

knowledge of cultures is done through ritualized behaviors followed by stories as to what do they mean. Part eight extends the study into several specific directions that help us prepare and digest the overall relevance of drawing connections between food preparation and ritual practices that transmit cultural knowledge and collective memories.

The monograph is written for experts and those familiar with the archival materials covered, which makes it difficult for nonspecialists to understand. However, because the monograph is in dialogue with the literature on history and methodology of the study of religion, it presents even a casual academic reader with an opportunity to see the scaffolding behind theoretical approaches through examples from participatory observation and a lively engaging discourse that gives rise to deep insights into how cultural transmission takes place and the role that religious behaviors have in that process.

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*God, Human, Animal, Machine: Technology, Metaphor, and the Search for Meaning.* By Meghan O’Gieblyn. New York: Doubleday. 2021. 304 pages. \$28.00. (Hardcover). \$18.00. (Paperback).

*God, Human, Animal, Machine: Technology, Metaphor, and the Search for Meaning* by Meghan O’Gieblyn is not just a scholarly exploration; it is akin to an intimate conversation with a close friend, discussing profound intricacies of our existence. Through its chapters, O’Gieblyn weaves an intriguing narrative that spans theology, technology, and existentialism, captivating readers with her deeply personal and conversational tone.

The text sets the stage with “The Soul of the Machine,” dissecting the metaphorical interpretations of the soul and its historical significance. As the narrative unfolds, a pivotal revelation emerges: even as machines grow to emulate human functions, the intrinsic human quest for meaning remains undeterred. This quest, increasingly, gets concealed beneath layers of technological excellence, consumerism, and the comforts of the modern age.

“God of Technology” resonates deeply, emphasizing the alarming propensity to view technology as a new-age deity. But, much like historical religious narratives that often anthropomorphized God, modernity risks making the same error with technology. Instead of a deity, we now have machines and algorithms as answers to our existential queries. Yet, these too mirror our limitations and paradoxes, indicating that our age-old yearnings merely find new forms of expression.

The parallels O’Gieblyn draws between contemporary scientific principles and their theological roots are both enlightening and provocative. The danger, she cautions, lies in conflating metaphors with reality, leading to potential fanaticism and discord. While religions have borne the brunt of such criticisms, O’Gieblyn unearths how contemporary scientism and digital age ideologies tread a similar path, often blurring the distinction between metaphor and reality.

O’Gieblyn’s book is reflective, urging readers to discern the religious, philosophical, and psychological needs often camouflaged by the habits of the digital age. By the culmination in “The End of Meaning,” there is an acknowledgment of the void that unchecked technological progression could exacerbate.

In “God, Human, Animal, Machine,” Meghan O’Gieblyn achieves a commendable feat—marrying the past with the present, spirituality with machinery, and questions with introspections. Although some parallels might be contestable, the book’s core narrative is undeniable and deeply resonant. It is an essential read for anyone intrigued by the intersection of theology, technology, and the ever-evolving human narrative.

Some additional reflections:

- O’Gieblyn’s work compels readers to introspect on their identity, relationships, and cosmic significance.
- Her book disrupts traditional paradigms surrounding technology and spirituality, melding introspection with a futuristic perspective.
- The book’s strengths lie in its compelling narratives, insightful analogies, and a clear call to reflection. Some might argue certain connections to be speculative, but the broader message remains profound.
- I would unreservedly recommend this tome to those at the crossroads of technology and theology, as well as anyone intrigued by the dynamic interplay of historical beliefs and modern advancements.

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*Theology, Science and Life*. By Carmody Grey. London: T&T Clark, 2023. x + 258 pages. \$115.00. (Hardcover).

The Anglican theologian John Milbank is well-known for his uncompromising defense of theology in the face of its marginalization by the legacy of Enlightenment thinking. In *Theology and Social Theory* he argues that social scientific disciplines, such as sociology, politics and psychology have increasingly regarded theology as concerned with “spirituality”, making it thus irrelevant to robust, empirically based, intellectual enquiry. Milbank argues that theology must fight back and regain its self-confidence. At the heart of his project lies the claim that *all* disciplines are in a sense “theological”, because all concern God’s creation. Too often, however, theologians timidly reconfigure the basic tenets of Christian belief in line with the findings of social science. Milbank contends that, far from occupying such a subordinate role, theology should be “Master” of all discourses and the prism through which all other disciplines are understood and interpreted.

Milbank’s work forms the background to *Theology, Science and Life* by Catholic theologian Carmody Grey, who aims to extend Milbank’s critique to the natural sciences. Since she believes that biology is the most important science in the twenty-first century—a claim likely to raise eyebrows among practitioners of