causation framework allows us to understand God's action as meticulous concurrence while also avoiding the danger of occasionalism by preserving the distinctiveness of created causal powers or dispositions. God also acts as formal cause through the granting of *esse* in accord with the exemplars of being in the divine mind. As God actualizes creatures they participate in the divine ideas. Finally, God creates and sustains creaturely being as final cause in accord with the *telos* of every being. Collectively, these spheres of divine action provide a framework to understand God acting meticulously at all levels of nature while maintaining the distinctiveness of created being, respecting levels of ontological emergence, and avoiding the challenges posed by localized discrete action at a specific causal joint.

*Divine Action and Emergence* is packed with insights and rewarding features, including a fascinating and detailed overview of the many recent models of emergence (chap. 1) and a clear and concise history of major panentheistic theologies down to the present. Time and again, I appreciated Tabaczek's ability to make multiple subtly nuanced distinctions as with his many possible interpretations of the seemingly innocuous preposition "en" in panentheism.

Not surprisingly, Tabaczek's model invites its own questions. While he addresses the problem of evil by appealing to an Augustinian concept of privation, I am not persuaded that this abstract notion is a very effective theodicy. It seems to me the problem of evil is not so much about an abstract absence of being so much as the undeniably real and all-too-concrete suffering of individual sentient beings, and that problem very much remains even if overlaid with an Augustianian ontology of evil.

Among the other challenges faced by this kind of Thomistic model of the God/world relation is the implication that God has no real relation with the world (p. 163), such that all changes in the world merely constitute Cambridge changes in God (i.e., changes not involving God's intrinsic nature). Tabaczek responds by citing Michael Dodds who claims that, in virtue of lacking a real relation with creation, God is "infinitely closer" (p. 165) to created being. This reminds me of the defender of impassibility who says God is not unloving but rather is already fully actualized in his being. Nevertheless, I suspect many critics will find this an unsatisfactory rejoinder and thus will still look for a "two-way relation" between God and the world. It is also worth noting that panentheism is certainly not the only way to establish this two-way relation.

*Divine Action and Emergence* provides a very detailed summary of the contemporary debate on emergence and panentheism while offering a bold new proposal that promises to reinvigorate Aristotelian causation for our day. The book has many virtues including the aforementioned overview of the field of emergence theory and concise history of panentheistic theological models. By reconciling classical theism to contemporary work in emergence (most notably, that of Deacon), Tabaczek lands a serious blow against the popular notion that panentheism offers superior resources for conceiving divine action within an emergent framework. Along the way, he also retains the virtues of classical theism, including a robust commitment to divine aseity and transcendence, *creatio ex nihilo*, and meticulous providence alongside created autonomy and human free will.

This is a rich and dense book and is a must-have for scholars in the field as well as university libraries. While Tabaczek expresses the hope that the book will also find a readership among the clergy, I suspect the high level of technical discussion will limit its broader appeal.

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**GOD, HUMAN, ANIMAL, MACHINE: Technology, Metaphor, and the Search for Meaning** by Meghan O'Gieblyn. New York: Doubleday, 2021. 304 pages. Hardcover; $28.00. ISBN: 9780385543828.

Meghan O'Gieblyn's *God, Human, Animal, Machine* is the most honest, insightful, and therefore challenging book of its kind I have ever read. Part intellectual memoir and part philosophy, it walks us through O'Gieblyn's journey away from the Christian faith of her youth toward seeing herself "more or less as a machine" (p. 7). God, she has become convinced, is a projection of the human imagination, a product of our solipsism. "For centuries we said we were made in God's image, when in truth we made him in ours" (p. 12).

This is such a common late modern narrative of disenchantment that the reader expects the usual suspects to follow. Namely, vitriol against the ignorance of theologians, and a solid articulation of the merits of scientific naturalism. But that is not what we get here. What we get is the kind of intellectual honesty that is willing to admit that if humans are inherently meaning-making creatures, then all of us could be getting it wrong.

O'Gieblyn maps her own disenchantment narrative onto that of the modern western world. Descartes couldn't be sure of anything but his being a thinking thing; Kant couldn't be sure that those thoughts had anything to do with the world as it actually is. Once you go through this door, the only honest position is that every human belief about ultimate reality is based on faith in something. She makes this point brilliantly through David

Chalmers, who endeavored to explain the idea (said of philosophers) that "one starts as a materialist, then one becomes a dualist, then a panpsychist, and one ends up as an idealist" (p. 180). Chalmers knows that each of these perspectives necessarily entails accepting different metaphorical lenses, none of which can be definitively proven by science or philosophy.

O'Gieblyn thus finds Bernardo Kastrup's "shortcut through this trajectory" particularly fascinating. For Kastrup, consciousness is all that exists, and the "entire observable world is patterns of excitation" of a "universal mind" that is the cosmos (p. 185). "By the time you seriously consider all the options and their limitations," O'Gieblyn writes, "the idea of God begins to seem just as crazy as anything else" (p. 185). She knows how this sounds, and immediately wonders if she's predisposed to this position because of her previous faith and her desire for meaning. And she is correct: there can be no way out for the honest skeptic. "It's not as though I never experienced God's presence or guidance as a Christian; it was that I could not, as so many of my friends and classmates managed to do, rule out the possibility that those signs and assurances were merely narratives I was constructing" (pp. 187–88).

I found this refreshing precisely because O'Gieblyn knows it cuts both ways. If Christians and materialists could admit to sharing this limitation, we might have a new starting point for genuine, and possibly life-changing, conversations. O'Gieblyn has done her scientific and philosophical homework, and she's found the stumbling stone for everyone: consciousness. For despite the arrogance of titles like Daniel Dennett's *Consciousness Explained*, scientists and philosophers familiar with quantum physics know that there is a lot up for debate here. The hard problem of consciousness is not a God-of-the-gaps thing, where we tack the "mystery" label on something we can't explain and then return to happy-clappy worship. It's a whole world of weirdness, and God could be behind it all. Or not.

O'Gieblyn's intellectual honesty leads her to be able to pinpoint exactly what it is she is rejecting when she rejects the Christian God. She identifies first with Job, and then with Ivan in *The Brothers Karamozov*. In a pivotal conversation between Ivan and Alyosha, Ivan can't stomach the fact that God's work in this world would require innocent children to suffer. He says, "I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unsatisfied indignation, *even if I were wrong*." While O'Gieblyn's Moody Bible Institute classmates saw Alyosha's response of loving faith the point of the passage, "what the novel had made clear to me was that I deeply admired Ivan in his rebellion, just as I had admired Job in his" (p. 235). She was able to reconsider her apostasy as an act of courage. She is not rejecting God, but a "system of human thought" (p. 236).

This frankness is reason enough for me to wish I could have a regular coffee date with O'Gieblyn. But I'm barely scratching the surface of this wide-ranging, insightful text that does an especially superb job of analyzing the ideology of digital culture. All cultural metaphors create meaning and then disappear from view as metaphor. The digital age's primary metaphors (brain as computer; mind as nodes on a network) have left us with a particular view of being, "which might be described as an ontology of vacancy—a great emptying-out of qualities, content, and meaning. This ontology feeds into its epistemology, which holds that knowledge lies not in concepts themselves but in the relationships that constitute them, which can be discovered by artificial networks that lack any true knowledge of what they are uncovering" (p. 245). In short, in the twenty-first century, individuals don't lead out of good character with altruistic motives. Memes gain influence not by being good ideas, but by being irresistible click-bait. Although O'Gieblyn describes this ideology with incredible journalistic restraint, there can be no doubt. This is our epistemological crisis, and it is not going anywhere anytime soon.

Carefully researched and beautifully written, *God, Human, Animal, Machine* provides an excellent starting point for meaningful discussion between atheists and believers. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the relationships between science, technology, and religion.

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## TECHNOLOGY

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**A CHRISTIAN FIELD GUIDE TO TECHNOLOGY FOR ENGINEERS AND DESIGNERS** by Ethan J. Brue, Derek C. Schuurman, and Steven H. VanderLeest. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022. 226 pages including discussion questions, endnotes, credits, and indices. Paperback; $28.00. ISBN: 9781514001004.

Finally! The long-awaited update to *Responsible Technology: A Christian Perspective* (Stephen V. Monsma, ed., Eerdmans, 1986) is here, and this new book is well worth the wait. Framed as a practical field guide for engineers, it is also adept at illuminating some of the philosophical issues that swirl around the interface of technology and Christian faith. Hearty pats-on-the-back to Ethan Brue, Derek Schuurman, and Steven VanderLeest for undertaking and completing this grand project in such fine fashion.