

Corpus Dionysiacum, and the emphasis on activity as constituting hierarchy as the divine image, suggests that gender is irrelevant to determining authentic hierarchic participation and rank. (53)

This goes too far, both historically and logically. Absence of evidence is not evidence of anything. That Dionysius was a Syrian monk is the common scholarly conjecture today, but imagine two other possibilities: Dionysius may have been a bishop, in which case the pseudonym, though still subversive to some degree, would not be subversive with regard to hierarchical rank. According to tradition, the historical Dionysius was bishop of Athens. On the other hand, what if Dionysius were not only a monastic, but a nun? The discovery that Dionysius was an ancient George Eliot would be directly and profoundly relevant to modern questions of gender dynamics. But at present, we simply do not know the author's true identity. And, to quote Wittgenstein, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."

Nevertheless, one can—indeed *must*—say that *God, Hierarchy, and Power* is well worth reading for its contribution to a nuanced, Byzantine, historical theology of hierarchy and power. Once again, I recommend it.

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Interrupting Capitalism: Catholic Social Thought and the Economy

Matthew A. Shadle

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Since the publication of *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, Christians in the West have wrestled with how Christianity navigates the issues and questions of their respective contemporary social locations and what that means for the future. In *Interrupting Capitalism*, Matthew A. Shadle introduces a bird's-eye view of Catholic Social Thought (CST) by highlighting the ways in which a communitarian perspective better deals with the issues facing the world than other ideological attempts of the past.

Shadle believes that the primary focus of CST ought to be singularly concerned with deconstructing capitalism. In the book, Shadle wants to "help Catholics reimagine what their tradition can contribute to the way we understand and inhabit the contemporary capitalist economy. Today, Catholic faith demands the interruption of capitalism" (3). The remaining chapters in the book survey the ways in which CST and its interpreters have succeeded or failed at being anticapitalist and pro-communitarian.

The book operates with three central theses described in chapter 2. First, a "theology of interruption" outlines the framework of the book. Borrowing from Lieven Boeve, Shadle argues that capitalism should not be assumed to be a "closed narrative" net social good and that it needs to be interrupted with new questions and deeper understandings. Second,

CST proposes an organic (dynamic) communitarianism that needs not only to be revived from obscurity but also put forward as the primary means of understanding and applying CST to issues in the twenty-first century. Third, critical realist social theory provides the tools to advance developing visions of economic life found in CST.

Europe's economy after the Second World War occupies the focus of chapter 3. Shadle explains that Europe introduced several versions of capitalism including: (1) social democracy; (2) "organicist capitalism" (38), which sought to embed capitalism with civil society institutions; and (3) the German Social Market Economy characterized by Keynesianism, which essentially won the day. Chapter 4 begins with early encyclicals such as *Rerum Novarum* and describes how Catholicism interacted with developing economic and political visions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Chapter 5 examines the contributions of Jacques Maritain and Marie-Dominique Chenu, OP, as Christian Democrats whom Shadle ultimately finds wanting. Maritain's personalist perspective, for example, opens Christians up to the privatization of faith, which leads to an underdeveloped sense of praxis, among other problems. Additionally, Chenu fails to account for the role of the church through the proclamation of the gospel, unwisely supports industrialization, and inadvertently ignores the subjective element of work. Chapters 6 and 7 survey the "aggiornamento framework" largely associated with encyclicals written in the post-Vatican II period. Shadle rejects the criticism that economic policies promoted by aggiornamento were evidence of a leftward shift in Catholic thought. He believes this is inaccurate because the period was essentially characterized by an organicist approach coupled with a lack of understanding of Christian Democrats in Europe.

The liberation theologies of Latin America are covered in chapter 9 and are found wanting for embracing the presuppositions of modernity even as they rightly challenged the failures of capitalism. Chapter 10 introduces readers to emerging CST views during the 1970s and 1980s up to the 1986 publication of *Economic Justice for All* by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (chapter 11). These "progressive" American Catholic expressions, Shadle argues, comprised over-realized proposals for massive, sweeping economic changes in the American context in ways that may simply be impossible. Shadle recommends a more localized form of incremental change toward a more communitarian vision.

As a book intended to interpret and apply CST in a communitarian fashion, Shadle's harshest critiques, by extension, are reserved for neoconservatives like Michael Novak and for conservative interpretations of Pope John Paul II's writings, in particular *Centesimus Annus (CA)* (chapters 12–14). Shadle wants to rescue CST from any neoliberal or free-market affirmations that do not lead to communitarian ends. In this regard, Michael Novak fails to consider communitarian solutions to issues like poverty by ignoring the role of structural sin, among other issues, and the conservative interpreters of *CA* simply ignore the encyclical's regular exposing of the weaknesses of capitalism.

The book concludes by surveying the contributions of Pope Benedict XVI (specifically *Caritas in Veritate*), Mary Mee-Yin Yuen, Stan Chu Ilo, Meghan Clark, Samuel Gregg, Christine Firer Hinze, and María Teresa Dávila. In the end, Shadle believes that organicist

communitarianism is the best way forward for CST because “consumerism conditions us to remain blind to the impoverished people who grow our food . . . and it contributes to the commodification of our relationships and culture” (281). In Shadle’s organicist communitarian vision, social movements, community organizations, and other intermediate institutions are needed to respond to particular social issues because the market economy is ultimately oppressive and undermines human dignity.

Throughout the book, Shadle does a superb job of describing much of the CST canon. However, one of the vulnerabilities of CST interpreters, Shadle included, is the tendency to bring an ideological agenda to the canon of social encyclicals and other church documents on economic life, and to read one’s own presupposed ideology into the tradition in order to identify all others as incorrect or inadequate. In the end, Shadle is another example of cherry-picking CST to make the tradition say what the interpreter has already decided CST ought to be saying according to the author’s previously adopted ideology. In Shadle’s case, he presses organicist communitarianism on CST.

Shadle’s ideological agenda to “interrupt capitalism,” and interpret CST in order to do so, perverts the ideological nuance of well-formed documents and obscures the ways in which CST does not pick sides in the debate between free-market advocates and communitarians. For example, in Shadle’s explanation of *CA* he noted that its discussion of the free market was a communitarian version (not a classical liberal one) and that the conservative championing of the critique of the social-assistant state is simply misunderstood. In other words, the only way to properly interpret CST is through an organicist communitarian lens. Ironically, this type of interpretation introduces the very closed interpretive system Shadle believes capitalism should be liberated from.

Finally, since the project is ideologically predisposed, Shadle fails to account for the ways CST also interrupts socialism, Marxism, and communitarianism. Shadle simply redefines the aim of the church’s social teaching to fit his ideological preferences. As a result, the book should instead have been titled something like, *A Case for Catholic Ideological Organicist Communitarianism*. A better book project would introduce readers to how CST interrupts all “isms” and seeks to stand outside them, at some times more successfully than others, because political and economic ideologies in the West tend to presuppose forms of Gnostic interpretations of good versus evil and tempt Christians to turn various economic “isms” into idols, which simultaneously perverts the prudential judgments needed to advance human flourishing and moral virtue.

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