

of the work more than compensate. The implicit conversation between chapters invites the reader to make connections and draw deeper conclusions.

In sum, *Traditions of Natural Law in Medieval Philosophy* is a noteworthy contribution to both historical scholarship and contemporary theological discourse. It exemplifies the ideal of a rational quest for truth conducted in fidelity to tradition yet open to insights from every side. The collection vividly shows, in the editor's words, how medieval theories of natural law in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity "offer valuable insights not only on ethics, law, and politics but also on how to engage with rival traditions on these issues" (p. 21). In doing so it truly does "help advance the ongoing conversation" (p. 21) about natural law — a conversation as urgent as ever in today's pluralistic society.

For scholars of philosophy, theology, and canon law, this book provides a wealth of historical knowledge and a model of thoughtful engagement with pluralism. More broadly, it serves the Church's intellectual mission by deepening our understanding of the natural moral law as a truth that, while perfected by divine revelation, extends to all people of good will. In reviving medieval wisdom for modern times, this volume reminds us that the natural law tradition, far from being a mere relic of the past, remains a living and dynamic source for dialogue between faith and reason, Church and world.

**Blaise D. Ringor**

**Zhang, Zhiqing. *The Aesthetic Thought and View of Art of Thomas Aquinas*. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2024. pp. 136. ISBN: 978-981-97-6898-1.**

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In the advent of post-modern claim on aesthetics, those which are relativistic, a call to revisit an objective criterion of beauty must come about. The occurrence of such problem on aesthetics does not only concern relative take on beauty, but one can argue that such conception on beauty is the cause of the emergence of artificial beauty brought forth by the technological advancements e.g., camera filters, photo editing, photo manipulation, AI-assisted photo enhancement and others. With the extremity of subjectivism in such condition, a rethinking of an objective take on beauty was set by this book through the aid of Aquinas' aesthetic thoughts.

The author of this book, Zhiqing Zhang, is a professor at Macau University of Science and Technology. This work is testament to his inclination to aesthetic discourse, in fact, long before this work, he already contributed several journal articles that concern the post-modern condition of aesthetics. His works vary from topics such as film industry, digital media, literature, comparative discourse on eastern and western thought. In some of his works, the thought of Thomas Aquinas was already accorded with his view on some contemporary issues on aesthetics. Such vigor in the field of aesthetics and philosophy leads Zhang towards a comprehensive survey on the aesthetic claims of Aquinas which included discourse with other philosophers – from different eras – that may affirm and negate Aquinas'

thoughts. This method used in this book makes the readers able to objectively assess the propositions of Aquinas regarding the concerned topic, not making Aquinas' claims a dogmatic proposition, but an appropriation to the current condition – an appropriation to the contemporary claims.

Zhang, in the introduction, provides the philosophical landscape of Thomistic movement in China by comparing it with the rich western development of Aquinas' thought in European movements – citing some of the thinkers who saw Aquinas' philosophical claims as foundational to their philosophic enterprise. Hence, the inauguration of this book provides a great contribution in Thomistic scholarship in China – especially in the field of aesthetics. As mentioned by Zhang, Chinese research community often refused to adhere in European medieval aesthetics because of several reasons including political and historical. The author admittedly mentioned the scarcity in the quantity of research on Thomas Aquinas due to the aforementioned condition in the Chinese research community (p. 15). Primary to the contribution of this book in the development of Aquinas' influence to Chinese research community is that, a comprehensive discourse on Aquinas' aesthetic claims was made available to scholars. Apart from the prejudices imposed by the historico-political condition in Chinese research community, this book attempted to provide an objective exposition of Aquinas' concepts related to aesthetics concerning the ontology of beauty, production of art, and literature. Included in the multitude of topics discussed by this book are some of the elaborated ideas from different Thomistic scholars whose thoughts on Aquinas are foundational in its appropriation to the different epoch and movement in the history of Philosophy.

The method posed by Zhang in approaching Thomas Aquinas is an integral one. He does not dichotomize the Theological and Philosophical enterprise of the philosopher, in fact, he presented Aquinas in the second chapter of this book, first, as theologian. Evidently, Zhang treated Aquinas' philosophical thought as intertwined with Aquinas' theological claims, which is in accordance with Aquinas' pursuit of making sense of faith and reason. Moreover, the elaboration made in the second chapter of the book features significant discourse in Aquinas' philosophical and theological enterprise; and from there, a solid take on his aesthetics was established, supported by the Aristotelian metaphysics.

Zhang presented the central thought of the book in the third and fourth chapter, where Aquinas' primary principles concerning beauty were given its depth. This attempt to deepen the discourse on specific topics – formalism, conditions of beauty, art as production, art as mimesis, and the interpretations of art – serves a pivotal role for the succeeding section of the book. Though the significant aspects of Aquinas' aesthetic thought were mentioned, one cannot deny that the length of the discourse is very limited, especially when it is compared with the discourse presented in the primary text. Nonetheless, this may serve as a primer or introductory in engaging in Aquinas' claims regarding aesthetics since it offers substantive undertaking of such thought.

As observed, this book is structured in a way that it surveys on the current condition of Aquinas' thought in the research endeavors in western and in Chinese academic system

of thought. Furthermore, there are two movements of discussion that can be observed, that is: (1) the historical approach and (2) thematic approach. The former is evident in Zhang's attempt to establish the origin of Aquinas' aesthetic thought, rooted from Aristotle, and his attempt to present the development of such aesthetic thought in the contemporary claims and commentaries of other philosophers concerning Aquinas. The latter, on the other hand, is manifested in Zhang's discussion of several areas that concern Aquinas' aesthetics, among which are ontology, empiricism, hermeneutics, and symbolism. Though this book attempts to cover such broad discourse on Aquinas' aesthetic thought, the depth of the discourse was compromised due to the limited length devoted by the author for the discussion of each topic and historical survey. Even so, researchers and scholars of Aquinas that concern aesthetics may find substantive underpinnings of the philosopher's relevance throughout the history of aesthetics – including the twentieth-century – together with the discourse set by 'Neo-Thomist' such as Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson. To cite one, Maritain presented the idea of "Religious Art" as an extension of his Thomistic scholarship. In the elaboration by Zhang, this kind of art according to Maritain is "not as ecclesiastical art or art influenced by Christianity, but rather as a sacred art that is fully grounded in theological wisdom, devout, and thereby beautiful. This art lacks a specific style or technique; its essence lies in religious faith and spirit rather than in style or technique." (p.93).

Truly, to establish the antiquity of Aquinas' thought as relevant in the post-modern society, in the twenty-first century, is challenge to his scholars due to the current movement of the community of thinkers; not to mention the current condition of Chinese research community as described by in the preliminary of this book. Zhiqing Zhang's "The Aesthetic Thought and View of Art of Thomas Aquinas" is a good outset of understanding Aquinas' relevant influence to the current maturation of aesthetics despite the challenges posed by the departure from the objective take on beauty.

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**Farin, Ingo and Malpas, Jeff. ed. *Heidegger and the Human*. Albany: Southwest University of New York, 2022. pp. 367. ISBN 9781438490502.**

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Ingo Farin is a professor at the University of Tasmania, whose research specialization is on phenomenology, specifically on the thought of Martin Heidegger. Likewise, Jeff Malpas is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Tasmania in Australia whose works also draw inspiration among wide range of thinkers including Martin Heidegger. This volume has been possible through the contributions of various thinkers whose interest include that of the human being in consonance with Heidegger's thinking. Lurking behind is the reality that, as affirmed by the editors, "we find ourselves in a thoroughly "humanized" world and are still haunted by our real ignorance about the human being qua human being." (p. 2) Hence, in this volume, Heidegger's key concepts are considered, extended, and questioned to contribute to the continuous aporia on the human being, having as the aim, to open issues on what being human really entails and what it takes for humanity to attain this.