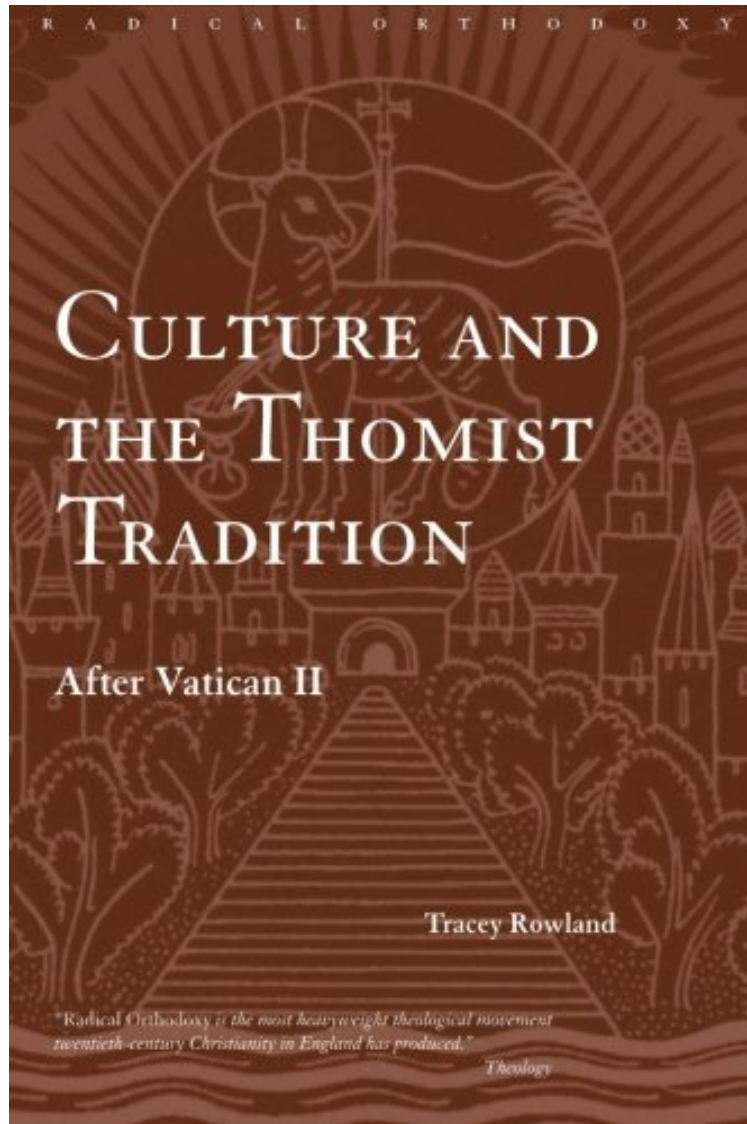


[Download] Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II (Routledge Radical Orthodoxy)

## Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II (Routledge Radical Orthodoxy)

Tracey Rowland

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#604087 in Books Tracey Rowland 2003-04-20 2003-02-20Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.21 x .55 x 6.14l, .85 #File Name: 0415305276244 pagesCulture and the Thomist Tradition After Vatican II | File size: 52.Mb

**Tracey Rowland : Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II (Routledge Radical Orthodoxy)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II (Routledge Radical Orthodoxy):

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Vatican II Document on Culture is A Local Concern to the Catholic

faithBy KennyThis book is scholarly and academic but it is not a dry commentary on the Vatican II document on culture. It is well written and readable, critical and is not very long. Its' critique should be of acute interest to lay Catholics concerned with the total loss we seem to be at with what is happening to the present culture we find in our Church, which has taken upon itself to preempt the proper culture of the Church and which we generally deal with by uncritical surrender believing that otherwise we will be disobedient to our life in Christ in the Church. I mean to say it can direct our energies towards a constructive faith based solution by applying the Thomistic method to where lies the root of the problem in the thinking and documents of Vatican II on culture. Consider this interesting nugget contained in the book: who would have thought that the future Benedict XVI, a radical theologian of the time of Vatican II and a valuable assistant to those who shaped it, would first publicly respond to the document on culture by criticizing it for its dependence on pagan language and thought to express culture; yet that is what he did; it gives one a sense of how shocking it must have been to read it to those more numerous but less influential Catholics well versed in the faith and living outside the pagan like circle of thinkers who formulated the document in secret. There is much that could be added as an aside to the history of Vatican II. But that is not the subject of the book;and that is not taken up in this book. Rather in many important regards this book provide some important factual context to: the document;its implications;and about the thinking of those who shaped it and those that would reform it. As for instance the book makes clear the last two popes knew what problems lay in the documents declarations because in a short time the problematic nature of what presumptions girdled its propositions became all too apparent--as for instance in the documents cow-tow to secular culture as it was discussed to exist in the United States, that culture which Pope John Paul II would come to call "The Culture of Death". Yes that was a sort of model-- as the book explains it everything was in a spring time in these experts' eyes; and Pentecost had not happened and was not fulfilled at all until through Vatican II. How times change and some things.The proposed remedy in the book is that it would be wisest for us to apply a Thomistic approach to Catholic culture, something which as the author explains the Church has never done nor had anyone thought necessary until after the aftermath of Vatican II. It is perhaps one way we can revisit and revise the document and do something about the problems it has fostered, especially when one considers that the Thomistic approach, once it was made manifest, in the power of its clarity and simplicity, has ever been the Churches trusted bulwark against false teachings.However if Vatican II is an expression of how things actually get done in the Church these days then the solution must be sought less in talk, as it seems this battle field is lost, and more and more in prayerful thought and faithful diligence. As members of the faithful prayer,fasting, and participating in the sacramental life of the Church is what we are directed to make our more common supplement which includes, and does not exclude, a resolute fidelity to what has been handed down to us by apostolic succession and its' fruits delivered to us since the time of its' institution by Our Lord; and having taken the Lord into our heart to do His Will.And part of that is of course to work out a solution to deal with the problem. Get to know the problem as expressed here. Then perhaps you will agree with the author and see that some Thomistic thought-out reform is in order.For my part it is part of what I intend to do.Let us be one, as Our Lord labored and labors, prayed and prays for us to be.66 of 68 people found the following review helpful. A Crititcal Re-Appraisal of Vatican IIBy Alcuin ReidTo live in the aftermath of an Ecumenical Council appears never to have been easy. In our own age, we who have grown up in the shadow of Vatican II need to remember this. We probably suffer from having been told "Vatican II changed all that" in respect of all aspects of Church life, and we may well have looked on whilst those who questioned such `changes' were consigned to perdition.Such is the deference with which we have been taught that we must speak about Vatican II and all its works that I was astonished to read in Aidan Nichols' The Theology of Joseph Ratzinger an account of Ratzinger's substantial criticisms of the Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*. Surely this was the document of the Council par excellence? How could it be subject to such informed criticism? The answer is that most of the documents of Vatican II contain reformable prudential judgements made in contingent circumstances; they are not dogmatic definitions to which one owes the assent of faith, but rather, largely, they seek to chart pastoral policy for the Church (eg, one can be a Catholic in good faith and believe that the Council was silly to call for the introduction of bidding prayers into the Mass-the decision is simply a matter of judgement, not doctrine). Once this is understood, it is perfectly reasonable for a peritus of the Council, as Joseph Ratzinger was, to engage in a critical evaluation of these judgements and policies. Today, it is, surely, no less appropriate that critical evaluation should continue, particularly in the light of the almost forty years' experience since, for, even if the policies of the Council were apposite, the pastoral policies appropriate to the Church today may well not be identical to those of forty years ago. Enter the Australian Cambridge scholar Dr Tracey Rowland. She is a "child of Vatican II" in that she has known no other period of history, and has been inoculated with the assumptions that modernity is intrinsically good and that modern culture is the apex of philosophical and humanistic achievement, and that the Church has rightly shaped her pastoral policies in accordance with them. Fortunately, though, Rowland has-rather like a child forbidden to look in an attic-delved behind these assumptions. She has delved deeply. Its central tenet is that, in its uncritical embrace of modernity in general and of modern culture in particular, *Gaudium et spes* was insufficiently critical of modernity and operated from flawed understanding of culture, with the result that `modern' pastoral policies based on these errors have resulted in "a widespread loss of faith within Europe...within countries like Canada, the United States

and Australia." Furthermore, Rowland argues: Those sections of *Gaudium et spes* that appear to give the Church's approval to the culture of modernity were formulated without reference to a theological framework within which the concept of culture could be 'eschatologically situated.' In the absence of any such theological framework, an endorsement of the culture of modernity, or select aspects thereof, can only be, as Rahner conceded, an act of faith. To this canonisation of modern culture, Rowland juxtaposes the response of scholars of the Thomist tradition, who vary as to whether such a concept is fundamentally alien to the faith, or is complementary. Her study finds for the former, concluding: 'Pastoral strategies' that further blur the distinctions between the culture of modernity and a culture rooted in a specifically Trinitarian Christocentrism do nothing to restore the visibility of the form and further compound the crisis. Either the Church as the Universal Sacrament of Salvation is the primary source, guardian and perfecter of culture within persons, institutions and entire societies, or culture becomes and ends in itself - an ersatz religion - as in the Aristocratic Liberal and Nietzschean traditions, which in turn implodes into that anti-culture known as 'mass culture.' Dr Rowland draws upon an impressive and wide-ranging array of philosophical and theological sources including works by Alasdair MacIntyre, Von Balthasar, Aidan Nichols, David Shindler and John Paul II, and avoids the dry erudition of some scholarly works by regularly connecting her argument with facets of post-Conciliar life, most particularly the Liturgy. Her conclusions in here are highly significant, locating the question of the Liturgy at the very centre of the life of the Church: It is precisely what [Cardinal] Lercaro called the 'cultural patrimony of the Church,' and what Paul VI identified as the Church's rich liturgical culture, which was historically the source of the plain person's exposure to 'high' or 'erotic' or 'aristocratic' culture and, in particular, to beauty. By depriving people of these riches through the policy of accommodating liturgical practices to the norms of 'mass culture' - a culture already identified by Guardini in the 1950s as an 'anti-culture' - the post-Conciliar Church has unwittingly undermined the ability of many of its own members to experience self-transcendence. This destruction in turn leads to a loss of 'sapiential experience' - ... a necessary element of [truly] prudential judgement - and a preparation for the virtue of hope. As a consequence, plain persons fall into the pit of nihilistic despair and/or search for transcendence in the secular liturgies of the global economy, whereas the more highly educated pursue strategies of stoic withdrawal and individual self-cultivation which are destined to end in despair, and even madness, for which the secular critics of modernity - Freud and Heidegger, for example - have no viable solutions. This is an extremely important book, and no serious student of theology or pastor can afford to ignore it; we do live and work in the shadow of an Ecumenical Council which has - intentionally or not - revolutionised the Church, and - unless all the statistics lie - not for the better. It is utterly necessary that more scholars continue the work of thorough, loyal, critical examination of its strengths and of its very real weaknesses and of their implications for the life of the Church that Dr Rowland has begun so well.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. difficult, but worth the effort

By jmartin Tracey Rowland has done a masterful job in this book in analyzing, and shredding, the faux capitulation of Catholicism to secularist, modernist materialism since the 2nd Vatican Council. He begins by showing (p. 19) that *aggiornamento* as 'opening the windows of the Church,' was only an offhand comment by Pope John XXIII, kind of like Jefferson's offhand comment in a private letter in 1803, about "separation of church and state": of no probative weight in interpreting their respective documents. On p. 33 Rahner, the darling of the post Vat leftist commenters, declared a "break" in Vatican II from the previous documented tradition, which would mean that all the previous councils were not assisted by the Holy Spirit, only Vat II, OR, that all the previous ones were, and Vat II was not. I'm a both/and man, not an either/or. There was development, not change, of doctrine. On p. 39, Rowland cites with approval the comment of Pope John Paul II, that the Enlightenment is inherently reduction to materialism, only immanence, what is in this world, is worthy of study and belief, and thus to Nietzsche's death of God, so those who would favor Nietzsche over the previous enlightenment are kidding themselves. I loved the quote from JH Newman Rowland cites on p. 191. fn 15: "Doctrine is percolated, as it were..." Rowland is not afraid to take on the sacred cows of both the left and the right, namely, the secular human rights doctrine and an over-obedience to the [liberal] market economy. Finally, I recommend this book to the high level amateur reader, and it will still be a struggle, but one worth making.

Thomism's influence upon the development of Catholicism is difficult to overestimate - but how secure is its grip on the challenges that face contemporary society? *Culture and the Thomist Tradition* examines the crisis of Thomism today as thrown into relief by Vatican II, the twenty-first ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church. Following the Church's declarations on culture in the document *Gaudium et spes* - the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - it was widely presumed that a mandate had been given for transposing ecclesiastical culture into the idioms of modernity. But, says Tracey Rowland, such an understanding is not only based on a facile reading of the Conciliar documents, but was made possible by Thomism's own failure to demonstrate a workable theology of culture that might guide the Church through such transpositions. A Thomism that fails to specify the precise role of culture in moral formation is problematic in a multicultural age, where Christians are exposed to a complex matrix of institutions and traditions both theistic and secular. The ambivalence of the Thomist tradition to modernity, and modern conceptions of rationality, also impedes its ability to successfully engage with the arguments of rival traditions. Must a genuinely progressive Thomism learn to accommodate modernity? In opposition to such a

stance, and in support of those who have resisted the trend in post-Conciliar liturgy to mimic the modernistic forms of mass culture, Culture and the Thomist Tradition musters a synthesis of the theological critiques of modernity to be found in the works of Alasdair MacIntyre, scholars of the international 'Communio' project and the Radical Orthodoxy circle. This synthesis, intended as a post-modern Augustinian Thomism, provides an account of the role of culture, memory and narrative tradition in the formation of intellectual and moral character. Re-evaluating the outcome of Vatican II, and forming the basis of a much-needed Thomist theology of culture, the book argues that the anti-beauty orientation of mass culture acts as a barrier to the theological virtue of hope, and ultimately fosters despair and atheism.

'This ... is an extremely important book, and no serious student of theology or pastor of souls can afford to ignore it.' - Laudetur  
'This study...deserves a wide readership...[Rowland's] powers of elucidation and clarification of tangled issues are in full stride in this sustained and persuasive argument.' - David Forest, Nova et Vetera  
'For anyone interested in contemporary Thomism or the future of Vatican II's theology, there is much of interest here. ... There is no doubt that anyone interested in current thinking on Vatican II would gain from reading this book. The argument is impressive, challenging, and expressed with clarity and force.' - Theology  
'Tracey Rowland's compelling new book ... [is] impressive in many respects.' - FCS Quarterly  
About the Author  
Tracey Rowland teaches at the John Paul II institute for Marriage and the Family, Melbourne, Australia.