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Chapter 3 is a definite attempt to respond to critics on the subject of ‘putting religion in its place’. Human life has a ‘dark centre, an unlit core, a concealed depth, to which we have limited access’ (76), and in the light of this, religions are always in danger of making unlimited truth claims which cannot take this into account. This is where Tillich, as Caputo’s favourite theologian, begins to feature in more depth (81), and we enter the territory of what I would call the apophatic, although Caputo does not address the question of how to move from the mystical to the practical or acknowledge that this ‘not knowing’ can lead to a range of responses, in addition to striving for greater justice in the world. While, like Paul, we see through a glass darkly, what we see is, according to Caputo, still to lead us into love.

Chapter 4 follows this with further discussion about traditional and institutional religion and whether or not true religion is to be found there. Borrowing from Derrida, Caputo uses the term ‘pharmakon’ to describe religion as both poison and remedy (106). Chapter 5 tackles the question of why religions lead to violence (9/11 happened after the publication of the first edition). Chapter 6 takes us into the area of the post-human and the impact of technology, with references both to Keller and to panentheism, similar to those in *Cross and Cosmos*. The final chapter is a recapitulation of the whole text.

If the objective was to deal with issues that have arisen since the first edition, the new chapters are relatively thin on the subjects that Caputo might have addressed, such as the dominance of digital technology. As a result, I am not entirely convinced by this second edition: the familiar Caputo themes are well established and available elsewhere, and new areas receive more heavyweight treatment in the publications of others.

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John Reader

Štefan Štofanič

The Adventure of Weak Theology: Reading the Work of John D. Caputo through Biographies and Events

Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2018. Pp. xx, 288. Hb. \$90.

ISBN 978-1-4384-7195-2

It is not often that one finds oneself smiling when reading an academic publication, but this book manages to prompt just that. Štefan Štofanič

captures the reader with an irresistible style and the uncanny promise ‘to fall over backward to make sense’ (1). The implications of that promise become clear in the opening chapter, in which Štofanič states that ‘one just does not write a book on Caputo’s theology by merely stating that it is (attempting to be) radical hermeneutics all the way down – even if this true!’ (20). To Štofanič, the ‘how’, the manner in which one discusses Caputo’s theology of the event, is not simply a matter of personal preference. He makes the convincing point that in Caputo’s work, his voice, ‘how’ he speaks, is irreducibly intertwined with ‘what’ he speaks about, the substance. While the French philosopher of deconstruction, Jacques Derrida, loosened Caputo’s tongue, Štofanič’s emphasis on the ‘how’ highlights the consistent, but seldom discussed, influence of Søren Kierkegaard on Caputo’s work. Caputo’s ‘first love’ (34) never really left him. Kierkegaard is, according to Štofanič, single-handedly responsible for the stylistic shift present in Caputo’s work from ‘a serious, dry scholastic style to discovering his own personal voice’ (23).

Caputo himself states in the afterword that Štofanič has ‘an ear to his voice’ (231). Štofanič understands that ‘a simple summary of a theology of the event’ will not do, as it misses ‘this eminently biographical point’ (23). To write on Caputo’s theology of the event requires ‘a style that does not rule out event, adventure, and emplotment’ (24). Štofanič’s book therefore offers the reader a story, *The Adventure of Weak Theology*, that crosses boundaries between scholarly description and storytelling. In twelve chapters, the book – a revision of Štofanič’s PhD dissertation at the University of Leuven – introduces both the familiar and not-so-familiar reader of Caputo to his ideas, while listening to stories of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

In ‘Adventure’ (chapter 1), Štofanič describes the method and (im)possibilities of writing about Caputo’s radical hermeneutics. ‘Call’ (chapter 2) introduces the reader to the concept of the call on which ‘everything in Caputo’s theology of the event stands and falls’ (30). ‘Brother Paul’ is a biographical chapter which discusses Caputo the young monk and his ‘inner conflict of loves’ – that is to say, Thomas Aquinas and Kierkegaard (35). ‘Transgression’ (chapter 4) deals with Caputo’s departure from the monastic life and his intellectual desire to transgress ‘narrowly defined boundaries of intellectual and religious traditions’. ‘Two loves’ (chapter 5) leads from Jacques Maritain and Pierre Rousselot to Caputo’s discovery of Heidegger. Via Heidegger, Caputo (re)discovered Angelus Silesius and Meister Eckhart, which brought him back to Aquinas. ‘Freedom’, ‘Interlude’ and ‘Freedom Again’ (chapters 6, 7 and 8) tell the story of a Senegalese slave, Bark, in Saint-Exupéry’s *Terre des Hommes*. Bark’s deep desire is to be free and return home, but when he finally returns, he realises that ‘he had nowhere to go’ (93). His freedom was not that free after all. Štofanič correlates Bark’s experience

to Caputo's concept of 'religion without religion', which Štofanič regards as questionable: 'because this freedom lacks a concrete sense of orientation, it results in sterile dreaming' (106).

Besides the problematic appropriation of Bark's experience as a black slave by the white Saint-Exupéry, I furthermore think that Caputo's concept of freedom is not as sterile as Štofanič argues. Caputo dreams both with and without religion. He intends to save religion from itself in unveiling the event that is going on in concrete religions – that is to say, the gift of what is to-come. In *Hoping against Hope* (Fortress Press, 2015), Caputo explains that 'dreaming of what is coming is never a question of dismissing structures of culture but of cultivating them, keeping them open to the future, ready and able to reinvent and reproduce themselves' (188).

The longest chapter of the book is 'Between Heidegger and Derrida' (chapter 9). Štofanič shows that it was not love at first sight between Caputo and Derrida – initially, Caputo sided with Heidegger – but eventually Derrida's thinking decisively determined Caputo's work. 'Dancing in the Void' (chapter 10) discusses the matter of style in assessing 'how to read' Caputo. Chapter 11 emphasises the advent of weak theology 'because in an important sense weak theology is still to come' (178). Finally, in 'Kingdom (In Place of a Conclusion)', Štofanič discusses the future of weak theology.

All in all, this book is a labour of love, the result of Štofanič's long and careful study of Caputo's theology. Moreover, the book is also a reflection of love for Štofanič because it was published after Štofanič's tragic death by editor and friend Joeri Schrijvers. Although some minor remarks can be made about Štofanič's interpretation of Caputo's 'what', in the end the 'how' makes pursuit of Štofanič's adventure of weak theology more than worthwhile.

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