

stand where our technology is taking us and how we might ultimately *feel* about it when we get there.

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THEOLOGY

HUMAN ORIGINS AND THE IMAGE OF GOD: Essays in Honor of J. Wentzel van Huyssteen by Christopher Lilley and Daniel J. Pedersen, eds. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017. 322 pages. Hardcover; \$60.00. ISBN: 9780802875143.

If you are looking for proof that you are not alone, here it is. Transdisciplinary work in theology and anthropology has been on the rise over the last few decades and Wentzel van Huyssteen has been at the forefront of bridge building. Humans may be the only species with religion, and Earth may be the only planet with intelligence, but our humanity is defined—in large part—by the interactions we have with the rest of creation.

In 2004, van Huyssteen delivered the Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh. The series was entitled “Alone in the World? Human Uniqueness in Science and Theology” and resulted in a book by the same title (Eerdmans, 2006). Those lectures and a broader body of work by van Huyssteen have inspired a generation of scholars to engage more deeply in questions about what makes us human and how that differentiation came about historically. In the present volume, Lilley and Pederson present a collection of essays in honor of van Huyssteen, featuring prominent scholars working at the intersection of science and Christianity. For scholars, the book provides an excellent avenue into the literature. The general public will find it provocative, but occasionally difficult to read. Individual articles vary greatly in readability and level of jargon. If you can get past those challenges, the range and depth of thinking is impressive.

The book is organized into an opening section and three disciplinary heads: natural scientists, philosophers and historians, and theologians. The opening has a foreword by M. Craig Barnes and a preface by the editors, setting forth the intentions and import of the book. An introduction by Niels Henrik Gregersen provides a thorough, if rather technical, summary of van Huyssteen’s work. It emphasizes his commitment to relational epistemology and critical realism. By attending to how we come to conclusions in anthropology and theology, and by creating better communication between the disciplines, he opens a space for serious scholars to approach the material together, even when their standards and goals differ. All the works in the book demonstrate this level of care, not only for disciplinary standards, but for the significance of working beyond any one field. Van Huyssteen calls his methodology transversal postfoundationalism:

transversal because it respects boundaries but communicates across them, postfoundational because it denies the divide between modern foundationalism and post-modern coherentism.

Part one deals with anthropology and psychology, featuring chapters by Ian Tattersol, Ian Hodder, Justin Barrett and Tyler Greenway, Agustín Fuentes, and Richard Potts. Each one brings a scientific perspective to the question of what makes humans unique and how such traits arose. In addition to providing highlights of the historical record, they all emphasize the importance of relationships. Humans live and move and have our being in community. What makes us unique might not be inherent in individuals, so much as it is something attained interactively.

As an evolutionary biologist, I have some concern that claims of uniqueness—particularly with regard to agriculture—may be overstated. Ants, for example, breed fungi and aphids. No doubt such objections could be addressed if the essays were longer, but the limitations of format restrict the scope. Overall, I found the material fascinating and informative.

Part two deals with philosophy and history, primarily focusing on questions of ethics and aesthetics in human origins. Keith Ward usefully distinguishes between (biological) humans and (ethical) persons. Clearly the categories overlap, but they are constructed in different ways and it matters how we line the two up. Michael Ruse provides a provocative set of questions that highlight the ways evolution can challenge Christian thinking. Wesley Wildman and John Hedley Brooke also contribute.

Part three includes theological reflections. Each author comments on van Huyssteen’s methodology, how it does and does not work in practical settings. Celia Deane-Drummond provides a critique, asking whether it is clearly enough defined. David Ferguson defends it as an important way forward in theological anthropology. D. Etienne de Villiers compares it to Max Weber’s “ethic of responsibility.” Each in their own way, these authors deepen the discussion that van Huyssteen started. Michael Welker’s chapter, on the other hand, seems unconnected and out of place. The section and the book wrap up with a wonderful reflection by Dirk J. Smit on the concrete context of van Huyssteen’s thought in South African Christianity at the end of Apartheid. He draws the connection between our ideas of “self” and “alone” and how they interact with our ideas of “stranger,” reminding us that the discussions of humanity invariably have life or death consequences in how we treat our neighbor.

The book is well edited and thoughtfully organized, with useful contents, index, and short author biographies. Copy-editing is solid throughout, but flow and

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reference formats vary from chapter to chapter. Overall, this detracts little from a broad and insightful volume.

I disagree with the authors on several points; sometimes I disagree strongly with their conclusions. That is, perhaps, what the authors intended. In line with van Huyssteen's career, they are willing to engage in meaningful conversation, to bring the best of their fields to a common dialogue and to reveal their own presumptions in a way that allows all of us to come away with a deeper understanding. We do not all agree on what it means to be human, but anthropology and theology have important, even indispensable, things to offer in the conversation. We cannot know how they will interact until we bring the best of our reason and knowledge to the table. Van Huyssteen models this, and Lilley and Pedersen give us ample proof that it works. When we are willing to listen and to engage with others in careful, thoughtful, and compassionate dialogue, we are never alone.

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Letter

Mind and Heart

I wish to comment on Luke Janssen's article "'Fallen' and 'Broken' Reinterpreted in the Light of Evolution Theory" (*PSCF* 70, no. 1 [2018]: 36–47). I write from the vantage of two overlapping worlds, one as an active member of a conservative evangelical (largely "creationist") Christian faith community, and the other as a university professor and scientist who has concluded beyond reasonable doubt that the evolutionary model (descent with modification) best explains the many evidential trains that inform questions of biological origin. I also seek to build upon a 2017 essay in *God and Nature* titled "With All Your Mind," which I wrote during a sabbatical leave that included an objective to "construct a bridge over the perceived gulf that forces so many conservative Christians into having to choose between either their faith or the overwhelming picture of our origins that science is painting."

Generalizations are always treacherous, but I think it is safe to say that we scientists enjoy loving God with all of our minds. We are evidence based by training and often by personality archetype. Good scientists thrive on questioning orthodoxies and rethinking models when confronted with clear and compelling data that point in a different direction. Thus, it is probably no surprise to find large communities of committed Christian men and women in organizations such as the ASA and BioLogos who do not feel threatened by evolution theory. We appreciate the overwhelming scientific evidence supporting evolution and are willing

to seek common ground with our Christian faith. But as Janssen's article lays out, simmering beneath any effort to reconcile evolution and conservative Christian faith lie profound questions of theology, not the least of which concerns the "Fall" and the Christian understanding of why nature and humanity are the way that they are.

As Janssen points out, the embrace of evolution theory necessitates a shift in the conservative Christian understanding of "The Fall" from one in which nature and humanity were originally "good" (essentially perfect), but subsequently cursed by God because of the sin of Adam and Eve, to one in which neither nature nor man were ever "good" (in the sense of being essentially perfect) to begin with. That is, when God declared that his various creative acts were good, and humankind very good, he was speaking of the same cosmos and humanity that we experience today. The problem is that this view presents an enormous stumbling block for many conservative Christians who are desperately trying to make sense of this world.

After all, we are not called to love God with just all of our mind, but also with all of our heart and being. How can I love a God who created a natural system capable of inflicting unspeakable pain and misery upon human beings (think cancer, debilitating birth defects, natural disasters here), and who populated it with humans who are capable of inflicting unspeakable pain and misery upon each other? Many conservative Christians conclude that it is logically and morally impossible for a good God to create this world and this human species in its current form—humankind and nature must have fallen!

We scientists need to take ownership of this problem of pain and deeply empathize with our creationist brothers and sisters if we are to ever have a substantive conversation with them. Dealing with the theological implications of evolution, as Janssen has done in his article (and others before him), is a necessary first step, but it cannot end there or the conversation will go nowhere. I struggled with this issue for years, and it was only through the insightful musings of C.S. Lewis in *The Problem of Pain* and some of his other writings that I began to find a way to reconcile my science and faith. This is not the venue to recount that journey and share my own musings, but please let me plead to my brothers and sisters in Christ who are scientists and comfortable with evolution theory that we have to deal with the heart as well as the mind, and do so very gently when it comes to reaching out to our creationist brothers and sisters. Many thanks to Luke Janssen for starting that process in my own mind and heart.

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