

such is necessary. Her idea of hospitality is not an obvious variable for IR theorizing but that does not mean that it is not a useful idea for serious policy and/or normative consideration in its own right. Certainly, an argument can be made for hospitality—that not only states but also other institutions (e.g., civil society, churches, individuals) ought to be rooted in neighbor-love so as to promote enduring political order, justice, and peace.

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Prophets of the Posthuman: American Fiction, Biotechnology, and the Ethics of Personhood

Christina Bieber Lake

Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013 (243 pages)

I suppose we are all a bit scarred from high school English classes that focused on dystopias. Some educational theorist somewhere must have decided that the burgeoning adolescent psyche is best served by a diet of *Brave New World*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *1984* (with *A Separate Peace* and *Catcher in the Rye* tossed in to lighten the mood, perhaps!). Furthermore, outside the classroom, the realm of popular (and profitable) young adult fiction has been dominated by the *Hunger Games* and *Divergent* trilogies, such that the dystopic vision is a central trope of middle school America.

Christina Bieber Lake's *Prophets of the Posthuman* has made my dilemma worse, and I thank her for it. Her engagement with the disconcerting vanguard of bioethics, proponents of human enhancement technology, and hyper-evolutionary philosophers such as Peter Singer and Daniel Dennett makes for a depressing and troubling journey. However, like Dante's tour through Inferno, there is a literary imagination alongside to offer sense, or rather, a number of different imaginations, some philosophical and some literary, from which Lake draws her extended rejoinder to the posthuman apologists. The preface shows her following Hannah Arendt in the notion that political philosophy, not science, is the place to establish boundaries for technology's purview. Likewise, Lake follows critics Martha Nussbaum and Wayne Booth in framing ethical debates as "requir[ing] deep, nuanced, and ongoing reflection on narrative" (xvii). Having moved into this rich terrain of narrative responses to hyper-scientism, Lake perhaps is too hasty to suggest that literary studies has backed away from this difficult realm; she perhaps ignores the work of Marxist critics; the Derridian school; Richard Kearney's work; and maybe even the project of T. S. Eliot in the years between the two world wars, an age of startling dehumanization and scientific hubris. But I would say Lake's general trajectory, to pit story against empiricism, is the right move, even if it has a long backstory and feels rather familiar.

The introduction also sets out a good aim, albeit somewhat jarringly. The move from Emerson and American autonomy to the personalist vision of such thinkers as Maritain seems hasty. With a number of thoughtful quotes woven together from such substantial

ethical thinkers as Alasdair MacIntyre, Miroslav Volf, and Jürgen Habermas, the warp and woof show through a bit. A thick sense of what personalism entails, and why it offers a strong counterargument to the posthuman discourse, never quite emerges. Lake sometimes seems to be in a hurry to move through the philosophical to reach the literary, and though her own narrative in *Prophets of the Posthuman* includes many helpful quotes and augments from a range of thinkers, the effect is episodic rather than cohesive.

That being said, when Lake finally does launch into her project proper and begins to unpack prophetic fictional narratives that twist up a posthuman or complex human vision and then release the narrative threads to see them spin and unravel, she provides an important and often insightful light that shines into dark corners of our contemporary desires.

Lake's method throughout the eight chapters of the book is to set up a contemporary champion of enhanced, winnowed, genetically perfected future humans and then to show how a particular fiction writer questions and undermines such idealized (and perverse!) visions. Some of the comparisons work better than others, but Lake always seems to find something in the literary insights that resounds with the reader, even if bioethicists sometimes seem like straw men. The juxtaposing of Flannery O'Connor's brilliant accounting for the wonder of even aberrant sexual physiology in her story "Temple of the Holy Ghost" with the faith crisis caused by a similar situation in Lee Silver's *Challenging Nature: The Clash of Science and Spirituality at the New Frontiers of Life* makes for a strong and lucid opening chapter. (It is noteworthy that Lake has written an earlier book, *The Incarnational Art of Flannery O'Connor*, and her reading feels deeper and more subtle on this tough story than on some of the other texts.) Lake speaks to her deepest point eloquently at the end of this chapter, asserting that "arbitrating between all possibilities will be disastrous if we deny that individuals make decisions through a complex tangle of facts, emotions, spiritual beliefs, and values" (42). I especially like this counterintuitive image of the "complex tangle" because it captures how narrative works and how irreducible fiction's truth telling can be, especially in the face of a hubristic empiricism.

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Flourishing Churches and Communities

Charlie Self

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Flourishing Churches and Communities offers a joyous, practical, and insightful primer to the integration of "faith, work, and economics for Spirit-empowered discipleship." In doing so, it seeks to drink from a "Pentecostal" well for its *ressourcement*.

The author, a noted Assemblies of God pastor-scholar and professor, inspires a pathway for leaders of Pentecostal thought to reflect on public life in a renewed way. Self's use of *Pentecostal* is conveyed with nonprovincial understanding, so that non-Assemblies of God charismatics and Pentecostals (e.g., for me, a member of Vineyard Association of Churches)