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Recommended Citation

Ward, Kate, "Book Review of *Interrupting Capitalism: Catholic Social Thought and the Economy*. By Matthew A. Shadle" (2019). *Theology Faculty Research and Publications*. 757.

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Book Review of *Interrupting Capitalism: Catholic Social Thought and the Economy*. By Matthew A. Shadle

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Interrupting Capitalism: Catholic Social Thought and the Economy provides a history of the development of modern Catholic Social Thought (CST) in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and advocates for a particular Catholic engagement with modernity, deploying a “theology of interruption” with the potential to challenge views of markets’ independence and neutrality.

Accounts of the development of modern Catholic thought in Europe, Latin America, and the United States make up the majority of the book. Each region receives summaries of approaches starting with the political and economic context, narrowing to theological and economic thought that grew out of those contexts. Shadle offers pithy yet comprehensive treatments of the European social Catholicism and Christian democratic movements that informed the social vision of Vatican II; the Latin American engagement with Marxism and dependency theory that formed the context for liberation theology; and the individualistic US social and economic context that gave rise to thinkers as varied as John A. Ryan, Michael Novak, and M. T. Dávila. CST’s own vision of social and economic life is ultimately both *organicist*—viewing workers, markets, and civil society

as distinct yet interdependent parts of one body—and *communitarian*, prizing and seeking the goods of communities rather than those of individuals, and holding that the goods of individuals will be found in their participation in flourishing communities. Throughout, Shadle demonstrates how CST framers built a consistent organicist communitarian vision from a variety of secular and theological perspectives that might themselves be organicist, communitarian, both, or neither.

His carefully handled, meticulously researched histories of theological perspectives in their social and economic context allow Shadle to clear up common misconceptions about various theological approaches. For example, the “aggiornamento framework” of Vatican II, often characterized (by fans and foes) as a turn toward the political left, more accurately captures the organicist vision of Christian democratic political parties in Europe (90). Again, not only theological movements, but also the political and economic schools of thought that informed them are treated, requiring Shadle to cover a vast range of perspectives. He does so admirably, without overgeneralization, giving each viewpoint texture and a fair hearing.

Disparate interpretations of CST from liberationist, neoconservative, and progressive perspectives share one thing in common for Shadle. All are “theologies of continuity” that emphasize the shared values of Catholicism and modernity, leaving them less able to critique the ways modernity challenges CST's priorities (22). Rather than the unrealistic extremes of restructuring the global economy or attempting to withdraw from it completely, Shadle's theology of interruption proposes “‘breaking into’ the economy, adopting practices of solidarity that have the potential to transform the economy, while recognizing the limits of our control over economic institutions and structures” (4). The book concludes with a discussion of how Pope Francis’ contributions to Catholic Social Thought support this vision. Still, Shadle's case for the theology of interruption is most thoroughly worked out in his analysis of other approaches, and the monograph would have benefited from a more sustained presentation of his own vision. In particular, in his fair-minded evaluation of various perspectives on CST throughout the book, Shadle rightly discusses whether each perspective views CST as a tool for dialogue and shared action with non-Catholics or as a particular expression of the gospel best suited for use by the baptized. It seems to me that Shadle's theology of interruption, deeply rooted in theological understandings of incarnation and grace, adopts the latter view, implicitly rejecting the view of CST's potential in pluralistic contexts advanced by interpreters such as David Hollenbach and Meghan J. Clark. Shadle's dichotomy between theologies of continuity and interruption may require this, but I would have liked to see a more sustained discussion of the choice and its implications.

While its short, pithy chapters are eminently assignable, this book's price may unfortunately exclude it from classroom adoption in many cases. Still, it is an invaluable background resource for anyone who teaches Catholic Social Thought, liberation theology, or modern Catholicism, and justly deserves a place on instructors’ own bookshelves and in university libraries.