

the real particulars of the case. Similarly, given Greig's arguments against the social model's expectation that people with disabilities must only ever speak for themselves, it is unfortunate that the voice of Ashley's parents only appears in the first half of the book, which is primarily critical. The parents' actions and attitudes towards Ashley justify a certain suspicion towards them, but their blog (still available at [www.pillowangel.org](http://www.pillowangel.org)) is also the primary way Greig and his readers have access to Ashley's experience. For that reason, more interaction with the words of Ashley's parents throughout the book could have augmented Greig's focus on Ashley's case.

Extending the use of the case method could also have bolstered the rhetorical force of some arguments in the second half of the book. For example, Greig's inspiring claims for the sacramental power of footwashing to shape Christian communities are weakened by the absence of any examples of churches that understand the practice in the holistic sense he advocates. An extended meditation on the L'Arche experience with footwashing is provided in the next chapter, but in the context of Jean Vanier's theology, which has different emphases and starting points than Greig's own. A closer integration of Greig's theology of footwashing and L'Arche's practice of footwashing would not only clarify and support his proposal, but also illustrate how sustained attention to particular examples can help make theological arguments more practical and plausible. Similarly, despite the mention of ethics in the title and the detailed critique of medical ethics early on, Greig makes few of his constructive ethical insights explicit, leaving the reader to derive them from his reflections on ecclesiology and ecclesial practices.

To be fair, the proper role of cases, ethnography, and qualitative research in Christian theology is highly contested, and as of yet there is no generally accepted model for how to integrate particular narratives and more theoretical work. Moreover, the stories of Ashley, Jean Vanier, and L'Arche clearly strengthen the book as a whole, grounding both Greig's concerns about contemporary medicine as well as his constructive proposals for the church in concrete examples. Therefore, my identification of some minor methodological and structural issues should not deter prospective readers from enjoying Greig's work. The title will be of obvious interest for scholars of disability theology, but I would also recommend the book for those working and teaching in the areas of constructive ecclesiology, practical theology, and medical ethics, and at the intersection of moral theology and liturgy.

Michael Buttrey  
 Regis College, Toronto School of Theology  
 206-1840 Bathurst Street  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 CANADA M5P 3K7  
 Email: [michael.buttrey@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:michael.buttrey@mail.utoronto.ca)

*The Theological Project of Modernism: Faith and Conditions of Mineness* by Kevin W. Hector (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), xiv + 271 pp.

Kevin Hector's second instalment is as ambitious and lucid as his debut *Theology without Metaphysics*. The title, *The Theological Project of Modernism*, indicates the impressive sweep of the book; however, once one conducts a close reading of each chapter, one will notice that modernism or "modern theology" signifies nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German (and Protestant) philosophy of religion: Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Troeltsch and Tillich, and each figure, for the most part, receives his own chapter. While conventional studies of "modernity" or the "modern age" will offer broad cultural analysis and textured historical meta-narratives of paradigm shifts (think of the tomes of Hans Blumenberg, John Milbank or Charles Taylor), Hector's book consists of a series of focused inquiries into these particular German Protestant voices. While there is nothing in principle wrong with this, of course, I do wonder if the expectations of prospective readers should be adjusted, so that they know that they are getting a book that contains little text devoted to the task of diagnosing the cultural complexion of modernity itself.

What is helpful, even if it is wholly assumed, is that Hector invites us to associate modernism with "mineness," or individual self-expression. There is nothing particularly original about this

connection, and perhaps that is why Hector does not marshal much evidence to verify the claim. I do not disagree with this characterization of the modern spirit, for *mineness*, which represents a kind of subjectivism, unfolds from the Cartesian paradigm of the ego up to Nietzsche's Will to Power (in differing degrees of intensity). Other categories come to mind, which Hector highlights in various chapters, such as autonomy, self-legislation, individual appropriation, vocation, self-integration, etc. Often a person appears pre-modern or unenlightened to us if we understand that person as bound slavishly to religious or cultural authorities of any kind. One may even appear immature if one cannot think for oneself (consider as an example a small toddler who needs constant direction, guidance and vigilance). This rings true, does it not? Do we not need a sense of autonomy to express truly who we are? And if I am not in some real and genuine sense autonomous and free to make my life "hang together" (Hector's expression) in the way I see fit, then my life is not really my own.

Think of Kant's famous vignette "Was ist Aufklärung"? The Western "Enlightenment project" was centuries in the making, and as Europeans were becoming conscious of living in an age different than their ancestors, philosophers like Kant offered pointed, if compressed, commentary on the lived expression of enlightened personhood. Kant says that Enlightenment reflects a movement of overcoming the framework of immaturity. Immaturity, to quote Kant for a moment, bedevils one as the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. Religious immaturity reflects the most barbaric type of immaturity of all, because for Kant it enthralls both mind and soul. I would basically agree with Kant, and I would applaud Hector for singling out this idea of ownership, maturity and self-expression as a conceptual key that unlocks authentic personal identity, religious or otherwise, in the modern age.

The thesis, then, of Hector's volume does not exult in pure autonomy but rather a dialectic between, on the one hand, one's self-expressiveness, and on the other, the cultural narrative of one's membership in a particular group. The problematic of "mineness" explored by Hector is the following: to the extent one is able to put "one's stamp on moral norms, social structures and natural necessities, to experience one's entire life as self-expressive," one is able to identify with one's life and thus be mature (75). Chapter one connects Hector's thesis with the larger debate about the importance of narrative philosophy. If I am to express myself as "myself," how do I reconcile my individuality with the reality that much of my personal identity is given to me by my surrounding culture, by the many cultural narratives that I assimilate to make sense of my life? The real question becomes: am I nothing more than a narrative centre of gravity (to use Daniel Dennett's vocabulary)? Influenced by such luminaries as Wittgenstein and his heirs, and others who work explicitly in narrative philosophy, such as Paul Ricoeur, Hector challenges the long-standing Enlightenment myth that "mineness" emerges as an isolated moment of individual self-assertion (as if by fiat) over against all cultural narratives. *Mineness*, rather, reflects the process by which one's micro-narrative fits within, or is reconciled with, the larger meta-narratives on offer in one's ambient culture. Concerning theological narratives in particular, one may ask: how can I self-narrate my life if I am to give my life over to God? The person on the street formulates the question like this: is the faith I have my own, or is it one passively received as it was handed down to me from my guardians and community in which I grew up?

Hector addresses this question most directly, in my opinion, when he filters his thesis through Schleiermacher. I will focus on this aspect of Hector's book, a necessary limitation I have placed on myself should I be able to develop something in the following paragraphs that might resemble Hector's thesis. I will leave it to specialists in "Kant studies," "Hegel studies" and "Tillich studies" to voice approval about Hector's treatment of those figures. I cannot, therefore, do justice to Hector's book in its entirety, for his treatment of Hegel and Tillich is especially rich. The sections on Ritschl and Troeltsch are interesting, if only because such minor characters in the intellectual history of modern theology rarely receive the careful treatment they demand. I will make a comment on the overall treatment of the figures. What concerns this reader is the value of the close exegetical readings of each figure, which forces Hector's voice to recede to the background. The ventriloquism on display sometimes distracts from Hector's broad point about *mineness* and ownership.

Schleiermacher roots his analysis of selfhood, according to Hector, in the dualism that befalls every conscious individual: (1) *mineness* and (2) *otherness*. How to reconcile these two poles is the issue at hand. In our fallen state we set them in opposition. An individual's mind is split,

in other words, between an awareness of the “self-positing” element of selfhood, and a second, “non-self-positing” element. When I see a tree or another person, my perception depends on that which I bring to the perception (self-positing) as well as on that which is given to me (non-self-positing). When I feel these two elements at loggerheads, when all I see is oppositions in the world, then I am operating wholly by “sensible self-consciousness” (106). This distinct kind of self-consciousness is basically my ordinary understanding of the world, in which I am not able to see my freedom and dependence as an integrative whole. I see myself standing in contradiction to that which is not me; there is nothing, in principle, evil or alienating about sensible self-consciousness unless it forgets to combine it (or perfect it?) with consciousness of God (failure is God forgetfulness). Only “God consciousness,” which is the awareness of the “world’s absolute dependence on that which transcends it” (106-07) can free me from crude oppositional frameworks that alienate me from others and the world generally. Oppositional thinking leads to the following miscarriage of wholeness and integration with my surroundings: “The finite world is treated as if it were absolute, then the opposition by which that world is constituted will likewise be treated as absolute, and we will experience the world as frozen into intractable contradictions. Freedom and dependence will seem to be at odds with one another” (110). God consciousness is acquired through faith, and faith is developed over time in community with other like-minded individuals who have habituated the perfect overcoming of oppositions in the person of Christ himself. This paradigm of narrative selfhood is worked out in lucid fashion with sensitive attention to Schleiermacher, and it is slightly refined via Hegel and Tillich (but no radical departures are evident to me). Two critical remarks may now follow.

Given the extensive and nuanced deployment of the terminology of mineness and self-integration, vocation, etc., one would expect a more explicit definition of the self or a first-person account of experience that underlies the whole edifice of Hector’s subtle narrative analysis. If Hector’s book boasts an impressive array of textual readings (sometimes to the point of exegetical tedium) of important figures in the canon of modern philosophy of religion, and if it is essentially a work in theological anthropology, one is surprised by the lack of attention to the most basic question of all: what is the self? Who is the agent responsible for freely adopting or rejecting faith? Who is the noetic power, or core self, that decides for or against faith in Christ, a “self” invoked by Hector on nearly every page?

In other words, this self-positing element, the natural inner impulse to live and to make decisions, is neither named nor fully explored by Hector. The spontaneous factor, the “me” that distinguishes me from you, evokes more questions than answers in Hector’s book. Why not attempt to investigate its anthropological shape, even if its ultimate derivation and existential contours elude exhaustive treatment? If, as Hegel seeks, there is a self who is at home with oneself and with what is external to oneself, what is the “self” to which Hector refers? Hector compares the self to an editor who “cuts film” in a uniquely subjective way (48). An analogy: two individuals, Jones and John, are given the same raw footage to edit over the course of an afternoon. Each final product, the edited film, will be different. The distinctive marks of Jones and John, respectively, are obvious. But who is the “self” unique to each individual that finds a restatement in the film? This underlying ontological ground of selfhood remains at the heart of Hector’s work, and yet, he does not address it in any kind of systematic or sustained way. Early in the manuscript, Hector offers a lucid consideration of Kant’s framework of concepts or categories that each of us share; we employ this a priori manifold of categories to shape the world (time, space, causality, etc.). And yet, the table of categories, because it is abstract and universal, does nothing to distinguish Jones from John, since they both contain the exact same table of categories. Hector does highlight, I will add, through Tillich, a possibility of a dynamic “centre” that Tillich calls life (228). What is my unique “me” or “living centre” that endows me with my character or style, which enables me to improvise within a tradition, that is, to cut and edit film in a manner consistent with my particular “imprint?” Phenomenology and existentialism, and the philosophy of mind tied to these philosophical traditions, to which Tillich is an heir, would give Hector more conceptual tools to work this out.

The second critical remark, while I can only hint at it, refers to Hector’s missed opportunity concerning Christology. This is probably a function of the theologians and philosophers he engages. The exemplar model of the Incarnation motivates Schleiermacher and thus Hector. On this model, Christians must simply “profess faith” and imitate Christ’s spirit as it is mediated

by the community. But how? What if habit and mimesis do not fulfil their function? We all know what Jesus meant by a whitewashed tomb (i.e. Pharisee), one who is properly habituated to the behaviours of religious life but who remains spiritually dead inside. Can I simply “will into existence” the reconciliation of freedom and dependence by way of imitation or conformity? Where is the transformative power, at the ontological level of my natural being, that the Incarnation makes possible? Where is grace? Hegel moves in the direction of Incarnational ontology when Hector highlights Hegel’s understanding of the objective reconciliation of the world through Christ’s assumption of flesh, which enables Christ to enter the antitheses of human nature and overcome them from within the economy of nature itself (170ff). Much of the patristic and medieval tradition embodies an explicit mystical understanding of human nature that the Incarnation opens up in the figures of Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and in Western figures too, like Irenaeus and Aquinas. In this there is a sense that the Incarnation radically transformed human nature itself (whatever we may mean by human nature). Nature was united to God in the hypostatic union, and the higher, divine nature prevailed, precisely so that the human nature might be “made God” so far as Christ is made man. How does Hector relate faith to the Incarnation? Faith, for Hector, is a matter of fitting my narrative within the metanarrative of scripture, as it is passed on by the community of Christ’s spirit. This labour of habit takes place over time, so that gradually, little by little, my life “looks” like the perfect God consciousness of Christ, even while my life of faith retains my distinctive mark. But *how* this gradual and linear evolution of the spiritual life occurs is not clear to this reader (sometimes faith is a violent gestalt shift, not a gradual process).

Suggestive as Hector’s discourse on mineness may be, and as informed by the modern tradition as it so obviously is, it feels incomplete. I am confident that the book will revive interest in figures like Schleiermacher and Tillich and generate interest in the very idea of “modern theological anthropology.” It is worth a read, especially if there is a figure of particular interest. I am inclined to think that a postgraduate module on modern theology would benefit from Hector’s reading of Protestant figures which could then be complemented by an analysis of Roman Catholic modern theology (beginning with transcendental Thomism).

Joseph Rivera  
 Dublin City University  
 School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music  
 Dublin 3  
 Dublin  
 Ireland  
 Email: rivera30@gmail.com

*Encountering Religion: Responsibility and Criticism After Secularism* by Tyler Roberts  
 (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2013), xiii + 300 pp.

Those of us who teach in confessional departments of theology will find much to learn from and plenty to be encouraged by in Tyler Roberts’ *Encountering Religion: Responsibility and Criticism after Secularism*. Part of what the book does is blur the usual distinctions between confessional and non-confessional scholarship, offering, indeed, confession as a practice of scholarship, confessional and otherwise.

*Encountering Religions* makes its case by distinguishing two contrastive ways scholars of Religious Studies imagine their work. The first Roberts understands to be regnant and symptomatic, and the second he offers as emergent and revolutionary. *Encountering Religions* sees itself as identifying and inaugurating this emergent and revolutionary second way. The first begins by valorizing *religious* practice and *secular* scholarship and views the religious practitioner as committed to a sort of mental map whereby she locates herself, the world, and God (or what have you) as spatially related to one another through faithful or not so faithful coordination. The secular scholar of religion sees himself as responsible for accurately describing what life with this map entails. In good ethnographic fashion, the point of the description is not to render judgment on the map itself. In order to objectively map the world of the religious person the scholar must refrain from mapping that religion in terms of the world. He does not in other words