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Redeployment (Book Review)

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every subjective act (139).

De Roo's concluding chapter, "The promissory discipline," takes final stock of what he has achieved in the book. He carefully and convincingly points out the ways in which his identification and amplification of futurity as central to phenomenology "opens phenomenology to a set of problems and questions that otherwise might seem to fall outside its scope." In terms of my earlier description, De Roo's insightful care as a "mechanic" of phenomenology especially shines in this concluding account. These final pages open the exciting prospect of broad cultural relevance for the work he has offered.

De Roo suggests that his interpretation of phenomenology as essentially promissory can open up "the claims of the various sciences" to see the ways in which they are "united together in the lives of individual people, who live in and as the promise of their respective traditions," as well as the ways in which "communities and institutions, and not just individuals, are called to live in, as, and up to the promise" (152). His closing assertion that "the phenomenological project is not only communal and intersubjective in its method...but also in its application and scope" makes this reader eager for the sequel in which these tantalizing suggestions could be developed more fully (152). I would expect, given the prominence in these closing remarks of references to "community" and "tradition," that this subsequent work would offer a more sustained dialogue with the hermeneutical wing of phenomenology represented by Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, whom De Roo mentions occasionally but did not have the space to treat at length.

Most readers of *Pro Rege* are likely to note with interest that Neal De Roo is a current faculty member

at Dordt College. Readers of De Roo's book who are familiar with the Reformational Christian philosophical tradition, which has exercised a profound shaping effect on Dordt's history, may want to keep that tradition in mind as they read his account of phenomenology's commitment to honoring the complexities and inherent tensions of human experience. Reformational philosophy, which was initiated by Dirk Vollenhoven and Herman Dooyeweerd at roughly the same time as Husserl was establishing phenomenology, is similarly committed to an anti-reductionist approach to complexity. While De Roo does not explicitly address the Reformational tradition, he does provide ample material for readers interested in considering the affinity between this tradition and phenomenology.

This is not a book for beginners, at least not beginners reading on their own. Phenomenology is intricate in its conceptuality, its terminology, and its controversies, and De Roo dives right in to the midst of it, assuming his readers' expertise and offering few handholds for those who do not already possess that expertise. That said, his voice is lively throughout, and his cheerful good humor winks out persistently. In the hands of a skilled teacher, this book would serve very well as a thematic centering text for a graduate or upper-level undergraduate seminar on phenomenology. The tight structure of the book's contents, along with its abundant endnotes (37 pages of small type), generous bibliography (13 pages), and carefully prepared index, would provide ample resources for students and professor to navigate both through and beyond the text. If Neal De Roo himself were to offer such a course as a seminar for colleagues in the discipline—such as a National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar—I would be the first in line to sign up.

Klay, Phil. *Redeployment*. New York: Penguin, 2014. 304 pages, paperback. ISBN: 978-1-5942-0499-5. Reviewed by James C. Schaap, Emeritus Professor of English, Dordt College, Sioux Center, IA.

War stories usually take on the motif of initiation because no one, thank goodness, is ever prepared for watching friends—buddies—die and die fitfully; war stories are always about men and women whose lives and visions are changed by warfare, changed forever.

Experiencing the horror of war leaves those who are changed with memories as sharp as cut glass, stories you either tell or you do not. Many do not, but not talking about one's experiences often means those stories create a din within the echo chamber that one's mind and heart becomes. PTSD can result—at least that's the common wisdom.

The stories Phil Klay tells in *Redeployment*, a riveting collection of tales dug out of the recent Iraq War are not so much about not telling war stories. They're not about what veterans suffer for their silence. What Klay does so poignantly is explore the heartache one feels in telling them.

All vets, I suppose, are achingly conscious of the stories they have and can tell because they discover that some people really do want to know them, for reasons that are both noble and ignoble, for everything from soulful empathy to sick entertainment. Many do want to know.

But the stories that changed the hearts and souls and minds of the vets who tell them can be manipulated or altered, reshaped for listeners simply because they do hold such monstrous power. Tell them right and they can get you laid, as several of Klay's vets come to learn. But those storytellers also learn that exploring with war experiences is its own minefield because manipulation risks discrediting both the stories and, they come to understand, the storytellers, which is to say, themselves.

What distinguishes Phil Klay's *Redeployment* from Tim O'Brien's famous 1990 Vietnam novel *The Things They Carried* has little to do with narrative power. Phil Klay had to have known and read O'Brien; O'Brien's influence is everywhere. Some of Klay's stories, given a few deft time-and-place edits, would fit snugly within the covers of *The Things They Carried*.

But *Redeployment* does something else: it studies war stories and their varied effects even while it tells them, which means it tells stories about telling stories; a hail of bullets becomes a hall of mirrors and, sadly enough, yet another form of PTSD. Klay's storytellers are haunted not only by what happened but also by how they try to explain and detail what happened.

Redeployment creates its own echo chamber, and the effect is stunning. Phil Klay walked away from the 2014 National Book Awards with the top prize, an award that is, to me, completely understandable.

Like *The Things They Carried*, *Redeployment* is not just a book you read, but a book you experience.

Phil Klay was there in Iraq, a Marine, and it's evident throughout. Consider:

When I got to the window and handed in my rifle, though, it brought me up short. That was the first time I'd been separated from it in months. I didn't know where to rest my hands. First I put them in my pockets, then I took them out and crossed my arms, and then I just let them hang, useless, at my sides.

It may well be possible for someone who wasn't there to imagine that unique emptiness, but such sharp perception creates authority that's totally convincing.

Redeployment takes us, time after time, into the equation all of us experience when we are suddenly forced to grow up, and it does it with war, something none of us really want to experience.

That Phil Klay walked off with the National Book Award is absolutely great because his *Redeployment* is, quite frankly, a great book. The stories his storytellers spin—and what they think about and feel while spinning them—creates a hall of mirrors that's as fascinating as it is horrifying.

This isn't a book for the beach. There are plenty of those.

Redeployment's power is that it is, without a doubt, deadly serious, as is war itself.

Sproul, R.C. *Everyone's a Theologian: An Introduction to Systematic Theology*. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust. A Division of Ligonier Ministries, 2014. 357pp., ISBN-13:978-1-56769-365-2. Reviewed by Jack R. Van Der Slik, Professor Emeritus, Political Studies and Public Affairs, University of Illinois Springfield.

Recently, I mulled over the bookstore offerings of Christian books. Finding a systematic theology of interest, I realized the paucity of such books in my study. Of Christian books, yes, I have quite a number and variety. My commentaries take up significant space. There are books by Calvin and about Calvin. I have Strong's *Concordance* and some biblical archaeology reference works. There are topical books by Plantinga, Schaap, Smedes, Van Til, Wolters, Wolterstorff, and many more. But my only systematic theology is Louis Berkhof's *Summary of Christian Doctrine*, his 1938 simplified version of his 1932 masterwork *Systematic Theology*. I recognized my lack and acquired R.C. Sproul's *Everyone's a Theologian*.

I am delighted with my purchase. After giving it a full reading, I compared it to Berkhof's *Summary*. The topics, organization, and coverage of the two

books are remarkably alike, although Sproul's work is half again as long as Berkhof's *Summary*. Sproul's work is divided into eight major sections, beginning with "What is Theology?" and concluding with about 40 engaging pages on eschatology.

Berkhof has, of course, provided readers with a welcome Reformed standard—an orderly, coherent exposition of the essential doctrines by which we begin to comprehend God and His way of salvation for humankind. Brief though it is, one can quickly explore its themes and scrutinize the biblical evidence underlying them. Despite nearly fourscore years since its publication, it remains a treasury of carefully measured theological analysis.

But Sproul's work does not suffer by comparison. I should note that Sproul's peers are mostly a Presbyterian lot. His degrees are from Westminster