

Part 4 includes essays on Augustine's understanding of the soul and time. Chapter 11 examines and articulates problems with Augustine's argument for the incorporeality of the soul in a letter to Jerome; chapters 12 and 13 connect Augustine's account of time to issues of world-soul and the liberation of the soul; and chapter 14 concludes with an argument that the unity of the *Confessions* may best be understood in terms of key theses of Christian Neoplatonism.

Although the essays have all appeared before, the volume will prove a valuable contribution. Because of its close reading of dense texts, the book will be of most use to graduate students and specialists in Augustine's philosophy. Still, the rigorous analysis and patient, clear examination of some of Augustine's most subtle thoughts offer an example of the scholarly virtues we have long come to appreciate in this author.

*Santa Clara University, Calif.*

MICHAEL C. MCCARTHY, S.J.

FATHER AND SON IN CONFUCIANISM AND CHRISTIANITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF XUNZI AND PAUL. By Yanxia Zhao. Portland, Ore.: Sussex Academic, 2007. Pp. xvi + 245. \$67.50.

In this meticulously researched work, Zhao significantly contributes to the field of comparative religion in general and to Confucian-Christian dialogue in particular. After introducing her objectives and research methods, she compares and contrasts the sociocultural, familial, political, ethical, and religious implications of the secular father-son relationship in the writings of Xunzi (the last of the seminal, original Confucian thinkers) with the divine father-son relationship articulated by the apostle Paul.

While acknowledging the centrality of the ethical father-son relationship in the Confucian tradition and the divine father-son relationship in Christian ethics and theology, Z. avoids facile and simplistic correlations of Xunzi's secular perspective, which roots the ethical father-son relationship in the natural father-son relationship, with Paul's "spiritual transcendent" perspective of the divine father-son relationship. She correctly notes that the Confucian relationship calls for filial piety, while the Christian relationship calls for obedience. She also attempts to correlate the Pauline ideal of peace with Xunzi's ideal of harmony. Although Xunzi and Paul both agree on the depravity of human nature, Z. points out that Xunzi's understanding of the innately evil nature of all human beings differs significantly from the Pauline understanding of the sinful human nature that arises when human beings separate themselves from God.

Although it is perfectly acceptable to compare and contrast in a detached fashion two specific figures for a doctoral dissertation (which this initially was), given the breadth of Z.'s stated aims one can reasonably expect her to broaden her focus by discussing also other important Confucian and Christian treatments of father and son—at the very least to

ground her own judgments of value. However, she avoids other historical and contemporary sources, leaving us to wonder on what basis she asserts that the perspectives of Xunzi and Paul are normative for and constitutive of their respective traditions. She comfortably claims that “both Paul and Xunzi adopt patriarchy as their cardinal ruling principle for their discussion of familial and social relationships” (180) without addressing correlative problems such as, for example, Xunzi’s absolute patriarchalism, rigid hierarchical ordering with its twin emphases on ritual propriety and obligatory duties, and his social stratification and elitism. She offers no clues for why we should prefer Xunzi to Confucius or Mencius, or, for that matter, Paul to Jesus.

Without an acknowledgment of much diversity and plurality, past and especially present, in both traditions, Z. lands in a real danger of sweeping generalizations and uncritical contemporary extensions of the oppressive status quo. She argues that “hierarchy and patriarchy still have meaning in modern Chinese society,” having “encounter[ed] little challenge,” and that women are “accustomed to being governed by males” and “lack consciousness and equality” (183). She in fact advocates “a reform of Chinese culture based on Confucian ideals, especially Xunzi’s father-son relationship” (188). She concludes dismissively, “It is possible to criticize this point of view as it compromises an ideal society, but as we have concluded, any theory, if it seeks to be practicable in a real society, must respond to the real situation of that society” (184).

Clearly Z. reads Xunzi in isolation from the long history of oppressive patriarchy and misogyny, and also in isolation from the writings of contemporary Confucian scholars who challenge and reinterpret the classical Confucian tradition in favor of gender equality (see Chenyang Li’s edited volume *The Sage and the Second Sex*, 2000). In this isolation, her detailed work is not yet a major resource for Christian-Confucian dialogues or comparative religious studies. The complex and conflicted histories of both the Confucian and Christian traditions must be discussed critically in their totality in order to avoid naïve or uncritical extrapolations between the two traditions.

*Xavier University, Cincinnati*

JONATHAN Y. TAN

TRINITY, CHURCH, AND THE HUMAN PERSON: THOMISTIC ESSAYS. By Gilles Emery, O.P. Faith & Reason: Studies in Catholic Theology & Philosophy. Naples, Fla.: Sapientia, 2007. Pp. xvii + 303. \$27.95.

Emery is an important contemporary interpreter of Aquinas, especially on the Trinity. The present collection will help English-speaking theologians, Thomists or otherwise, to appreciate the constructive payoff to be gained from E.’s exacting interpretation.

Karl Rahner influentially claimed (especially in the opening chapter of *The Trinity*) that the “Western-Augustinian” tradition, much abetted by Aquinas, had dislodged the Trinity from its proper place as the