

McCord Adams's paper on 'Sceptical Realism' is both a celebration of the potential of individuals to produce a rich diversity of meanings and forms of life by means of reasoning, and at the same time is a moral exhortation concerning 'the horrendous', the evil that would ruin us without reason to which humanity is always and everywhere in thrall. This seems also to be the human situation to which Ralph McInerny is responding in his paper on 'The Scandal of Philosophy', which basically argues that what he calls 'the implicit philosophy' of Thomas Aquinas is the common ground upon which a plurality of philosophical positions can be 'dealt with', which I take to mean disciplined, and without which there 'would otherwise be nothing but an intellectual scandal' (p. 36). The sense here that humanity is endangered by that against which Leibniz also strove, namely '*Nichts ohne Grund*', is profound, and leaves one with the realisation that in consequence of *this* kind of faith in reason, the problem of evil, or the so-called question of theodicy, is the stumbling block at which both faith and reason will of necessity trip over.

It is, however, Nietzsche who most illuminates this situation, for this is surely to be described not only in historical terms as 'modern', but philosophically as of the essence of nihilism. It is nihilism which drives an endless reassessment of things as the uppermost values devalue themselves, which means, as that against which anything could be measured and so valued has entirely collapsed to be upheld only by the power of will. There is little enough real and sustained attention to nihilism in this collection, except as something that one is to stand against or as a foil for games of 'let's pretend (suppose, imagine) otherwise', with the result that many of the papers are less self-aware and self-critical than one might have hoped, and the collection as a whole risks leaving the reader adrift on the waves.

Among the other papers by John Hilary Martin, Gregory Moses, Peter Coghlan, Winifred Wing Han Lamb, Raymond Gaita, Hayden Ramsay, Michael Levine, Graham Oppy, John Ozolins, John Michael McDermott, Gerald Gleeson, Anthony Fisher, Tony Kelly, John Quilter and Tracey Rowland, two more could especially be mentioned. John Haldane gave his paper having heard within hours of his arrival in Australia of the death of his mother, and it is the only paper in the collection to turn the tables on the editors' questions and take up instead the question of the faith of reason. His search for a spirituality of philosophy is not only a response to the Pope's call for a 'recovery of the sapiential dimension' (*Fides et ratio*, §§81–83), but in breaking open a discussion of Foucault's 'practices of the self', and even though Haldane continues to speak of this as an opening onto 'the idea of spiritual values' (p. 126), he nonetheless points out a way in which analytic philosophers might engage with nihilism. Kevin Hart's paper, '*Fides et Ratio et . . .*' is the only paper that attends to the astonishing claim of the Encyclical that the reach of faith and philosophy is broken up, not by the problem of evil but by the Paschal mystery, and this happens just as what lies beyond this mystery, namely the infinite horizon of truth, is opened up as a place where they may yet come together (*Fides et ratio*, §23). This mystery celebrated in the Eucharist is the other 'and' which faith and reason always presume, an 'and' that 'bespeaks love and sacrament, hope and exegesis, imagination and testimony' (p. 269). Thus faith and reason are turned outward to the 'beyond which', as they also are turned into the tradition through which both are formed and upheld.

SUSAN F. PARSONS

GOD'S ADVOCATES: CHRISTIAN THINKERS IN CONVERSATION by Rupert Shortt, *Darton, Longman & Todd*, London, 2005, Pp. xii + 284, £12.95 pbk.

Rupert Shortt is the religion editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*, which puts him in the ideal position to conduct these fourteen interviews with leading

theologians. He knows just the right questions to ask, prompting each contributor to outline his or her thought and comment on the current state of theology. Each edited interview runs to around twenty pages. Four of Shortt's conversations engage two writers together, in one case a husband and wife, and in the others an older theologian alongside a younger pupil. Here is contemporary academic theology presented with energy and excitement. No theology student or graduate, or member of the clergy, could fail to learn from it. It reads like a bibliography of contemporary theology annotated by the authors.

A number of common convictions become obvious, most prominently that the future of theology cannot lie with liberalism. Instead, we have here something like an open-minded orthodoxy that upholds the Bible and the Fathers as the wellspring of Christian theology. This rejection of the liberal position could become wearisome through repetition; it does not, largely because the contributors describe the evolution of their thought in biographical as well as abstract terms, often with considerable candour. At times these stories can be genuinely moving. We are not spared the struggles, but neither is there any lack of humour.

Sarah Coakley and Christoph Schwöbel, who discusses current interest in the doctrine of the Trinity, represent systematics and doctrine. Coakley's interview highlights a revival for systematics, but also a new emphasis. She argues that theology must range widely and comprehensively, but that no system can presume itself to be the last word.

Janet Martin Soskice brings philosophical theology (and considerable compassion) to bear on rationality, language and human experience. Alongside her we have Alvin Plantinga and Christopher Insole on the philosophy of religion. David Burrell, in an excellent survey of contemporary Thomism, provides an illuminating comment on how these approaches differ: 'the tendency of philosophers of religion is to think that their categories will work everywhere and there's no need to transform them to talk about God'. In contrast, Burrell casts Thomas as a philosophical theologian, 'the stellar example of how someone, in trying to use philosophy to search for the truth of our faith, will have to transform ordinary philosophical categories'. He pays particular attention to how we need to recast notions of causation in the light of the doctrine of creation.

If Burrell is right, then it is the approach of St Thomas (rather than that of the philosopher of religion) which wins out for most of these writers. We sense here a renewed confidence in the Faith, and the desire to let it transform other disciplines and patterns of thought. This is familiar territory for John Milbank, who is joined by a pupil, Simon Oliver. Especially valuable here is Milbank's concern to refine his position carefully in response to criticism, including a consideration of the weaknesses in St Thomas's rationality – not what we immediately expect from the father of Radical Orthodoxy. Several other writers refer to Milbank's work, almost all favourably, and these comments by one interviewee on the work of another add coherence to the book as a whole. Amongst the other contributors, it is perhaps J. Kameron Carter on black theology and Tina Beattie on feminist theology who bear closest comparison with Milbank. Both insist that theology must go beyond dialogue with the traditional guardians of black or feminine identity. There must also be a transformation of identity by the Gospel.

Stanley Hauerwas provides a characteristically bracing case for putting character and practices of life at the centre of theological ethics. With his younger colleague and apologist Sam Wells on hand to fill in the gaps, this chapter provides a particularly thorough survey of his thought. David Martin (on Christianity and society) lines up, broadly speaking, as an advocate of Niebuhrian pragmatism, against Hauerwas, for whom this blunts the priority of the Gospel. Martin's prose is particularly polished, amongst interviews which are already highly literate. This might cause us to wonder how much pre-publication processing they have been through. Also addressing theology and public life, Miroslav Volf situates himself closer to Hauerwas than to Martin. His reflections on identity and non-violence

witness to a profound dialogue between the Gospel – learnt in Pentecostalism – and his experiences in Communist and post-Communist Yugoslavia. His interest in ecumenism is shared by many of the contributors.

Oliver and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan are assigned political theology, although there is a consensus amongst the writers interviewed here that all theology is 'political' (and ethical). Often, as in this chapter, this involves an inter-faith, and especially Islamic, dimension. As two of the more Protestant contributors, the praise which they reserve for Roman Catholic social teaching is all the more telling.

Only occasionally during these interviews does Shortt call for further explanation. Generally it is not necessary. Perhaps the face-to-face conversation lends itself to clarity. In chapters such as Jean-Luc Marion's 'Continental perspective', this clarity is a sheer joy. Anyone who has tackled his *God Without Being* will be grateful for the concise, lucid summary he provides here. Along with the majority of contributors, he puts 'gift' at the heart of the contemporary theological agenda, along with a related rejection of Scotist 'Univocity of Being' (that is, approaching theology with a concept of Being prior to God and the world or, more practically speaking, conceiving of God as a thing).

In the opening chapter, Rowan Williams argues that the impulse for theology comes when 'some profound puzzlement has shaken up frames of reference'. Contemporary life might therefore lead us to suppose that the world is ready for theology again. Williams also suggests that the most persuasive place to glimpse theology is in the contours of a transformed life. With its biographical approach, this excellent book provides more than mere glimpses.

ANDREW DAVISON

THOMIST REALISM AND THE LINGUISTIC TURN: TOWARD A MORE PERFECT FORM OF EXISTENCE by John P. O'Callaghan, *University of Notre Dame Press*, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2001, Pp. 392, \$59.95 hbk.

Since Aristotle, philosophers of differing approaches have assigned epistemic and semantic functions to mental entities in virtue of their representing extra-mental things. However, since the individuation of those entities is considered to be distinct from any representing function they may have, then regardless of whether the mental is reduced to the physical or not, that representative function cannot individuate such entities and what are known and referred to primarily are the individuated representations themselves, while the represented entities, things in extra-mental reality, are only known and referred to secondarily, through a context of interpretation. Against such considerations John O'Callaghan's account of St. Thomas's view identifies a distinction between the instituted sign relations of words to *passiones animae* and words to *res extra animam* as opposed to the natural likenesses (*similitudines*) relation of *passiones animae* to *res extra animam* and argues that the epistemic and semantic functions St. Thomas assigns to *passiones animae* are not representationalism so construed.

Chapter one introduces the (in)famous goblet from *Peri Hermeneias* (16a3–9) that identifies the vertices of Aristotle's semantic triangle: words, *passiones animae*, and *res extra animam*. The relations between these vertices are affirmed as irreducibly different and the activity of the intellect identified as the means by which a general word can be predicated of singular things. Chapter two argues against Kretzmann's contention that Aristotle is not primarily concerned with semantics but rather wants to distinguish signs and symbols and affirm the priority of the sign relation of word to *passiones animae* over the symbolic relation of word to *passiones animae*. It also distances St. Thomas's view from those of Ammonius and Boethius. Chapter three considers the mental representationalism of Locke, Berkeley and Hume and some objections raised against them by Husserl, Frege and Wittgenstein. Chapter four