Tocqueville21 Book Forum

Soldiers of God in a Secular World: Catholic Theology and Twentieth-Century French Politics

Sarah Shortall

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Editor: Christopher Schaefer

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Introduction by Christopher Schaefer

Over the past two decades, increased scholarly attention to religion (and its counterpart, secularism) has generated a number of important works. The most important among them have fundamentally reconfigured our understanding of the relationship between the domains of religion and politics, ones that many scholars had assumed and/or expected to remain separate. When it comes to this problematic, France presents one of the most interesting national cases. The 1905 law that established *laïcité* is relatively unique. Other countries have passed similar laws that strictly delimit religion to the private sphere (for example, Mexico, Turkey, and Albania), but more often than not, these countries have drawn from the French example.

Not only has France's *laïcité* served as a political model for other countries, but developments in French Catholic thought—contemporaneous with *laïcité*—have been similarly influential on broader theological developments. Most notably, the movement we call the *nouvelle théologie*, a collection of erudite Dominicans and Jesuits working in the middle of the 20th century who advocated a "return to the sources" of the early Christian church in order to find resources to thoughtfully engage with the modern world. Notably, these thinkers were influential on the development of Catholic doctrine in the Second Vatican Council. All this is well known. However, the precise connection between the two concurrent phenomena of *laïcité* and the *nouvelle théologie* has not been the subject of an archivally-based historical study until now.

Sarah Shortall's *Soldiers of God in a Secular World* belongs among the handful of important histories of religious topics that allow us to more clearly grasp the complex relationship between politics and religion. Shortall, a historian at the University of Notre Dame, begins *Soldiers of God in a Secular World* by detailing the theological education of the thinkers behind the *nouvelle théologie*, much of which occurred in the context of exile because of *laïcité*. It then examines the wartime efforts and "spiritual resistance" of these Jesuits, and it ends by examining their disagreements, their condemnation by the Vatican, and ultimately their rehabilitation for the Second Vatican Council.

In this *Tocqueville21* book forum, four reviewers from diverse disciplines offer their perspectives on *Soldiers of God in a Secular World* and the questions it raises. All hail it as a crucial intervention in the history of religious and political thought, but each approaches the book from a different angle. They are unanimous in noting the significance of Shortall's work. She offers us a "fresh take on the significance" of the *nouvelle théologie* (Holman) that "corrects many persistent misunderstandings and simplifications of her fellow historians" (Milbank). Her work asks "the big questions about religion and secularity without getting drawn towards reductive answers or binary thinking" (Chappel). As a result, it ought to be praised, for Shortall is one of those rare historians who "do both theology and history" well (Moore).

Despite this praise for Shortall's contribution, each also presses her in different ways. James Chappel, a historian at Duke University, inquires about the absence of the sexual abuse crisis in Shortall's story. It is central to the history of the Catholic church during this time period, even if it is archivally absent. Mary Kate Holman of Benedictine University welcomes *Soldiers of God in a Secular World* as a much needed contribution regarding the "perennially fraught story of Catholic engagement with politics," and she notes the importance of intra-ecclesial politics (and not just theologians' engagement in extra-ecclesial politics). However, Holman inquires about the

personal relationships behind these theological developments. John Milbank, a theologian at the University of Nottingham, who appears towards the end of *Soldiers of God in a Secular World* as an interpreter of the *nouvelle théologie*, praises Shortall's history as "consistently impressive" and offers some clarifying remarks concerning his own theological movement, Radical Orthodoxy. Brenna Moore, a theologian at Fordham University, compliments Shortall on her ability to "elucidate the internal diversity within the movement" and focuses on the counter-politics of the *nouvelle théologie*, but she wonders what would happen if we were to examine more closely "the distinctively colonial flavor of De Lubac's theology." Finally, in a gracious, grateful, and substantial response, Shortall addresses each of these reviews at length.

Soldiers of God in a Secular World provides a clarifying account of an important part of the intellectual history of the 20th-century Catholic Church, and it opens the way to other important conversations. As questions related to religion and politics (and, yes, also counter-politics) are central to debates about liberalism and democracy in the 20th and 21st centuries, *Tocqueville 21* is proud to host this forum on Sarah Shortall's remarkable new book.

Christopher Schaefer *is a PhD student in History at the University of Cambridge and an editor at* Tocqueville 21.

Review by James Chappel (Duke University)

They Saved the Church, but at What Cost?

The centuries-long debate over religion and modernity seems, to me, to have reached something of an impasse. This was an arena of enormous controversy and intellectual creativity a decade or two ago, when Charles Taylor, Saba Mahmood, and others were helping readers hungry for new and better ways to understand the God-drenched world of the early twenty-first century. While exciting work continues to be done, I can't shake the sense that this terrain has been colonized by the likes of Patrick Deneen and Rod Dreher, who are more interested in crusading against liberal modernity than they are in understanding it, and understanding how it emerged (incompletely) from the religious verities of the past.

One of the many achievements of Sarah Shortall's *Soldiers of God in a Secular World* is to reinvigorate those debates, showing us how to ask the big questions about religion and secularity without getting drawn towards reductive answers or binary thinking. The big questions do, after all, still matter. There are many billions of religious people in the world, some of whom have outsize influence on global politics (American evangelicals are one example but not the only one). It still matters how religious belief gets articulated, and how religious practice interfaces with race, gender, and class. It matters, too, how we understand the recent past of religion: in this case, Catholicism, which remains one of the world's largest religions. For many historians, myself included, the twentieth century history of the Church is essentially a syllabus of errors. Many books portray a bestiary of illicit alliances, implicit condoning of racist violence, and wretched handling of the sex abuse crisis. Shortall does not, of course, deny these facts about the Church. She thinks, though, that there is another story to be told.

For all of the recent interest in the history of Catholicism, there has been surprisingly little attention paid to the cluster of intellectuals who star in Shortall's book: a group of Frenchmen, born around 1900, most of whom were Jesuits and who ended up founding the so-called *nouvelle théologie* (or "new theology"). The particular stars are Marie-Dominique Chenu, Gaston Fessard SJ, and Henri de Lubac SJ. It is not news that these figures mattered. Histories of the modern Church dutifully mention them as theological titans who inspired both the Catholic resistance to Nazism and the ecclesiastical innovations of Vatican II. They have never, though, been the subject of an archivally-rooted history that brings their story from the 1920s to the 1960s, asking how they related to the world that produced them, and how they shaped the one after them.

To explain why they have been historically neglected is to get at the core of Shortall's project. These figures and their allies, dozens of whom are briefly explored in the book, were reluctant to endorse specific political projects, or locate themselves in the grammar of secular life at all. They are thus a challenge to integrate into research projects that are, in the end, about secular life: about how the Church impacted the world. Shortall believes, and with justice, that her figures did impact the world, but they did so precisely through articulating a form of Catholic theology that would abjure worldliness in the name of a connection to the ancient spirit of the Church: the spirit that reigned before the many compromises that came in the wake of Constantine's conversion, when the vicars of Christ found itself aligned with the princes that Christ himself had been wary of.

Shortall's overall thesis is that the anticlericalism of the French republic ended up forcing Catholic thinkers there to renovate the entire theological apparatus of the Church—in the end, saving the Church from irrelevance. And she thinks, too, that this story has been overlooked because of the overwhelming scholarly desire to understand the Church's relationship with the world: with genocide, war, fascism, democracy, and so on. She doesn't deny that those stories matter, but she thinks that we are missing something important if we allow them to stand in for sensitive readings of theologians who were committed first and foremost to theorizing and reforming the Church as a vessel for salvation, not political reform. She tells the story in three parts. Part I is about the early decades of the twentieth century, when the French Jesuit order had to survive in exile (after being expelled in 1880). In her telling, that expulsion backfired, because it created intellectually vibrant centers of French Catholic life just across France's borders, in Belgium and on the island of Jersey. De Lubac and his peers were not interested in scheming for the return of the *ancien régime*; they were more interested in imagining what the Church might look like in the regime that actually existed.

They turned for intellectual sustenance to the Church Fathers—an orthodox move, of course, but one that was outside of a mainstream currently infatuated with St. Thomas Aquinas. In Shortall's telling, the neo-Thomist renaissance, even in the hands of such a master as Jacques Maritain, ended up reinstating the firm division between the natural and the supernatural that was central to secular politics. Indeed, this is what made Thomism so easily susceptible for co-optation into secular projects, whether those were reactionary or (in Maritain's case) progressive. The earlier sources allowed Shortall's protagonists to think more dynamically about the role of the Church in the modern world.

The specific insights of *nouvelle théologie* can be challenging to pin down, and even in Shortall's skilled hands it is sometimes difficult to parse what they are trying to say. In general, though, I think that their most crucial innovations involve the nature of the Church itself. They were suspicious of the grand Church of the Middle Ages, with Aquinas as its poet, and returned instead to the mercurial, fly-by-night Church of early Christianity. They did so not in order to claim that the institutional Church is irrelevant. They are still Catholics, after all. They do so, though, in order to claim that the Church is not a building, or a hierarchy, but a mystical communion between believers and God—one overseen, but not dominated, by a sacrament-dispensing institution that we call the Catholic Church.

Part II of the book covers the drama of World War II, and Shortall is to be commended for giving the war so much attention (in many trans-war studies, the war itself tends to disappear). It was only during the war that the explosive potential of *nouvelle théologie* became apparent. While most French Catholics fell into the arms of Marshal Pétain, the authoritarian ally of Hitler, de Lubac and his peers were steadfast in their belief that his regime, however much it trumpeted a religious renewal, was pagan to the core. Shortall's protagonists distinguished themselves with their bravery, publishing tens of thousands of illegal newsletters; at least one of them (Yves de Montcheuil) was executed.

The bravery of these men, and the transparent power of their ideas, rocketed *nouvelle théologie* into newfound prominence after the war, as chronicled in Part III of the book. In the immediate wake of the war, they were swept up into the most consequential debates in French intellectual

life. Gaston Fessard, especially, was concerned to bring the Church into dialogue with existentialism and Communism alike, although not in equal measure. He believed that existentialism, with its commitment to personal liberation, had a kernel of Christian truth, while the totalitarian and atheist dogma of Communism could only be anathema to the believing Catholic (this at a time when some prominent French Catholics, notably Emmanuel Mounier, were convinced that the spirit of history had galloped to the Soviet Union). All the same, these ideas were condemned by the Church in the 1950s, along with the most innovative experiments that they inspired (notably the worker-priests). As Shortall showed in Part I of the book, though, attempts to suppress Catholic ideas have a way of invigorating them. Her book concludes, triumphantly, with Vatican II, where de Lubac and others emerged as leading lights, whose influence and literal words can be found throughout the texts of the Council.

Shortall's book is a landmark in the intellectual history of the modern Church: a well-written, archivally rooted, and persuasive account of how *nouvelle théologie* emerged, and why, and how it shaped the modern Church. In the spirit of dialogue, though, I would like to raise a few questions. My questions are inspired by a report has recently emerged that details the enormity of the sex abuse crisis in the French Catholic Church. There is no doubt that the issue did not appear in the archives, and it is not surprising that it does not appear as an explicit theme in this book. Nonetheless, I think it is imperative for contemporary historians of the Church to think through how our work can cast light on the issue, which was apparently at its worst between the 40s and the 60s: just at the moment when Shortall's protagonists were finding ways to help the Church survive.

First: if we presume that the sex abuse crisis was the major historical fact about the Church in the latter half of the twentieth century, the creators of *nouvelle théologie* take on a less comforting role, insofar as they helped to rehabilitate the Church from the charges of clericalism and authoritarianism that were, in fact, well placed. This depiction does not emerge from the text because of the way that Shortall chooses to frame her story. Time and again, the foil for *nouvelle théologie* is neo-Thomism. And compared to neo-Thomists, with their addiction to systematizing and rationalist theology, the new theologians can only appear as creative, mercurial, and almost post-modern. Nonetheless, and however much they championed the laity, they ended up at the heart of the same Church—even, at story's end, reaching the apex of that Church, which was at that very moment condoning so much evil. What if the story were framed differently? What if, for instance, we presumed that the path of mysticism was the alternative? Simone Weil, for instance, does not appear in this book, even though she was concerned with many of the same questions; Teilhard de Chardin SJ does appear, but certainly as a bit player. If Weil, rather than Maritain, was the persistent foil to *nouvelle théologie*, I think we would arrive at a very different picture: a picture of a group of men who were, in the end, committed to the survival and expansion of a hierarchical, male-dominated Catholic Church.

Second: to understand the sex abuse crisis requires an understanding of the particular institutional culture of the Church, but also of its unique attitude to celibacy, sexuality, and gender. These themes are almost absent in Shortall's book. The contribution of women themselves to *nouvelle théologie* and to the Resistance is honored but not explored. It might be that her chosen heroes did not talk about gender or sexuality much, beyond the ritual invocation of

the male-female dyad as the model for a harmonious community. This explains, then, why the book would not talk about these themes much, as it hews relatively close to the archival record. And yet, from the vantage point of 2022, the absence of these questions is itself surprising, and bears reflection. How did Shortall's figures think about gender, sexuality, contraception, or priestly celibacy? Those issues were debated in the 1940s and 1950s. Did Shortall's figures take a stance on these issues? And if not, what does it say about them that their theological approach led them towards high-profile debates with Sartre, and away from the issues that from our vantage point were significantly more important?

These questions are not meant to distract from the enormity of Shortall's achievement. Her monograph is an exemplary work of intellectual history, and in fact the lacunae mentioned above are present in most intellectual histories of the Church, my own included. The issue is methodological—and even moral. How can we, as historians of the Church, find space for precisely the kinds of horrors that are erased from the archive? How can we tell a story that is attentive to the good the Church does, which is real, without denying the reality of the hundreds of thousands whose lives and psyches have been damaged? That is a question for the future, and one that I hope studies in Shortall's wake will begin to take up.

James Chappel *is the Gilhuly Family Associate Professor of History at Duke University. His first book,* Catholic Modern *(Harvard, 2018), provides an intellectual history of the transformation of the Catholic Church in the middle of the 20th century.*

Review by Mary Kate Holman (Benedictine University)

The Politics of Ecclesiology

On November 4, 2021 (just a few weeks before this review was written), Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez released a controversial pre-recorded speech for the Catholic and Public Life Congress in Madrid. While expressing sympathy at the murder of George Floyd, which he recognized as a reminder of the ongoing realities of "racial and economic inequality," Gomez took aim at so-called "woke" movements, suggesting that they offer an atheistic "rival 'salvation' narrative" against the authentic truths of Christianity. Despite the fact that Christians desire a more just society, the church, he argued, must "understand and engage" social justice movements as "dangerous substitutes for true religion."

Gomez's speech, coupled with the flurry of criticism that it provoked, is just the latest episode in the perennially fraught story of Catholic engagement with politics. The questions it raises have been asked and argued over since the onset of modernity: Is the salvation preached by the church primarily concerned with life after death, or ought it to transform the realities of this world? Is collaboration with any secular ideology a betrayal of Christian truth claims, even when Christians share common policy goals with these ideologies? In a pluralistic society, or one that prizes the separation of church and state, does the church have anything to say to the public sphere?

In *Soldiers of God in a Secular World,* Sarah Shortall explores these same questions from the perspective of the twentieth-century French theologians collectively known as the *nouveaux théologiens*. Caught between the virulent secularism of France's Third Republic and the paranoid anti-modernism of the Catholic magisterium, Jesuits including Henri de Lubac and Gaston Fessard and Dominicans like Marie-Dominique Chenu and Yves Congar forged a "new" way of doing theology. (While the *nouvelle théologie* moniker was originally coined by the movement's critics for whom newness was threatening and unorthodox, the name has endured.) They made recourse to historical sources of the Christian tradition—the patristics for the Jesuits, and Thomas Aquinas for the Dominicans—with an eye toward the pressing questions of their own tumultuous age.

Shortall tells the story of these thinkers in three parts. The first, "Separation (1880-1939)," deals with their theological education, which largely occurred in the context of exile, as French *laïcité* laws had closed all religious houses of studies, effectively banishing seminarians and their instructors. This distance from the political skirmishes of their homeland and the watchful gaze of Rome allowed for greater creativity in their theology. The second part, "Resistance (1940-1944)," chiefly focuses on the wartime efforts of the Jesuits, whose "spiritual resistance" to fascism ran counter to the collaborationist attitude of many French Catholics towards Vichy. The third part, "Renewal (1945-1965)," explores the *nouveaux théologiens'* postwar disagreement over engagement with the left, as well as the movement's condemnation by Rome and their subsequent rehabilitation at Vatican II.

This book recognizes that theological ideas are legitimate, and vital even, for scholars of history and politics. Shortall demonstrates how theology both shaped and expressed these thinkers'

political commitments, and even (especially) when they claimed to be above politics, their apolitical rhetoric itself could serve political ends. Shortall's explicit focus on the political dimension of the *nouveaux théologiens* offers a fresh take on the significance of this movement, far richer than the familiar narrative of their contributions to the Second Vatican Council.

Shortall particularly engages these thinkers' ecclesiologies, a sub-category of theology focused on the church's relationships to God and to the outside world. While on the surface, ecclesiology is "a domain presumed to be apolitical by definition," Shortall argues that for the *nouveaux théologiens,* it "constituted a 'counter-politics,' a form of critique that allowed theologians to intervene in political questions while rejecting the terms of secular politics" (52). Shortall analyzes astutely how competing ecclesiologies shape these thinkers' different frameworks for Christian political engagement.

While the political ramifications of the personalist philosophy of Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier has received much scholarly attention, Shortall argues that thinkers like de Lubac and Fessard were "personalists," too, but rather than centering their vision on individual human persons, they were chiefly concerned with the collective person of the Church, or, as they put it, "the Mystical Body of Christ." *Contra* the dangers of any totalitarian state that might annihilate the human person, these ecclesial personalists proposed a totalitarian church that celebrated the human person under the mantle of the person of Christ. While this vision bolstered resistance to fascism, Shortall demonstrates a pitfall of this way of thinking—it conflates the Catholic Church with the entirety of humanity. This theology was thus invoked to *defend* Jews from persecution by the Nazis, but, paradoxically, it did so by effacing the particularity of Judaism, implicitly valuing Jews because of their potential eschatological membership in the Mystical Body of Christ.

This Mystical Body ecclesiology gave way to an explicitly Eucharistic ecclesiology in de Lubac's *Corpus Mysticum* (1944). Shortall contends that while this move seems like a retreat from his political resistance to fascism, de Lubac's sacramental turn intentionally disrupted "the mobilization of theological concepts for secular political ends," emphasizing that the church was not a body among other political bodies, but an eschatological communion anchored by Christ's temporal presence in the Eucharist (141).

Post-war theologians also made recourse to the historical example of the early, pre-Constantinian church. The editors of the journal *Dieu vivant,* for example, argued in 1945 that since the time of Constantine, the church had settled too comfortably into political and social structures, and the time had now come to reclaim the eschatological vision of the early church, becoming a "thorn in the side of secular ideologies." Although Shortall does not mention this, Chenu could serve as an interesting interlocutor here. His 1961 article "The End of the Constantinian Era" similarly welcomes the demise of the Constantinian model and advocates for a return to the "missionary" roots of the early Church. Yet for Chenu this is not chiefly about critiquing ideologies, but instead transforming ecclesial and social structures to better proclaim the Gospel of good news to the poor, replacing "the myth of Constantine" with "the primitive poor community of Jerusalem."

These different ecclesiological models led these theologians to very different conclusions as to whether or not Catholics ought to engage with secular political movements. The language of "presence" and "engagement" was embraced by many Catholics who rushed to support the Vichy government. De Lubac, horrified by Catholic collaboration with authoritarianism, rejected outright the strategy of presence for any political movement, having seen the ways it could compromise the Gospel. Chenu, who was less involved and thus less traumatized by the World Wars, later advocated for presence and engagement with communists, having seen his theology come to life in his ministry with dechristianized laborers who belonged to communist unions in the industrial slums of Paris. For Chenu, collaboration with secular ideologies in pursuit of nuclear disarmament, for example, was a perfectly legitimate strategy for realizing the Gospel ideal of peace.

The peril and the promise that de Lubac and Chenu saw, respectively, in engaging with extra-ecclesial political movements provokes a deep challenge to political theology that will linger with me long after finishing Shortall's book. I wonder if the distinction that Gustavo Gutiérrez (who studied with both de Lubac and Chenu) makes between orthodoxy and orthopraxy, or right practice and right belief, might be helpful in thinking through what, if any, criteria Catholics ought to exercise in their discernment regarding engagement with political movements. De Lubac seems to emphasize the former (finding all ideologies wanting), and Chenu the latter (demonstrating a greater optimism about collaboration). I wonder if Gutiérrez's realization of a more radical theology in the Latin American context, explicitly formulated from the perspective of the oppressed, might offer a way forward.

While Shortall largely focuses on the impact of ecclesiology on extra-ecclesial politics, intra-ecclesial politics are an implicit dimension of this story as well. The *nouveaux théologiens* constantly were navigating sensitive political dynamics within the church, as much of their work came under suspicion, even censure, from the ecclesial hierarchy. The magisterial critique of these thinkers from the 1930s through the 1950s was in many ways politically motivated: their historical approach, it was believed, might relativize the eternal authority of the magisterium. Rome's tactics, too, at times mirrored those of secular political actors—what Chenu called the "police procedures" and "Gestapo behavior" of the movement's inquisitors (230). This further proves Shortall's main argument; even when their stated concerns were chiefly doctrinal, the apolitical rhetoric of ecclesial officials most certainly did political work.

While *Soldiers of God* fits squarely into the category of intellectual history, Shortall's approach lends texture and nuance to the genre by tracing not only the evolution of ideas, but the concrete intersections of these ideas with people's lives. She insists on the importance of relationships, particularly friendships, in the development of the *nouvelle théologie*. For example, archived letters between Henri de Lubac and Gaston Fessard, including an amusing caricature illustration of their professors, reveal how their mutual annoyance with arid, rigid seminary formation at the exiled Jesuit house of studies in Jersey shaped their later commitment to a robust sense of mystery in theological reflection. This shared frustration led them to create a "para-curriculum," and later a more established study circle, focused on foundational Christian texts of antiquity and the Middle Ages as well as modern philosophy. These youthful interpersonal exchanges prepared the soil for renewed ways of thinking to take root.

This emphasis on relationality is particularly strong in the book's first chapter, "Exile Catholicism," and I found myself looking for more of it as the chronology progressed. In her last chapter, Shortall presents the most compelling intellectual account of the methodological divergence between the *Concilium* and *Communio* schools in the wake of the Second Vatican Council that I have come across. She lays the groundwork for this analysis throughout the book, tracing the early formations and life experiences of their respective leaders that led to fundamental theological disagreements, even as they found themselves grouped together under the umbrella of "*nouvelle théologie*." This left me wondering about the human relationships behind the more explicit intellectual split of the postconciliar age. What was the role of those men's relationships with each other in that later moment when their very political and theological worldviews seemed to be at stake? I found myself asking how Shortall might analyze the correspondence between de Lubac and Chenu, for example, and the evolution of their (perhaps strained) friendship, as she did so presciently with the relationships among young Jesuits earlier in the book.

Overall, though, Shortall's use of archival sources presents readers with a treasure trove of important material. In a particularly compelling passage, she literally reads "between the lines" of the censor's pen to illustrate the subversive subtilties in Fessard's and de Lubac's writings during the Second World War, their contributions to the "spiritual resistance" against fascism before ultimately moving their publications underground in order to write more explicitly. In closely analyzing both the edited and unedited texts, Shortall reveals not only the Jesuits' theological and political commitments, but also the constraining effect of governmental and ecclesiastical censorship.

This book paves the way for future study in many areas, two of which I'll name here for my own discipline, theology. Contemporary Catholic theologians frequently make recourse to the foundations of the *nouvelle théologie*, and this book provides vital context for that continued work. Just as the *nouveaux théologiens* insisted on historical context in their use of the patristics and Thomas Aquinas, theologians today will benefit from Shortall's close historical analysis.

Perhaps more pressingly, Shortall's work sharply analyzes the theological foundations of political movements, an approach that could prove helpful for understanding our contemporary landscape. Catholics' priorities in the political sphere and their tactics in addressing them are divergent and, in many cases, polarized. Applying to the present moment Shortall's analysis of the ecclesiological foundations of political theology could illuminate how competing visions of church are shaping and being shaped by political issues as varied as climate change, abortion, migration, and religious freedom. Shortall has helped me realize that, while often reduced to papal soundbites, like Francis's "Church of the Poor" or Benedict's (perhaps apocryphal) "smaller, pure church," different understandings of the church's status, structures, and relationship to the divine hold immense political weight. What, for example, leads Archbishop Gomez to condemn engagement with secular movements to achieve justice-oriented political ends? It is his ecclesiology, but it is helpful to remember that his vision is merely one among many.

I am grateful to Sarah Shortall for this book, which has much to offer scholars of philosophy, history, and theology. She illuminates the political weight of transcendent ideas, and, in the

process, establishes the practical significance of intellectual history. This account serves as an excellent introduction for those unfamiliar with the *nouvelle théologie*, but it is a welcome contribution even for experts, richening our understanding of this important movement's political dimensions.

Mary Kate Holman *is Assistant Professor of Theologyat Benedictine University in the suburbs of Chicago. Her current book project focuses on the historically conscious, socially engaged theology of Marie-Dominique Chenu.*

Review by John Milbank (University of Nottingham)

The Politics of the Supernatural

There is a gathering consensus amongst modern historians that the secularity of recent history has been exaggerated. Not only is it the case that seemingly secular modes of thought are imbued with forgotten theological assumptions, it is also true that religious reflection has continued to shape modernity both positively and in terms of the reactions to which it has given rise. Within this reappraisal, a new awareness has arisen that, despite *laicité,* Catholic thought remains powerful in France to this day. It only appears marginal if one ignores an abundant amount of evidence: for example, the fact that Jean-Paul Sartre after 1945 was asserting an atheist existentialism against an existing and much more widespread Christian existentialism in France with pre-war roots.

A considerable amount of attention has now been given to the role of French neo-Thomism in shaping novel versions of Human Rights discourse and in crafting the global post-war settlement. Likewise, the role of Emmanuel Mounier, Alexandre Marc and others in developing a third-way politics of personalism, pluralism and federalism has been allowed greater due by secular historians.

However, in her new book, which is quite simply superb, Sarah Shortall both crucially expands this picture by attending to the politics of the *nouvelle théologie,* and, in the course of doing so, corrects many persistent misunderstandings and simplifications of her fellow historians. These focus upon a tendency to assume that the crucial political divisions of French Catholic thinkers of this period precisely correspond to the secular ones of left and right, and if they do not do so, then they must be trying to camouflage dubious right-wing stances.

By foregrounding the contribution of the *nouvelle théologie,* Shortall is able to show the political relevance of a seemingly esoteric debate within Catholic theology. Even the more innovative neo-Thomists, like Jacques Maritain, still ascribed to the early modern scholastic view that human beings have a distinct natural as well as a supernatural end. Although this view was often used to support a political *intégrisme,* requiring a distinctly secular state (whose norms might be openly positivistic) to be nonetheless ultimately subordinate to ecclesial and clerical supremacy, it was also used to uphold the legitimacy of more purely autonomous modes of secular politics. These might be of a right-wing, liberal, or left-wing kind.

By contrast, as Shortall demonstrates in detail, Henri De Lubac SJ and his *confrères* refused to endorse much Catholic involvement in any mode of secular politics, just because they held that all valid human action must be oriented to the beatific vision and the eschatological unification of humanity in Christ. Their ecclesiology *was* their political theory, and they insisted on the Church itself as the true fulfillment of a human society of mutual recognition, mercy, and justice. Yet this was qualified by a porous and mystical sense of the bounds of Church community focused more upon the eucharist than upon organization. In practice, this meant a politics of reciprocity and subsidiarity, distanced from the norms of state and market alike.

Shortall brings out the remarkable way in which this Jesuit counter-politics proved prescient: it enabled the Lyon group to rescue French Jews, to oppose Vichy, to resist the post-war adulation

of communism and no more to sanctify class than to sanctify race. Yet at the same time, it also enabled them to keep their distance from Maritain's endorsement of (only somewhat qualified) liberal human rights. They favored instead a politics of Christian virtue as proposing a true human fulfillment in differentiated unity for all. She rightly implies that, by comparison, the French Dominican branch of the 'new theology' (with Chenu and Congar) remained half-wedded to the *pura natura,* was conceptually confused and in consequence politically less critical, besides more inclined to embrace an implausible paradox whereby secularization was taken to be really evidence of divine grace in operation.

Throughout the work the level of evidence-gathering, analysis, synthesis, clarity and judgment is consistently impressive. There is little to fault. It is illuminating to read that Gaston Fessard SJ was perhaps the prime interlocutor of Alexandre Kojève, and that Jean Danièlou SJ took part in a significant debate with Georges Bataille in a private mansion at which none other than Vladimir Lossky was present. We are reminded that Paris is a small world and that all French intellectual life has tended to focus there: fostering a pluralism of dialogue across apparently disparate positions.

What is more, theologians, including myself, have much to learn from this work of history. Shortall is surely right to foreground the seeming strangeness of the *nouvelle théologie*'s combination of return to the Fathers and yet seemingly greater embrace of modern philosophy than was the case with the neo-Thomists, for all the latter's disguised modernity. She rightly focuses in this respect on concern with the human subject, and with history, which encouraged alliances with existentialism, phenomenology and French Spiritualism (after Maine de Biran), besides with Hegel in the albeit lone case of Fessard. And it is surely correct to suggest that the tensions in this combination are in part responsible for the tensions inherent in the project of Vatican II.

This has left theoretical work to be done. A clearer distinction needs to be made between the modes of historicity and subjectivism refused by the *nouvelle théologie'*s trajectory and those embraced by it. The allegorical and symbolic pre-modern history revived by de Lubac is clearly compatible with an existential and messianic sense of time as composed of moments which transcend linearity but may imply more criticism of the limits of the purviews of the Biblical Critic and 'detached' historian upon what constitutes real history than was always made apparent.

As to the human subject, the Kantian mode of finite subjectivism that is closed against both the knowledge of nature in itself and of God was surely not endorsed. And in this respect, I would suggest that, after Blondel, the *nouvelle théologie*'s sense of subjective action involved rather more positive, albeit mysterious, anticipations of God than the merely negative and transcendentalist gestures of aspiring refusal sometimes invoked by Shortall.

Instead of Kantian (and even purely Phenomenological) subjectivism, the modern subjectivism that *was* entertained—variously that of Cusa, Pico, Pascal, Biran, Ravaisson, Kierkegaard and Bergson, and even of Descartes and Malebranche—is instead one that opens into a measure of intuitive insight into, and unity with nature and the divine, besides into the depths of the self. In other words, a subjectivism that can be deemed to be in ultimate continuity with Socrates, Plato and Augustine (if the latter is not misread) as Shortall herself indicates, invoking Mounier.

In another respect also, de Lubac and others left a tension in their wake, which Shortall amply identifies and analyzes. Despite the Blondelian element of positive anticipation, in the case of their politics the Jesuit stress upon eschatological reserve as opposed to 'incarnation' became ever greater. And yet their Jesuit 'counter-politics' was supposed to take concrete social forms. It is significant that the personalists and the followers of Marc's *Ordre Nouveau,* rather more endeavored to articulate and practice these forms, yet at the same time much more fell prey to political capture by forces of both left and right and sometimes in near-succession, as in the cases of Mounier and François Perroux.

This indicates a real dilemma for a Catholic politics of the single supernatural end: how to sustain a non-worldly politics and yet retain some sort of 'incarnational' impact if the social dimension of eschatological witness is to be real.

Shortall correctly says that Gustavo Gutierrez, William Cavanaugh and myself have all sought to address this question and to add rather more incarnational anticipation to the eschatological suspension. She also notes Gutierrez's attempt to fuse the Dominican and Jesuit positions and yet his ultimate succumbing to the former's compromised dilution of the *nouvelle théologie,* favoring an uncritical adulation of the secular.

She rightly contrasts this with Radical Orthodoxy's continuity with the more stringent Jesuit view, although I would want to insist that RO fully sustains the latter's sense of a broadly-defined Church (it is, indeed, an ecumenically-situated movement) besides the witness and insight of other religions and intellectual traditions. If RO takes this as being witness to Christ as well as to God, then that is only because we think (exactly like de Lubac) that that follows from the credal affirmation that Christ is fully God. A seemingly shocking particularism here is linked to a strong universalism which believes that all of humanity, and indeed through humans all of the cosmos, will be eventually united with God, who eternally assumes also a human form—and therefore already is so, from all eternity and from an eternal perspective.

If I have ever come across as narrower than that, then I must take the blame for putting things badly. I have only ever intended to excoriate discourses that are self-defined as closed-off within a circle of pure nature. This cannot be taken to be by any means true of all the secular sciences and humanities, nor even to mean that discourses so narrowly circumscribed are in terms of their actual practice prevented from implicitly breaking those bounds.

If anything, Radical Orthodoxy seeks to make more explicit the tendency of the *nouvelle théologie* towards an asserted (and not merely hopeful) doctrine of universal salvation and towards a kind of 'Christological monism' embracing both God and the Creation as the final and eternal reality of being. It is not the least merit of Sarah Shortall's book that she brings the latter dimension to the fore—one with roots in Augustine and Malebranche, besides the Greek Fathers, and much secretly promoted, as she describes, by Teilhard de Chardin SJ during his long period of banishment.

As a whole, her book has most admirably succeeded in recasting an entire important chapter of twentieth century intellectual and political history. It should now be clear for all to see that Henri

de Lubac was just as much one of its masters and shapers as many far more well-known secular figures.

John Milbank *is Professor Emeritus of Religion, Politics and Ethics at the University of Nottingham. He is the author of several books, including* Theology and Social Theory*, a co-founder of Radical Orthodoxy and co-author with Adrian Pabst of* The Politics of Virtue.

Review by Brenna Moore (Fordham University)

Theological Malleability and the Counterpolitical

The renowned scholar of early American religion, David D. Hall, used to tell his graduate students that if they wanted to write an interesting religious history, they had to pay close attention to theology. But, as it turns out, theology can be very easy to miss. A book about the religious past can readily be told as a narrative of priests and pastors, schisms and wars, but to truly access theological worldviews, we must tap into inner sensibilities and spiritualities. Such analysis is richer, deeper and more intimate, but it is also surprisingly hard for a historian, even one with a strong background in religious history. We may begin a historical project with our eye on a crucial theological idea that runs through it, but, almost inevitably, it dissolves into the social and political forces that we have been trained to see as the *real* movers and shakers of this world. If we *do* manage to stay attentive to theology, it can also be hard to press against the habitual understanding of it as a lofty, unified theory hovering on high, instead of as something that people take up in their hands and transform over time.

Sarah Shortall's new book, *Soldiers for God in a Secular World*, is a stunning achievement, precisely because it rises to this daunting challenge inherent in writing religious history. She offers a history of what is known as the *nouvelle théologie*, a theological movement developed in interwar France by Jesuit and Dominican priests that expanded the Church's political repertoire beyond far-right conservativism and made major interventions in twentieth-century debates about fascism, human rights, democracy and communism. Although it eventually laid the groundwork for the Second Vatican Council, it also had a lasting impact in spheres well beyond the Roman Catholic Church. Shortall's book adds so much to the story that had been missing in standard accounts of this period in Catholic thought. It also gave me a completely fresh way of thinking about the political power of theological language, especially those that claim to explicitly disavow politics. I will say more about what makes her analysis so pathbreaking, and I also want to raise a topic that struck me as only implicit in her analysis, something I have come to see as increasingly central to the debates within twentieth-century Catholic theology.

For those familiar with Catholic thought, names like Henri de Lubac, Jacques Maritain, and M.D. Chenu seem inevitably to go together, as part of a package of twentieth-century theological innovation, all of them equally hard to pin down politically. One of Shortall's great contributions is to elucidate the internal diversity within the movement, the fissures and even dramatic infighting, as well as how they developed over time. Yet her point is not to merely show the complexity within something we otherwise have imagined as a unified whole. It is to make sense of something that scholars have never yet been able to adequately explain: why did the *nouveaux théologiens*, and especially the Jesuits—those rare Catholic resistors to Nazism—go on to become so critical of progressive Catholicism in the postwar period?

For instance, in chapters 3 and 4, Shortall unravels a mass of documentary evidence to show how Jesuits Henri de Lubac, Gaston Fessard, Pierre Chaillet, and Yves Moreau de Montcheuil defied orders of their religious superiors to resist Nazi authorities (Montcheuil was executed by the Nazis on August 11, 1944). Chaillet and Fessard helped found the underground journal *Témoignage Chrétien*, where they published essays urging resistance in Christian theological terms.

The Catholic Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops had ordered compliance with Vichy and dismissed *Témoignage Chrétien* as the work of "guerrillas more or less in revolt against the authority of the Church" (111). Driven underground, the journal grew as the sole wartime theological rejoinder to ecclesiastical authorities who framed obedience to Vichy as a spiritual duty. Chaillet and Montcheuil also played leading roles in clandestine rescue operations. Along with a young woman Germaine Ribière, they made false papers for deportees and helped smuggle people into hiding in Catholic convents and schools. In contrast to this small number of resisters, Shortall shows how massive blocs of Catholic laity and leadership (even those considered center or leftist, like Catholic Action) were much more accommodating to Vichy than is generally believed. It was more than mere silence or passive acquiescence. Given this larger context which she describes in detail, the actions of the Jesuits become even more remarkable. The texture of Shortall's narrative in these chapters was incredible to read, most of it appearing in English for the first time.

But the heartbeat of Shortall's analysis is the theology. It raced through this world like an electrical current. As these Jesuits understood it, their resistance was spiritual, not political. The mistake most Catholics made, they claimed, was in finding spiritual "presence" in the Vichy state, accommodating themselves to it, and aiming to orient a human institution towards Catholic goals. The Jesuits asserted that that God rather than any human institution is the ultimate *telos* of human existence, that the thirst for the Absolute can only be met by the Absolute, not any political plan or party. The Church, they insisted, is "in the world but not of it" (114). They constructed a theological edifice out of this assertion, first with the mystical body theology, understood through eschatological notions of time, then increasingly with the Eucharist, and later with theological interpretations of humanism. They saw their theology as an *alternative* to the political, rather than a theological *interpretation* of politics. They claimed to be intervening in politics not to affirm *anything* but only as a voice of negative critique. Yet, as Shortall shows, it was "paradoxically by remaining detached from politics proper and bearing witness to its eternal mission that the Church could engage most effectively in temporal affairs" (107). This helped Jesuit resisters evade the censors and insist that they were acting as priests proper. Their resounding *no* to the demands of the state was a refusal that had deep political implications. They disavowed politics at least rhetorically, but their work cannot be classified as apolitical either. It was neither political *nor* apolitical. Shortall refers to it instead as "counter political" (89).

Shortall claims that it was after the defeat of Nazism that the theological drama really intensified. In the postwar period, Catholics who had been involved in resistance began to segue into other progressive experiments. But, as she explains, the Jesuit "spiritual not political" framing meant that the Jesuits were skeptical about *any* theology that aligned with politics, on the right or the left. She tracks early ideological splits between the Jesuit "counter political" approach and those of the Dominicans, like M.D. Chenu and Yves Congar, or philosophers like Jacques Maritain, who affirmed projects like the worker priests, human rights, and ecumenism. Henri de Lubac, in particular, had a much darker, pessimistic take on liberal experiments than they did. The chasms between these theological approaches to politics widened throughout the 1950s and into the Vatican II period. By 1972, de Lubac split from the major Catholic theological *Concililium* and founded a rival journal called *Communio* along with Joseph Ratziner and others similarly skeptical about aligning theology with leftist politics. In de Lubac's formal letter, he refers to *Concilium* as "a propaganda tool in the service of an extremist school." As Shortall eventually explains, the

Jesuits' pessimistic take on liberal politics aligned them rather unexpectedly with an eclectic set of thinkers in the next generation. This includes thinkers like John Milbank, but also critical theorists working in Foucauldian vein like Talal Asad. Shortall connects all of these dots with remarkable analytic acumen and clarity.

But there is one thing I'd like to hear more about. There are places where Shortall seems to take at face value the statements of de Lubac and Fessard—that they *could not* affirm politics, that they *had* to be critics only, that the memory of Vichy was always so close at hand. The left was too cozy with secular politics, always at risk of being duped again. Admittedly, she does a brilliant job in the epilogue unpacking how liberation theologians like Gutierrez break apart this logic, showing how de Lubac's refusal to affirm any transformative political experiments simply sanctifies the status quo. But I wonder if there might be more to say.

Shortall's analysis reminded me that in reading Henri de Lubac's resistance writing, one of the features that that always strikes me is how committed he was to a truly and thoroughly colonial understanding of the French Catholic Church. It does not surface as merely incidental, like a residue of an earlier area, but it almost seems as it was the hot, active center of his theology, including his resistance writing. For example, in his essay, "Christian Explanation of our Times," (published clandestinely in 1942), de Lubac writes: "The vocation of France is a Christian vocation. Called from its cradle to Christianity and long formed by it, France," he explains, "carries its children either to spread this Christianity around them or to propagate in the world the great human values that we owe to Christianity" (447). He cites admiringly an early medieval pontifical tractate that read: "France is the oven in which the spiritual bread for the entire world was baked." "Authentic French nationalism," he writes, is "a universalism" that has given the world French literature, language, philosophy that "sprang from Christian universalism" (449). De Lubac sees the Church as global teacher and mother, whose pedagogy was enacted at first violently through the crusades, but became "purified" through the missions, then, at last, recast as that of teacher of universal values. His writing on resistance reads Nazism as a German Protestant and secular violence enacted on French Christianity itself—its universal values and the "treasures" that lie at the foundation of its heritage (Judaism).

I say this not to emphasize some secret hegemony lurking within an otherwise emancipatory theology. (Scholars like Olivier Wieviorka and Shortall herself are well aware that those who resisted did so for a whole range of reasons, most of which had little to do with the protection of Jewish people or combatting antisemitism.) And Shortall touches brilliantly on some of these elements of Henri de Lubac's resistance writing, i.e., the supersessionist understanding of Judaism and his understanding of the Church was *the* ultimate, all-encompassing framework for human life, a "good" totalitarianism as opposed to the "bad" of the authoritarian state (80).

But I wonder what difference it would make in our understanding of this religious world if we thought about the distinctively colonial flavor of de Lubac's resistance theology. It might help us illuminate the fissures Shortall describes in the book's final chapters and better identify the persistence of this theological imagination today. Would a greater attention to the colonialism inherent in de Lubac's project make a difference to the story that Shortall tells? And if so how?

I think the pronounced commitment to a colonial French Church as the ground of universalism is one of the key differences between Henri de Lubac and the many theologians he split with in the postwar period. Shortall rightly claims that Dominicans like Chenu really saw that "grace was present" elsewhere in the world, outside the recognizable confines of the Church. I wonder if we might want to linger over this a bit more. This was a *massive* paradigm shift—shocking and new—for so many Catholic thinkers of this period, and, of course, it is where de Lubac never goes. Chenu and other Dominicans sensed stirrings of the gospel in the experiences of communist workers in the industrial slums of France. Chenu and fellow Dominicans like Georges Anawati also set in motion a totally new way for Catholics to contend with religious difference, in their case, to see Islam as containing glimmers of theological truths. De Lubac's colleague Marie Magdeleine Davy knew that so much sin and antisemitism was *inside* the Church, one of the rare theologians to acknowledge as much. De Lubac's student, the young Jesuit Michel de Certeau, sensed spiritual truth even in critiques of the Church in the student rebellions of 1968. Young students like Gustavo Gutierrez who studied in Paris (and drew inspiration from de Lubac) came to the theological table from places like Peru, not as seekers of colonial charity or education, but as intellectuals in their own right, full of theological vitality and creativity, preparing to make their own interventions. This Catholic sense of theological truth and beauty outside the Church was all so new: theologians began to see the European Catholic Church no longer as the primary mother and teacher of the world, but as one possible, imperfect embodiment of the gospel, whose history is full of beauty as well as darkness and sin (Congar was the most cogent on that last point). They sensed that outside the Church was a vast complex world where stirrings of the gospel could be sensed in utterly surprising and unexpected places. De Lubac parted ways with all of these people.

Soldiers for God in a Secular World opens with a fabulous image. Shortall depicts a scene from the early 1920s, when a group of young French Jesuits in training were cast out from France into a tiny little island called Jersey, located just off the coast of England. As a result of one of the many French anticlerical laws, these young priests in formation had been exiled from their home country. The young men found themselves in totally new surroundings, a completely new world far from the traditional seminaries of Paris. In their schooling, the regular old "theology' they were handed by their teachers started to come into focus in new ways. They picked up on theological themes in Christian texts, like the prominence of mystery and interiority, that had been there all along but which had escaped them in France. These students of theology discovered new sorts of writings that had been understudied or overlooked, like those of the Church Fathers, and they began to crave more like it. When they finally returned back to France after their training on this little island, these exiled young priests became the most incredibly creative theologians Europe had seen in a very long time. They changed everything. When most Catholic leaders urged obedience to Nazism a decade and a half later, they were among the very few to resist.

But after WWII, these same priests must have felt cast out at sea yet again, when suddenly, for the first time, it was not just French seminarians and clergy talking theology, but now people from Latin America, Jews and Muslims, communists, women, and even secular students all at the table together. Some priests embraced this opening wholeheartedly. But many did not. One cannot help but wonder if some of them, later in life, longed more and more for theology to feel

like it did in those earlier days when they were hiding out on that little island huddled together over ancient texts. *Soldiers for God in a Secular World* gave me such a deeper, richer understanding of why the theological trajectory of these priests turned out the way it did and provided a portal into the political risks they took, the lines they drew, and the theological imagination that animated it all.

In the academic field, it is rare for scholars to do both theology and history. Theology has a certain strangeness in it, and its textual reach is so long chronologically. History, of course, presents its own fair share of complexities and difficulties. *Soldiers for God in a Secular World* provides an extraordinary synthesis of a topic that raises the exacting challenges of both disciplines. I cannot think of a better guide into the political and religious worlds of the *nouvelle théologie*. *Soldiers for God in a Secular World* is a remarkable accomplishment.

Brenna Moore *is Professor of Theology at Fordham Universityin New York, and the author, most recently of* Kindred Spirits: Friendship and Resistance at the Edges of Modern Catholicism *(University of Chicago Press, 2021).*

Reply by Sarah Shortall (University of Notre Dame)

I am profoundly grateful to James Chappel, Mary Kate Holman, John Milbank, and Brenna Moore for these very generous reviews. It is a rare privilege to receive reviews that engage so carefully and deeply with one's work. All four reviewers have clearly understood what I set out to achieve in the book and have represented its arguments faithfully. All four are fulsome in their praise while also offering judicious, fair, and thoughtful critiques that have forced me to think further about the book's arguments and their implications. I'm particularly pleased that this forum includes a range of disciplinary perspectives, which reflects the diversity of the book's intended audience. It is a true privilege to have the opportunity to discuss my book with such an eminent group of scholars, whose own work I so deeply admire, and I am extremely thankful to them for taking the time to read and review the book so carefully.

James Chappel raises a number of crucial points in his review—a testament to his own pioneering work on the history of Catholicism. He is absolutely right to raise the challenge of the sexual abuse crisis, which is without a doubt the darkest stain upon the recent history of the Church, and an issue to which historians have not paid nearly enough attention. As he suggests, a major problem that historians (including myself) encounter in the effort to incorporate sexual abuse into broader histories of the Church are the silences in the archival record. I found no mention or hint about it in my own archival work, which is why I do not include it in the book. But Chappel is right that this poses a critical methodological challenge to historians who think (rightly) that the history of the Church must grapple with the scandal of sexual abuse despite these archival omissions. Thankfully, there is much excellent work being done at the moment to correct this oversight by such eminent historians as Robert Orsi and my colleagues Kathleen Sprows Cummings and John McGreevy, to name only a few. Such work often requires scholars to look beyond conventional archival sources or to establish new archives by gathering oral testimony from victims and witnesses. Fortunately, the many recent state commissions and reports on sexual abuse in the Church—including the French one that Chappel mentions—have generated a wealth of new evidence for historians to draw on. I think we will begin to see the effects of this work in coming years, and it promises to reshape our understanding of the history of Catholicism in crucial ways. It will also be interesting to see whether the recently opened Vatican archives for the period of Pius XII's papacy (1939-1958) might yield any insights. But as Chappel implies, grappling with this history also requires us to think critically about the kinds of structures and ideas within the Church that may have created a conducive environment for abuse and its concealment. This includes an excessive emphasis on hierarchy, clericalism, and top-down authority, of which my actors were very critical, but it also includes many other structures which they did not question or challenge.

One example of such ideas would be Catholic discourses on gender and sexuality, and Chappel is probably right that my book does not do justice to these issues. As he surmises, that is in part because questions of marriage, sexuality, reproduction, and family life were not central concerns of the figures at the center of my story. Instead, they were consumed by the problems of secularization, totalitarianism, and the place of the Church in the modern world. While I do endeavor to show how ideas about the complementarity of the sexes were central to their personalist vision of social and political life, as well as probing the particular discourse of

masculinity that informed the "spiritual resistance" to fascism, the book's insufficient attention to questions of gender and sexuality tends to reflect the silences of my actors on these questions. And yet, it strikes me that these silences are in themselves significant. Questions of reproduction and sexuality have become central to the political mobilization of Catholics around the world in recent years, and one might assume that it has always been so. To be sure, such questions were hotly debated by Catholic laypeople and theologians in the 1940s, just as they are today, but the fact that they were not a central priority for many of the leading theologians of the day is a testament to how much has changed since the mid-twentieth century. It is a powerful reminder of the contingency of our own moment. In this sense, even though my actors might not have written extensively about gender and sexuality, their silences are in themselves instructive.

Mary Kate Holman beautifully excavates the ecclesiology of the *nouvelle théologie* and its political implications, which is a key theme of the book, and persuasively shows how such an analysis might be applied to the contemporary moment. I entirely agree with her distillation of the central political question facing twentieth-century Catholics: how to balance the other-worldly orientation of the Catholic salvation narrative with the this-worldly demands of a faith anchored in the mystery of the Incarnation, or as John Milbank puts it in his review, "how to sustain a non-worldly politics and yet retain some sort of 'incarnational' impact if the social dimension of eschatological witness is to be real." This was indeed the central predicament that my actors were grappling with and one that I think all Christian politics faces. There is, I suspect, an irreducible tension between these imperatives, but one that is also productive of new theologico-political configurations. And indeed, it may be a salutary tension, especially in an age of resurgent Christian nationalism when many Christians all too readily conflate the demands of their faith with those of a particular party, race, or nation.

Holman raises the distinction between orthodoxy and orthopraxy as a useful way to think about the differences between the approaches represented by Henri de Lubac and Marie-Dominique Chenu. And indeed, a key difference between these two models concerns the relationship between theory and practice, and whether it is possible to separate the theoretical or metaphysical underpinnings of a political movement from its practical aims. This question was as central to Catholic debates over the far-right Action Française in the 1920s as it was to debates over communism in the 1930s and 1940s, and I agree that it gets to the heart of the differences between de Lubac's circle and Dominicans like Chenu. I also appreciate Holman's desire for more attention to the role of personal relationships in the discussion of Vatican II and the post-conciliar moment. Unfortunately, the demands of a strict word limit prevented me from going into more detail here, but I'm confident that works such as Holman's forthcoming book will make up for this shortcoming and flesh out our understanding of these sorts of personal relationships, as indeed, Brenna Moore's recent book does beautifully.

I am very grateful to John Milbank for clarifying his vision of the Church and universal salvation, which I hope I have not misrepresented in the book, and for pushing me to sharpen the precise account of historical time and the human subject articulated by the Jesuit theologians at the heart of my study. Milbank is absolutely correct to insist on the importance of distinguishing their view of the human subject from Kantian subjectivism, and he is no doubt also right to suggest that I may overemphasize the negative, anti-foundational dimension of their anthropology—their

emphasis on the desire or lack at the heart of the human subject. I do so in order to foreground their affinity with contemporary existentialism and phenomenology. But it is equally important to stress that this negative aspect of their anthropology was always transfigured by a positive anticipation of the divine, and indeed, for these Jesuits, this negativity was the very sign of the supernatural calling at the heart of human nature. Negation and positive anticipation were bound up together for these figures, in other words, as they weaved the anti-foundationalism of contemporary secular philosophy with a more positive vision inherited from the Church Fathers and from Teilhard de Chardin. This is what makes these figures fit uneasily, I argue, into the humanism/anti-humanism distinction that intellectual historians often use to make sense of French thought in this period.

I also entirely agree with Milbank's suggestion that the Jesuits' vision of history implied a critique of both biblical criticism and the historicism embraced by historians. I try to bring out this latter point in Chapter 6, by suggesting some parallels between their approach and more recent critiques of conventional historical writing by historians associated with the "linguistic turn," some of whom drew on the work of de Lubac's discipline Michel de Certeau. And yet, theologians like de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, and Henri Bouillard also made frequent use of the tools of historical analysis in their own work, in an effort to historicize theology and show how it had departed over the centuries from the formulations of the Church Fathers or Thomas Aquinas. In other words, their relationship to historicism was ambivalent. They stressed the importance of reading theology in its historical context but also clearly believed that it could not be reduced to this context. What explains this ambivalence, I think, is their distinctive vision of historical time, perhaps best expressed by Daniélou in *The Lord of History* (1953). "On the one hand," he explained, "Christianity falls within history. It emerged at a given point in the sequence of historical eventuation … But on the other hand, history falls within Christianity: all secular history is included in sacred history, as a part, a prolegomenon, a preparatory introduction." This double temporality explains why these theologians could view the tools of historical analysis as appropriate and useful for illuminating the history of theology and the Church but ultimately incapable of making sense of the history of salvation.

I am particularly grateful to Brenna Moore for her thoughtful reflections because her work has had such a profound impact on my own. She is absolutely correct to emphasize the limitations of de Lubac's approach and I have tried to bring out these limitations in the book as well by stressing how far his vision departed from many of the basic assumptions of a liberal, pluralist worldview that many of us take for granted. But her reflections offer me a useful opportunity to clarify my own commitments and methodological approach. As a historian, my goal in the book is neither to defend nor to criticize the actors I study, nor do I wish to suggest that any of the particular models I outline in the book is superior. That I devote more space to de Lubac's approach than Chenu's, for instance, is a function of the depth of my archival source base rather than my own sympathies. My primary goal in the book has been to reconstruct what these actors thought they were doing, while also pointing out some of the implications of their work that they themselves might not have readily admitted. But it is ultimately up to the reader to decide what to make of these ideas. Indeed, what initially drew me to the circle of priests around Henri de Lubac was precisely the ambiguities in their work. In some ways it was remarkably progressive for its time, and in some ways it was deeply illiberal. I try to hold open that space of ambiguity as

much as possible in the book because it seems crucial to gaining a fuller understanding of the historical moment.

In the case of Henri de Lubac in particular, because he was profoundly critical of many of the tendencies that emerged from the Second Vatican Council, he has gained something of a reputation as a conservative theologian and there is a tendency to read his entire work through the lens of his post-1960s stance. But the de Lubac of the 1970s was not the de Lubac of the 1930s. In the book, I try to show how much his thought changed over the course of his life and why it is so difficult to classify as either progressive or conservative. While I therefore entirely agree with Moore's emphasis on the limitations of de Lubac's approach, I'm not sure I would necessarily describe his position as "colonialist." It was unquestionably ecclesiocentric and often illiberal, as I emphasize throughout the book. Implicitly, it seemed to collapse the distinction between the Church (conceived in a universal, eschatological sense) and humanity more broadly, with the result that it tended to ascribe value to that which lay outside the Church only in terms of its relationship to Christianity. As I point out, this tendency was particularly pronounced in de Lubac's writing on Judaism. But I'm not sure "colonialist" is quite the right term to describe this. In contrast to a great many French Catholics at the time, I found little evidence in de Lubac's writing of a particular sympathy or support for French colonialism. Indeed, he was sharply critical of Eurocentrism and the tendency among missionaries to identify Catholicism with European civilization. Writing in the 1930s about European colonial expansion in the previous century, he complained in *Catholicism* that it was "a century of barbarous blindness; and never more than at that time was there current among us 'that common prejudice that the sun illuminates the West with its full strength and lets fall on the rest of the world only the reflection of its rays.'" Such views must not infect the Church, he insisted, which could never be identified with any one culture, for "all races, all centuries, all centers of culture have something to contribute to the proper use of the divine treasure which she holds in trust."

I point this out not to defend de Lubac or to suggest that he was in any way "progressive" on this issue, by any means, but rather to indicate why his work is so difficult to classify politically. Views such as those outlined above are of course very far from the kind of religious pluralism that most of us would embrace today and they certainly did not embrace the explicit anticolonialism of Chenu or others like him. But they were also very far from the mainstream conservatism of French Catholics in the 1930s, most of whom saw little difference between spreading Catholicism overseas and advancing French or European civilization. It seems crucial to maintain these distinctions if we are to fully appreciate the internal diversity and political ambiguities of mid-century Catholic thought. Since Vatican II and the post-conciliar divisions that emerged in its wake, it has become common to categorize Catholic theologians and intellectuals as either progressives or conservatives, but it is crucial not to retroactively read these categories back onto the pre-conciliar moment. And perhaps the best proof of the way de Lubac's work fits uneasily into such categories is that both "progressive" and "conservative" Catholics claim him as an intellectual forerunner. He is a favorite of both Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis; both Avery Dulles and Gustavo Gutiérrez. To downplay the ambiguities in his thought is, I think, to risk losing sight of something significant about not just his own work but the complex relationship between religious thought and secular political categories more broadly.

The very different interpretations offered in this forum by Moore and Milbank are, I hope, evidence of the value of the approach I've taken and the diversity of conclusions that readers can draw from the book. I am extraordinarily thankful to them and to Chappel and Holman for this opportunity to think with them and to sharpen my thinking in response to their thoughtful and judicious critiques. Few authors could hope for a more careful reading of their work by four scholars with such deep knowledge of the field. I am deeply grateful to them for the time and thought they have put into reading and engaging with my work.

Sarah Shortall *is Assistant Professor of History atthe University of Notre Dame. In addition to authoring* Soldiers of God in a Secular World: Catholic Theology and Twentieth-Century French Politics *(Harvard University Press, 2021), she is also the co-editor of* Christianity and Human Rights Reconsidered *(Cambridge University Press, 2020).*