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## Book Review: Analytic Theology: New Essays In The Philosophy Of Theology

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McCall makes some excellent points about monotheism and the Trinity. It won't imply monotheism, he says, to say merely that there's one generic divine essence, that there's only one divine "family," that there's only one font of divinity (the Father), or that the Three are united by a mysterious relation of "periochosis" (241–242). Amen to all that.

My biggest criticism of the book is its friendliness towards theoretical solutions, which crucially depend on bold, arguably *ad hoc* re-definitions. Yet it is clearly written, sober, insightful, and rich with argument. As intended, it gives theologians and philosophers some important things to argue about *together*.

*Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp. 316. \$45 (paperback).

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This is an important and informative collection of essays that I expect will be highly influential, and which I highly recommend. However, reading these essays is somewhat frustrating. The frustration centers on a set of interrelated ambiguities that run throughout the collection. Some of these ambiguities are unavoidable, but others should be disambiguated and are not, at least not to the degree one might expect from an analytic treatment of analytic theology. In what follows, I focus on two concerns: just what constitutes analytic theology and whether analytic theology is meant to be only descriptive, or normative as well.

In the introduction, Michael Rea makes two important distinctions. First, while analytic theology is based on the methods of analytic philosophy, these methods are applied not to natural language analysis as in early analytic philosophy, but to metaphysical systems or worldviews. Second, to refer to the methods of analytic philosophy in contemporary usage is more about a particular style of philosophy with an associated set of desiderata—clarity, rigor, and logical argumentation being fundamental. As such, analytic theology can allow for much variety with respect to content and method. Analytic theology may be better thought of as an attitude toward theological methods as opposed to a way of doing theology.

The first two essays in part one are focused on the nature of analytic theology, but are less than direct in their conclusions concerning normativity. In "On Analytic Theology," Thomas Crisp uses a distinction by Peter Strawson between descriptive and revisionist metaphysics. Descriptive metaphysics seeks merely to understand the current status of a conceptual system. Revisionist metaphysics offers an alternative to the current system. Crisp envisions analytic theology as descriptive partly because it seeks to

remain within the theological traditions of the church catholic. But this is misleading. Using Strawson's distinction, a descriptive metaphysic may also be a corrective if the current system has broken from traditional understandings. In this way, as Crisp seems to envision it, analytic theology is both descriptive and revisionist. While Crisp seems to move toward this sort of normative account, he closes his essay reiterating only a descriptive approach.

In the second essay, "Systematic Theology as Analytic Theology," William Abraham defines analytic theology in terms of the skills, resources, virtues and insights of analytic philosophy. However, he does not articulate them in any detail. Still, he seems to support a normative account when he claims that "we need the help of analytic theology to do justice to the God we meet in the worship of the Church" (61). Abraham believes "the time is ripe" for analytic theology and that it "will bear much fruit in the years ahead" (69). However, Abraham focuses on an epistemology of theology that can give an account of truth, evidence, justification, and warrant as they apply to systematic theology, and here an analytic approach may be of great benefit. But if a theologian need not be concerned with these epistemic considerations, an analytic approach will be only one avenue a theologian may choose.

Clearly, in "Theology as Bull Session," Randal Rauser sees analytic theology as a needed corrective to what have become the standard methods of modern theology. Rauser focuses on two influential accounts in modern theology, Sallie McFague's theology as persuasive metaphor, and Jürgen Moltmann's theology as perpetual conversation. Based on the recent analysis of bullshit by Frankfurt and others, Rauser argues that these accounts convey the kind of skepticism that is inherent in modern theology and that gives rise to theological bullshit. For Rauser, an analytic approach can bring theology out of the bull session and reestablish it as a productive form of inquiry. However, what analytic theology involves is not discussed with any precision.

The historical investigations of part two are all very interesting but a bit perplexing as to the state of analytic theology. In "A Conception of Faith in the Greek Fathers," John Lamont makes it quite clear that much theological investigation into the nature of faith has had a strong analytic flavor. Of course, the prevailing attitude behind much contemporary theology is that Kant ended the kind of analytic work on which Lamont is focused. However, in "As Kant has Shown . . .': Analytic Theology and the Critical Philosophy," Andrew Chignell brings into question the hardline interpretation of Kant's work that sees in it the impossibility of one having knowledge, or speaking meaningfully, of God. Chignell argues that a moderate reading of Kant's claims regarding propositions about supersensible objects allows for a productive fit between analytic theology and "what Kant has shown." The result of such analytic theology will be "moral," or acceptable, belief instead of knowledge, but acceptable belief concerning God should certainly be important to the analytic theologian.

While this reading of Kant undermines much of the modern theological criticism of analytic theology, it also has a less positive effect. On this reading, analytic theology can be done in a Kantian vein. In "How Philosophical Theology Became Possible within the Analytic Tradition of Philosophy," Nicholas Wolterstorff suggests that the analytic approach may be more in keeping with Kant's critical philosophy than is much of modern theology. This substantially broadens the possibilities of what can be analytic theology. The already vague understanding of analytic theology becomes that much more nebulous.

However, in "Schleiermacher's Theological Anti-Realism," Andrew Dole does set some boundaries for the "proper" analytic attitude by rejecting two of Schleiermacher's "points of discussion." Dole outright rejects Schleiermacher's claim that truth for its own sake is foreign to religious interests. Dole also rejects Schleiermacher's insistence that the theologian should seek to eliminate the empirical content of their interpretations of traditional doctrines in order to isolate and insulate doctrine from scientific inquiry. Dole, correctly, sees these points as overly restrictive.

In the essays of part three, the sources of theology are discussed. Here again the question arises as to what should count as analytic theology. As Rea suggests in his introduction, philosophy of theology can be analytic theology. In "On Understanding Scripture as the Word of God," Thomas McCall opens the third part of the book taking an analytic approach to understanding Karl Barth's conception of scripture as the word of God. McCall argues that speech-act theory offers a "charitable and sensible" account of Barth's proposal. Furthermore, based on Barth's own insistence on the centrality of Christ for our understanding of divine revelation, McCall argues that one who is sympathetic to Barth's proposal should accept the "classical" view of scripture as the word of God regardless of Barth's own objections. In keeping with traditional Christology, speech-act theory can allow for a nuanced approach to scripture as both object and encounter. McCall's discussion is a good example of historical theology from an analytic approach, as were many of the essays in part two.

On the other hand, the next three essays clearly fall outside analytic theology as it is represented. In "On Believing that the Scriptures are Divinely Inspired," Thomas Crisp takes up the question of the divine inspiration of scripture. However, in his discussion of "preliminaries," Crisp passes over most if not all the traditional theological issues associated with the doctrine. Instead, he argues that such belief is justified on the grounds of authoritative testimony. In like manner, in "The Contribution of Religious Experience to Dogmatic Theology," Michael Sudduth focuses on the justificatory significance of religious experience for grounding theological belief. Sudduth argues that since religious experience is inextricably intertwined with natural theology, and natural theology makes important contributions to the task of dogmatic theology, religious experience must also make important contributions to dogmatic theology. Lastly, in "Science and Religion in Constructive Engagement," Michael Murray argues that

theologians must be open to the advancements of science while understanding that traditional religious doctrines have empirical consequences. Murray sees science and religion as working together to produce a unified, scientifically literate and theologically informed explanation of the world and our place in it.

My point here is not that all four of the essays in part three should be pieces of analytic theology while only the first essay actually is. Instead, the fine distinction between McCall's essay and the others in part three exemplify the difficulty of establishing the referent of "analytical theology." The problem is amplified in the last part of the book where critiques, alternatives, and emendations to the analytic approach are offered. In the essays of part four, beginning with "Hermeneutics and Holiness," Merold Westphal discusses an alternative to analytic theology based on continental traditions, whereas Eleonore Stump in "The Problem of Evil: Analytic Philosophy and Narrative" and Sarah Coakley in "Dark Contemplation and Epistemic Transformation: The Analytic Theologian Re-Meets Teresa of Avila" both offer what can be seen as needed correctives to an analytic approach. If Stump and Coakley are presenting ways of doing analytic theology, the vague borders of the enterprise lie both between analytic theology and analytic philosophy of religion and the like, as well as between analytic and modern theology.

Stump criticizes analytic theology for not being able to accommodate the nuances and complexities of narrative and story as ways of conveying knowledge. Since narrative is predominant in Christian scripture, she concludes, an analytic approach to theology will be ineffectual in conveying the truths contained in scripture. Stump suggests instead a method that brings together philosophy and literary criticism. However, the philosophical investigations she describes are amenable to an analytic approach in the metaphysical sense. If analytic theology is to be broadly understood as the application of the tools, skills and attitudes of analytic philosophy to the questions and content of theology, I don't see why Stump's method of philosophical literary criticism applied to theology could not be a form of analytic theology.

Coakley sees analytic theology failing with respect to contemplative practices and apophatic, or negating, language. She sees a feminist commitment as a helpful corrective to analytic theology. She describes her essay as an attempt to "nudge creatively beyond" the distinction between analytic and continental philosophy. Coakley continues: "In the spirit of the 'analytic theology' which this volume celebrates, the aim [of the present chapter] is to do richer justice hermeneutically to the texts of mystical theology than the analytic school of philosophy of religion has so far achieved, whilst retaining those traits of clarity and apologetic purpose which have been its positive hallmarks" (282). Generalizing beyond mystical theology, perhaps this is, and should be, the goal of analytic theology on the whole.

What analytic theology will look like as its methods are further employed is not presently known. This much seems clear by the general and

open-ended, even apophatic, discussions in the collection. A concluding remark by Stump is fitting here. "The appropriate conclusion to any argument for a methodology ought to be the employment of it" (263). I look forward to the work of analytic theology that is sure to be produced in the future. Whatever may constitute analytic theology, and how successful it can be, will be discovered only as the discipline is pursued.

*The Soul Hypothesis: Investigations into the Existence of the Soul*, ed. Mark C. Baker and Stewart Goetz. New York: Continuum Books, 2011. Pp. 287. \$19.95 (paperback).

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*The Soul Hypothesis* contains a set of state-of-the-art papers in philosophy of mind defending substance dualism. Although the book is an edited collection, unlike many such collections, it is tightly focused, and very well organized. The essays complement each other very well, and later essays refer to and build on points in earlier essays. Thus, in many ways the book contains something approaching a sustained argument.

It is not quite a sustained argument for a single view, however. Although all the authors are substance dualists of some kind, there are interesting differences in the kinds of dualism they defend. Indeed, one of the major theses of the book is that there are a range of positions that can usefully be described as substance dualism. One can usefully categorize dualisms by the degree to which they see the non-material soul as independent of the body and the degree to which they see the soul as differing from the body or other material objects. At one extreme, one might see Plato and (somewhat less extreme) Descartes, while at the other extreme one might place two of the authors in this volume: William Hasker, with his well-known "emergent dualism," which holds that the mind is causally generated by the brain but nevertheless is a distinct entity, and Robin Collins, who holds a "dual-aspect" view of the soul, which attributes to it both physical and non-physical properties.

Along the way, various authors present many standard, well-recognized arguments for dualism (and critiques of materialism, which are often closely linked), such as the "unity of consciousness" argument and arguments from the irreducibility of qualia. However, one of the interesting features of this book is that several of the authors believe that empirical and even scientific data are relevant to the arguments about dualism. They try to show that dualism, contrary to the dismissive charges of materialists, is not only fully compatible with recent scientific work, but actually may be given support by scientific considerations. Along the way suggestions are made as to how dualism could be tested, and how it could generate a scientific research program.