life itself. Pattison does not only advocate a relational approach, he exemplifies one such approach. May he receive the attention he deserves.

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Being and the Between. By William Desmond. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995. Pp. 557. Price $24.95. ISBN 0791 422 720.

There is, perhaps, no concept more historically weighted than the concept of being. Even today's hard-nosed empirical philosophers and scientists who may dismiss metaphysical talk of Being as senseless chatter, presuppose that what they themselves talk about, study, and refer to in some

way exists. And when the latter investigate and analyse 'what is' (= physical reality), they will do so from a contemporary historical perspective, mindless, perhaps, of other ways of making sense of Being in bygone days.

William Desmond is neither a physicist nor a metaphysician of bygone days. Rather, he stands somewhere 'in between'. He wishes to reawaken radical questioning of the meaning of being – somewhat reminiscent of Heidegger's famous endeavour in *Being and Time* (1927) to 'raise anew the question of the meaning of Being.' But unlike *Being and Time* which focuses on Dasein, *Being and the Between* takes into consideration what Desmond calls the 'plurivocity of Being', that is to say, the many ways in which and through which being expresses itself. This is not a new position for Desmond, as readers of his other publications will know. What is new, however, is that this work marks his endeavour to pull together and systematise his reflections on various senses of being in which he has been interested over the years, although without producing a system of metaphysics, something he would like to avoid. 'Do not mistake what I write for abstract system', the author forewarns us in the preface (p. xvii). Instead, what *Being and the Between* promises to provide is a 'flexible systematic framework' (p. xiii), to tackle the issue of being.

The 'flexible framework' of this book, around which the question of the meaning of being is going to be addressed, consists of four main senses of being which Desmond identifies as having arisen in various disguises and with various degrees of importance in the history of metaphysics, namely: 'the univocal, the equivocal, the dialectical and the metaxological understandings of being' (p. xii *et passim*). By focusing on this 'fourfold sense of being', the author argues, 'the major options for metaphysics in the tradition will be addressed' (p. 15). Notwithstanding the omission of, or at least the small attention given to, the analogical understanding of being – which some would argue is another major option for metaphysics in the tradition – what *Being and the Between* seems to defend (and, to presuppose at the same time) is the plurivocity of being itself. No attempt is made to reduce any of the four senses of being to any one of the others. All of these senses are treated as if they were legitimate expressions of being, although the author does indeed assert, 'the metaxological seeks the best understanding possible' (p. xiv). So, is the understanding of being from 'in the between' (Greek: *metaxu*), however this is to be determined, the best understanding possible and, perhaps more importantly, the one needing explication in order for metaphysics to develop today?

The study is divided into two, *Part I: Metaphysical Thinking and the Senses of Being* and *Part II: Being and the Between – A Metaphysics*. However, after reading some very interesting analysis of the way in which the univocal sense of being unfolds into and relies upon some notion of equivocation, and the equivocal sense of being in turn unfolds into and relies upon some form of dialectical reasoning, which then itself points towards the need for a metaxological understanding of being, the whole project of *Being and the Between* seems to hinge upon one particularly unique instance of the metaxological understanding of being, namely, creation out of nothing, which is the main topic of Part II.

Central to this study is the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. There is a Creator who creates out of nothing all that there is. Everything that exists, therefore, is in the between. Indeed we think we know what the 'between' means in the very first sentence of the preface, when Desmond states: 'Long, long ago, Plato told us that the human being is neither a god nor a beast, but someone in between'. But this historical allusion to Plato and the nature of (rational) man is somewhat misleading – to be

between a god and a beast is one thing, but to be between a creator and nothing is quite another, and it is in fact the latter understanding of the metaxological that enables Desmond throughout the book to include animate and inanimate, beasts and humans, as existing all together in 'the between', something which Plato did not do, and could not.

It is outside of the limits of this review to examine the influence that this creationist perspective has on the analysis of 'the fourfold sense of being' in Part I and the ensuing chapters of Part II on 'Origin', 'Creation: The Universal Impermanence', 'Things', 'Intelligibilities', 'Selves', 'Communities', 'Being true', and 'Being good'. However, the way Desmond understands creation is relatively straightforward.

According to Desmond, the relation of Creator to created is external from our point of view (i.e., God really does exist outside of creation), *and* internal from God's perspective (i.e., the excessiveness of the Creator's plenitude overflows into created alterity, though this origin itself 'remains other and an enigma') (p. 502). However (and this is the nub of Desmond's position) although external to God, created reality does not come between God and creation. There is an opening or openness towards the creator *in* creation. It is this 'between' that Desmond wishes most of all to point to, and recover as the lost *metaxu* of metaphysical thought for today.

Has Desmond, then, managed to do what many great philosophers before him have tried to do – to secure God's transcendence and immanence in relation to creation? This depends upon whether or not you accept Desmond's overall presupposition about the meaning of contingency and necessity, not in respect of propositions, but in respect of being. Nevertheless, his thinking on this issue depends upon three pre-conditions: (1) if that which exists is experienced and recognised by the questioner as finite in essence; (2) if one is convinced that there must be a sufficient reason for such being: Desmond does warn us that: '[M]etaphysical madness may ensue if the principle of sufficient reason is not properly understood' (p. 356); and (3) if there is a necessary being that creates all that there is out of nothing, hence, all that there is in finitude can be said to have contingent being.

But is there a Creator God (3)? Is the principle of sufficient reason applicable to this issue (2)? Is the experience of the 'sheer being-there of beings' (p. 167), that is, ontological finiteness of being, marvellous and agapeic though it may well be, a true experience (1)? Or, are these not all matters of biblically revealed faith *and* of philosophical faith for the author? In the final analysis, however, these issues are matters not only for the author to determine, but for the reader of this remakable book in metaphysics to determine too.

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SCRIPTURE

The Biblical Vision of the Human Person. By Maurice P. Hogan. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994. Pp. xx+394. ISBN 363147072X.

Since the fall of State capitalism the human race finds itself being herded into a single cattle-race of neo-liberal capitalism. However, the human mind always keeps reaching out for a fullness of life more in keeping with the whole human person as an individual and as a member of society.

The present work provides ample evidence of that search. It accepts and applies to biblical hermeneutics the insights of the philosopher Eric Voegelin. He had to grapple personally with modern ideologies which shut off any opening to the transcendental, to the divine. 'Voegelin has