

WHO'S AFRAID OF POSTMODERNISM? TAKING DERRIDA, LYOTARD, AND FOUCAULT TO CHURCH. James K. A. Smith. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006. Pp. 160. \$17.99, ISBN 978-0-8010-2918-9.

Making postmodernism less intimidating and recognizing its potential as an ally to Christian faith is the aim of Smith's latest book. Well written and brief but also somewhat dense, parts of the book may be too technical for practitioners. The book makes helpful connections with pop culture; each chapter begins with a synopsis of a contemporary film that articulates certain postmodern features launching the discussions that follow. Containing five chapters developed from lectures delivered at L'Abri Fellowship, Smith's approach to and appropriation of postmodernity reflects a Schaefferian impulse engaging culture critically and appreciatively.

After an introductory chapter, Smith summarizes the work of three French poststructuralists beginning with Derrida and his well-known dictum "There is nothing outside the text." Smith shows that Derrida assists Christianity by exposing the arrogant pretentiousness of modern claims to have obtained a true grasp of reality devoid of subjective bias. Next, Smith dissects Lyotard's famous definition of postmodernity, "incredulity toward metanarratives," clarifying the point that Lyotard was not incredulous toward metanarratives as such but only toward those rooted in confident appeal to universal human reason. Finally, Smith considers Foucault's assertion that "power is knowledge," demonstrating that society (including the church) is inherently a structure of power relations forming certain kinds of people. Smith rejects Foucault's implicit negativity toward power as such and redeems his analysis suggesting Christianity as a disciple-forming system operating not from domination but from reverent submission. A final chapter incorporates the critique of Radical Orthodoxy for developing a postmodern church in the twenty-first century. Chris Emerick Regent University.

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