

Michael J. Hyde. *The Interruption That We Are: The Health of the Lived Body, Narrative, and Public Moral Argument*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018. 212 pages. \$49.99.

Interruption is often perceived as an irritation that interferes with an individual's routine and can lead to anxiety or frustration. However, interruption could play a positive role in stimulating an individual or a community to engage in deep reflection, asking, "What is really going on?" and "What can we do to improve our situation?" In *The Interruption That We Are*, Michael J. Hyde argues that interruption is the foundation of progress. Hyde contends that interruption creatively forms a narrative of the lived body for the purpose of engaging a wider audience in public moral argument. The author asserts that interruption is a natural part of human existence and that competency in rhetoric is required to reveal the truth behind what we see. Interruption calls for us "to be open-minded, virtuous, dignified, and skilled in having a truthful way with words" (8).

Hyde's theory of interruption engages with scientific, biblical, and philosophical perspectives. In the later chapters of the book, he reflects on the theory in relation to concrete examples concerning people with disability or illness. In the first chapter, "The First Interruption," he contends that both the biblical and scientific views of the beginning of the world are grounded in interruption. The Bible begins with God interrupting a state of nothingness by bringing about a state of somethingness (20). Hyde argues that interruption is the very nature of God who "calls for acknowledgement throughout the Bible" (20). Scientific theory also points to the world beginning with the interruption of the big bang and suggests that interruption is a key part of the evolution of DNA from the monocellular cell.

In the second chapter, "Existence and the Self," Hyde describes Søren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger's arguments on how human beings can be authentic by answering their existential questions. Kierkegaard's society in Denmark was immersed in Christendom with its clergy enculturated with "eloquent babbling or talkativeness" (39), and he argued that everyone was tasked to contemplate the presence of God through their own existence. Kierkegaard's influence contributed to Heidegger's consideration of the avoidance of conformity in wider and popular thoughts and talk, which he termed "idle talk." In *Being and Time* Heidegger suggested that being is the place in which Being discloses itself and is open to and engages the "dynamic function of the interruption that we are" (52).

In the third chapter, "Existence and the Other," Hyde evaluates ethical concerns relating to the interruption that we are by discussing the work of Emmanuel Levinas. As the individual is surrounded by others, Levinas believes that the individual is exposed to the presence of otherness, or as he terms it, the "face." The face speaks to people by not only generating a "call of conscience," but also demanding an ethical response from them even before they assert their freedom not to respond (69). In other words, human existence is bound by its moral obligation to be concerned about the wellbeing of others to the point that this movement between self and others is not reciprocal. One finds the one's existence by serving others, not the other way around (71).

From the fourth to the seventh chapter, Hyde introduces several applied examples of the theory that he sets out in the earlier chapters. In Chapter 4, "The Right Word," Hyde discusses the case of Charles Siebert whose heart problem led him to resist the reductionism of regarding the human heart as merely a "pump." Chapter 5, "The Self as Other, the Other as Self," describes the struggle between Harriet McBryde Johnson, who was born with a degenerative neuromuscular disease, and Peter Singer, who advocated euthanasia for utilitarian purposes. The

interaction of Johnson and Singer in searching for an appropriate terminology led to acknowledgment and transformation. In Chapter 6, “A Good Showing of a Bad Situation,” Hyde points to how Brittany Maynard and Kara Tippetts had differing responses to impending death from cancer. Finally, Chapter 7, “Our Posthuman Future,” discusses Francis Collins’s work on human DNA and its implications for posthumans engineered to diminish the interruption that we are while pursuing perfection.

Hyde is aiming for an interdisciplinary method with a balance between religion, science, and philosophy, but some of his biblical interpretation might be questioned. For example, Hyde considers Jesus’ statement, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt 5:48). Hyde asserts that ambiguity in Jesus’s words serves the purpose of eliciting “discussion, debate, and the practice of rhetoric” (21). However, as a Christian influenced by Wesley’s theology, I believe that the perfectionist impulse in Jesus’s words mainly means that we become perfect in our love for God and neighbors, as God is perfect in love.

Overall, Hyde’s work is timely and important in a period when we are all experiencing the interruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has caused the suspension of in-person gatherings, depression and anxiety, job losses, and the deaths of family members and friends. We are interrupted by climate change, racial tension, and divisive and violent rhetoric in political administrations. Hyde’s phenomenological reflection stimulates preachers in particular to be more competent in our rhetorical response to contemporary circumstances by seeking meaning and calling for action.

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