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Book reviews

Stephen T. Davis *God, Reason and Theistic Proofs*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997). Pp. xiv + 204. £11.99 Pbk.

According to Kai Nielsen, 'for somebody living in the twentieth century with a good philosophical and good scientific education, who thinks carefully about the matter... for such a person it is irrational to believe in God' (quoted in Davis, 190). One of the aims of Stephen T. Davis's *God, Reason and Theistic Proofs* is to rebut views such as Nielsen's.

Davis's book does not presuppose much technical expertise, and is pitched at about the second year undergraduate level. It comprises ten short chapters, beginning with one explaining the concept, goal, and assumptions of theistic proof. Chapter Two, on the ontological argument, presents Anselm's version of the Proslogion II argument, criticisms by Gaunilo, Kant, and Rowe, and replies on behalf of Anselm. This may be the best chapter in the book, as it draws on Davis's previously published work, and demonstrates a profound, occasionally original, understanding of the subject. Chapter Three is an explanation of the significance of theistic proofs for religious non-realism, and vice versa. Davis treats Phillips, Cupitt et al. fairly, but he refuses to be cowed by their obscurantism.

Chapter Four, on the cosmological argument, focuses on Aquinas's first, second, and third ways. It contains a useful discussion of linear versus hierarchical causes, which is often not treated in standard textbooks, but it is less successful than the chapter on the ontological argument. It ignores the important Clarke/Rowe version of the argument; interprets Thomas's arguments as employing the principle of sufficient reason (which they do not); leaves the *Kalam* version of the argument till a later chapter; and lays down the premise 'All existing contingent beings have hierarchical causes' (71) without any more defence than saying 'it does seem highly plausible'. Chapter Five, on 'Theistic proofs and foundationalism', steps back from giving theistic proofs to consider the viability of natural theology in light of contemporary critiques of foundationalism. It begins with an interesting account of the shift in the rhetorical situation of 'theistic provers' between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, but is mostly given over to a discussion of the 'reformed epistemology' of Plantinga, Wolterstorff et al. that is well-known in specialist circles but is only now beginning to make its way into textbooks. Despite his sympathy with reformed epistemology and acceptance of most criticisms of strong foundationalism, Davis argues that theistic proofs can still have value.

Chapter Six, on the design argument, resumes the examination of theistic proofs, beginning with the older, deductive design arguments (that emphasize the arrangement of plant and animal bodies), along with Humean and Darwinian objections to them. A discussion of newer, cumulative case versions follows, particularly of those that emphasize the appearance of 'fine tuning' in the cosmos. In this connection, Davis helpfully sketches the relevant physical constants, the anthropic principle, the 'many universes' argument, and Swinburne's Bayesian approach. Chapter Seven discusses theistic arguments based on religious experience. Davis argues that, in the light of religious experience, we may conclude that anti-religious naturalism is false, but in the light of the diversity of such experience, that is the most we may conclude.

Chapter Eight, on 'Other theistic proofs', is the least satisfactory, and comprises a brief account of four apparently lesser theistic proofs: the ontological argument from Proslogion III, a generic cosmological argument, the moral argument, and the *Kalam* cosmological argument. Davis's criticism of the Proslogion III argument is lucid and persuasive, but the other arguments are criticized so quickly that one wonders why they were included at all. Also, Davis's treatment of the principle of sufficient reason (in the generic cosmological argument) is unsatisfactory. He asserts (implausibly) that the principle of sufficient reason is question-begging in that someone who doesn't accept the theistic conclusion of the argument *should not* grant it (146). In these ideologically self-conscious times, most people who want to avoid a theistic conclusion see that they *can* reject the principle of sufficient reason, but this does not mean that all non-theists *should*. Fortunately, the quality of argumentation bounces back in Chapter Nine, on 'Alternatives to theistic proofs', which treats voluntaristic defences of theistic belief, viz., Pascal's 'wager' and James's 'will to believe' argument. Davis offers a qualified endorsement of both, plausibly rebutting the more familiar objections. Remarkably, in the case of Pascal's wager, this is accomplished with no technical apparatus at all. In Chapter Ten, Davis concludes by asking 'How important is the existence of God?' (very); 'Do the theistic proofs prove the singular God of theism?' (up to a point); and 'What can we hope to show with theistic proofs?' (something more than the rationality of theism, but less than the irrationality of atheism).

God, Reason and Theistic Proofs is mostly clear and, except perhaps for an overuse of acronyms (hereafter 'OOA'), well-written. Its focus on arguments, their validity, soundness, and epistemological status, recommends it as a teaching text, though given its running references to the works of particular philosophers, it would need to be paired with an anthology of primary sources. Apart from the sorts of lapse detailed above, it is sensible and well-argued, though its greatest strength is its coverage, since few other books at this level treat topics such as non-realism, reformed epistemology,

fine-tuning arguments, the *Kalam* argument, and Bayesianism, along with the usual staples.

Would I recommend it overall? Yes, with qualifications due to the book's distinctive features, *vis-à-vis* those of its competitors. Davis's book is pro-theistic, so teachers who want a book that isn't may prefer Robin Le-Poidevin's *Arguing for Atheism* (London: Routledge, 1996). Davis's book is pitched at about middle level, so teachers wanting a high-level text may prefer Swinburne's *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); those wanting an elementary text may prefer C. S. Evans's *Philosophy of Religion* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1982). Among intermediate texts, Davis's book is distinctive in being concerned exclusively with theistic proofs. Those wanting an intermediate-level text sympathetic to theism that also treats the divine attributes, the problem of evil, etc. may prefer Brian Davies's *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). So, teachers wanting an intermediate level textbook sympathetic to theism focusing specially on theistic proofs, or those who just want a change, should consider *God, Reason and Theistic Proofs*. This may seem like faint praise, but it isn't. It merely points up the specialized nature of Davis's book, and the vigour and diversity of publishing in analytic philosophy of religion these days, to which it makes a clear contribution.

MARK T. NELSON
University of Leeds

Thomas P. Flint *Divine Providence*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998). Pp. xi + 258. £35.00 Hbk.

Since the recrudescence of Molinism due to the modern work on counterfactuals and particularly on the idea of counterfactuals of freedom, middle knowledge has been favoured by a number of philosophers who see in it a means of having it both ways on the vexed issue of divine foreknowledge and human freedom. Indeed, Molinism appears to offer a way of reconciling human libertarian freedom, that cornerstone of modern philosophical theology, and what has been called 'meticulous providence', God's providential control of every detail of every life.

Flint's is the first full scale account and defence of this approach, and as such its appearance is most welcome. Despite the title, it is not a work primarily of historical scholarship, nor it is an exposition of chapter and verse of Molina, but is filled almost entirely with argument and counterargument in contemporary vein.

The exposition is clear and full, measured and well-oiled, from one who is strongly sympathetic to the view, though not uncritically so. Part I

expounds, Part II looks at some alternative accounts of providence (particularly the 'open' view advocated by William Hasker and others) defends Molinism against objections from Thomism and from contemporaries such as Robert Adams and William Hasker, and provides discussion of more general objections, particularly the 'grounding' objection. Flint's contribution to these debates will be essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand them. Part III applies Molinism to certain doctrines, such as prayer and papal infallibility. (Though the book is written from an avowedly Roman Catholic standpoint it is far from being an 'in your face' defence of that position; middle knowledge has, of course, been resorted to by those of other persuasions.)

If one accepts the distinction between God's free, natural and middle knowledge, there seem to me to be two principal areas of concern. One is whether the idea of divine middle knowledge of free human actions is possible (a doubt raised by Adams) and the question of how God performs the feat of actualizing possible worlds which include libertarian actions without thereby infringing such freedom. While Flint considers the first of these problems, he pays little or no attention to this 'how?' question. Supposing that God knows that 'If A were to be placed in circumstances C, he would freely do X', then (since, as Flint stresses, God has no control over such counterfactuals – the knowledge which generates the foresight and sovereignty is not itself a product of free divine activity' (44)) how exactly does God actualize this item of his middle knowledge, should he wish to? What exactly is it to actualize, even to 'weakly' actualize, such a possible state of affairs?

The picture one gets from this is of God knowing all possible worlds, including those which allegedly contain counterfactuals of freedom. These worlds have, so to speak, already run their courses, for they are complete, filled out in every detail. They are, we may suppose, exhaustively describable by a set of unconditional propositions. So the counterfactuals of freedom such worlds may initially be thought to contain are not really counterfactual; what is conditional is the possible world, not bits of it. It is as if God is in his video library, viewing all the videos. For reasons best known to himself, he is attracted to one particular video, the video with you and me in it, just as we are in fact. It is as if he says, by a decision fraught with consequence for us all, 'Let it be in fact as this video depicts it to be' knowing (by his omniscience) its most intimate detail. It is as if the videos are accounts of what already has happened in innumerable possible worlds. (How could it be otherwise, if God has full descriptions of them all?) God decides to actualize one such world – to run it so to speak, or perhaps to re-run it. 'God knowingly puts him (Cuthbert, a libertarianly free agent) in a situation in which that very action was divinely foreseen' (44). My problem is how, if each video is a complete description of a possible world, does thinking of

God's relation to possible worlds in this way help us to preserve both providence and libertarian freedom, and (a further question, surprisingly not given much attention by Flint) how does it help with providence and evil?

In the final four chapters of the book Flint seeks to apply middle knowledge to some specific doctrines and practices: papal infallibility, prophecy, unanswered prayers, and praying for things to have happened. Whatever the merits of middle knowledge, it cannot be said that the treatment of these issues tends to the increase of its plausibility.

Take papal infallibility. It looks at first as if God can, by his middle knowledge, ensure that the right person becomes pope, for he knows how any candidate would freely act if elected pope, including what pronouncements he would make ex cathedra. But (to cut a longish story short) Flint argues that papal infallibility may be preserved only at the expense of libertarian papal freedom, for all things considered, God may think it better to have a pope for his other qualities rather than for his ability to utter infallible ex cathedra pronouncements, and infallibility may in such circumstances only be secured by God shutting the pope's mouth (191–2). However, Flint avers that it would probably be more fitting for God to guide the church towards some individual who both has fine qualities and would make infallible ex cathedra pronouncements (192). But then the question is, what is the nature of such guidance? Is the college of cardinals libertarianly free? While such an understanding of infallibility may be consistent with Molinism, it is hardly an advertisement for it.

PAUL HELM
King's College, London

Pieter Huiser *Models, Theories and Narratives: Conditions for the Justification of Religious Realism*. (Amsterdam: De Kok, 1998).

This book presents a defence of religious realism and, as the title suggests, is a contribution to the research into the relationship between scientific and religious realism, the locus classicus of which is J. M. Soskice's *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). As such, it is a useful contribution to the genre that deserves to be read by those with interest in the field.

Religion and science, Huiser proposes, constitute distinct conceptual frameworks. The scientific framework is distinguished by its concern with *physical causal structures*. Every object of scientific inquiry (magnets, colours, etc.) is either a particular or a subtype of physical causal structure. A distinction is then introduced between 'internal' questions to do with the

reality of some particular or class of particular physical causal structures, such as theoretical entities, and 'external' questions about the existence and appropriateness of physical causal structures as a whole. The scientific realism debate, Huiser contends, should be construed as the former type, as one which assumes the framework of physical causal structures but raises questions about the status of unobservable entities, specifically whether our epistemological situation with regard to them is the same as that for observed entities. A similar approach is adopted for the religious framework, the concepts of which are all subtypes of the 'supertype' *communicative causal structure*. 'Communicative causal structure' is generally used interchangeably with 'person', the principal one of interest being God. Religious realism is then formulated as a question about the reality of a class of communicative causal structures.

There follows a brief defence of the communicative causal framework against reductionism and scepticism, and religious knowledge is set out as a kind of knowledge about persons. A series of analogies is proposed, between religious narratives and scientific theories, theoretical aspects of science and theology, experimental aspects of science and religious life. With these analogies in mind, notions of truth, reference and explanation are then explored, and in each case arguments that the communicative causal framework can lay claim to such realism-relevant features are modelled on familiar arguments for scientific realism. Wittgensteinian objections to religious claims being explanatory, referential, or akin to scientific hypotheses, are considered along the way.

Notable virtues of Huiser's approach include his concern with arriving at fairly well stated definitions of the different realist positions under discussion, and his attempt to get to grips with issues in the philosophy of science. I have, however, a number of reservations. Given the fundamental role accorded to causal structures in both frameworks under discussion, it is disappointing that Huiser gives no treatment of the notion of causation, and offers only a cursory examination of the two types of causal structure in question. The application of the concept 'physical causal structure' is assumed for every area of scientific investigation with little argument, which has the counter-intuitive upshot of foisting on the non-realist about causation, such as the regularity theorist, a radical form of scientific non-realism. Nor does Huiser address the likely objection about the appropriateness of causal language for indeterministically behaved 'entities – hardly a moot point, since they are often the very class of entities whose status is disputed by non-realists. Huiser's inattention to these issues may be partly due to his dependence on a rather narrow range of philosophy of science texts, notably works by Rom Harré; at one point he slips into talk about 'causal powers', a term presumably inherited from Harré. This is not to say that the causal account of scientific discourse could not be successfully defended, though

Huiser does not fill in the arguments. It is much less clear what the analogous argument for religious discourse would look like. Huiser's thesis about the role of communicative causality would seem to call for a largely revisionary theology which brought religious claims into line with the standards of the proposed framework, on the basis of which a realist argument could be defended. But he gives no sign of wishing to engage in such a revisionary project, indeed, he is in sympathy with arguments based on a descriptive approach to religious discourse, such as those proposed by D. Z. Phillips.

It is at this point in particular that problems seem to set in. Suppose that much religious discourse does concern communicative structures, and that difficult cases could be translated into or grafted onto a communicative framework without dramatic restructuring. Phillips is still going to argue, of course, that religious discourse does not explain, describe, refer or hypothesize in the way that scientific discourse does. Huiser is prepared for this argument, and his response is to accept it, but to completely bypass its conclusion: certainly, religious claims are not scientific (i.e. physical causal) descriptions, hypotheses or explanations, but they are *communicative* descriptions, hypotheses and explanations. However, this elegant side-step leaves all the work still to be done, that is, spelling out what 'communicative' amounts to in this case. There is no reason in principle why the most ardent non-realist should not allow that religious statements describe, explain, and may be true in *some* sense. One way of doing this, suggested by Crispin Wright's recent work on realism, would be for the non-realist to concede that 'God exists' and other religious claims may be true and refer, provided reference and the truth predicate are interpreted in a suitably minimal manner. For example, where attributing truth to a statement is understood as equivalent to just asserting the statement, and any term or expression is allowed to refer provided it meets certain syntactic criteria (roughly speaking, a term will need to function as a predicate, a statement will need to be indicative). In this case, the analogy between the cases for religious and scientific realism will be only superficial. We will need an investigation into religious discourse, or the communicative framework, to show whether the sort of truth and reference that it supports is minimal or something more robust, something more akin to what we might expect to find in science. To take four points: does the discourse allow for truths that cannot be discovered? Is there anything more to a religious claim being true than our being justified in asserting it? Are true religious claims mostly caused or explained by the facts they assert? Are religious disagreements explained by a participant's failure to represent the facts as they are? Until these kinds of question are resolved, it may be that religious reference and truth are so metaphysically light-weight, so uninterestingly platitudinous, that we would be prepared to concede that in these senses discourse about what is, for example, funny is capable of truth and reference.

Central to these arguments is the way in which the realist debate is formulated. Huiser puts aside the debate about the metaphysical theory – that God exists independently of the mind – partly because the corresponding metaphysical thesis about physical objects is not controversial in science, where the question is typically one of scepticism about theoretical entities. The possibility of formulating realism as a semantic theory is not addressed, which is also characteristic of most approaches to scientific realism. This may all be desirably expedient, if it does not overlook the fact that the metaphysical theory *is* controversial in religion and that the semantic theory *is* a serious option. On the other hand, the realist position that emerges from Huiser's work is left looking rather vulnerable, without the resources to deflect most of the familiar kinds of non-realism found in philosophy of religion. Few of Huiser's arguments will carry any weight with someone who denies that God exists independently of the mind, and all the work will be undone if non-realism about persons is a plausible option (and insofar as 'person' is an ethical concept, Huiser will have to contend with ethical non-realism). The expressivist will also want to put an oar in. Giving religious claims a scientific gloss and dressing up the religious realist's argument to look like the scientific realist's is not enough to meet the central challenge of whether religious discourse addresses a real subject matter. Religious discourse may have developed, or may be given, a propositional surface – to use Simon Blackburn's expression – in some respects similar to that of scientific discourse or communicative discourse, but its function remains that of expressing attitudes. So the expressivist will argue.

Huiser shows us that when set up against the argument for scientific realism, the argument for religious realism can cover some of the same course (though the senses given to predictive power and success in religion rather stretch the analogy). The question remains as to whether religious discourse qualifies to be in the running.

MICHAEL SCOTT
University of Utrecht

Murray A. Rae *Kierkegaard's Vision of the Incarnation: By Faith Transformed*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). Pp. xii + 267. £37.50 Hbk.

Kierkegaard, it is well known, repeatedly claimed that Christian belief was absurd, and he thought this absurdity especially great in the case of the incarnation: for, he thought, if it is difficult to find belief in God rationally compelling, it is even worse trying to understand the intersection of the eternal with time in Christ. Rae's book is devoted to exploring Kierkegaard's sense of this absurdity as he discusses it in *Philosophical Fragments*.

According to Rae, thinkers within the Western tradition have utilized three strategies to remove the sense of the absurdity of the incarnation. They have wanted, he claims, to ground faith on history, on the human imagination, or on pure rational reflection. However, all these attempts fail, Rae suggests, and they do so because they refuse to accept that 'the basis of humanity's encounter with God is not some vestige of the eternal to be found in humankind … but the free decision of God to become immanent himself' (79). Further, Rae claims that, prior to accepting God through the incarnation – repentance or conversion (μετάνοια) – we exist in untruth, which state he calls, following Kierkegaard, sin. Our salvation is said to come through this conversion. And it is only *after* we have accepted the Truth in the incarnation that God's appearance in the form of Christ no longer seems absurd. As Kierkegaard has it: '[W]hen the believer has faith, the absurd is not absurd' (76).

As noted, Rae concentrates mainly on *Philosophical Fragments*, and this harbours both exegetical and philosophical problems. We may approach these by comparing conversion to faith in Christ with, say, conversion to belief in witchcraft, tarot cards, and the like. It will not be enough in the case of the latter to say that all of this seems absurd but, once we have come to believe, this absurdity will disappear. How, then, are we to distinguish Christian faith from faith in the occult? The answer, if one may be found, must surely lie in the idea that Christian faith deepens our spiritual life in a way that belief in the occult does not. And that, I think, is Kierkegaard's view, which is why he tries to give a sense of the spiritual emptiness of what he called the aesthetic and ethical ways of life and of the way in which Christian faith may deepen us. However, Kierkegaard does this principally not in *Fragments* but in others of his books, and since Rae has limited his discussion to the former he does not address Kierkegaard's reflections on the stages of life. Accordingly, a whole dimension of Kierkegaard's thinking, without which it is not properly comprehensible, is left out of Rae's reflections.

As already noted, Rae thinks that any attempt to ground faith on history, the human imagination or reason must fail because 'faith is utterly dependent on the grace of God' (106). The trouble with Rae's discussion here is that he gives us no real sense of what the acquisition of faith is like which will carry his point. Certainly he talks a lot about *gestalt* switches, paradigm shifts and changes in plausibility structures and life-views in an effort to make sense of an individual's coming to have faith in Christ, but none of this rules out the thought that the investigations of history or the workings of the human imagination or reason cannot be thought of as the *vehicle* of God's grace. It is, of course, true that faith would not be faith if it were wholly explicable, but this does not rule out that idea either. What it does mean is that even someone who is secure in his faith must be engaged on a life-long struggle to

deepen his faith: *this* will be where its mystery, where its nature as faith, resides. Yet Rae wants to say that any account of faith which bases it on history, the human imagination or reason is thereby reductive, and hence objectionable. Consider, for example, John Hick's attempt – which Rae discusses – to offer a metaphorical account of the incarnation which removes some of its deep puzzles. Rae criticizes Hick's account on the grounds that it is mistaken since reductive in the sense indicated. But this response is very odd, since Rae himself stresses – following Kierkegaard – that faith is not about assent to propositions but about living in a certain way. For it is not the case, as Rae seems to think, that, in removing some of the difficulties associated with the incarnation, Hick cheapens faith by rendering it within anyone's grasp regardless of the way he leads his life. For if faith is indeed about the way one lives and not the propositions one believes, then Hick's view must be assessed on what kind of spiritual resources it has, what kind of spiritual growth it fosters, whether a given person who professes to accept it is seeking to deepen his faith, and so on. Hick's view need not be reductive just because it makes certain things about the incarnation clearer unless it thereby replaces a struggle for spiritual growth with and through faith with a complacent and stupid self-satisfaction in faith (one of the permanent temptations of religion). But Rae does not address Hick's view in these terms, for, as we have seen, he is not really interested in this book in questions about the spirit.

The root of Rae's lack of interest in such questions lies, perhaps, in a certain naïveté which he demonstrates when he does discuss them. Thus he claims that God had to appear in the servant form of Christ since 'whoever learns to love God in the lowly form of a servant surely does not do so out of self-interest' (31). Rae is writing here as if the Dostoyevskian, Nietzschean and Freudian critiques of the tremendous self-enjoyment to be gained through lowliness and self-abasement did not exist. It is not that these critiques must undermine faith – Dostoyevsky, after all, thirsted for faith – but they need to be addressed if we are going to have a proper understanding of Christ and the spiritual life of the Christian. And this problem is particularly pressing for anyone who wishes to follow Kierkegaard in placing a sin at the centre of religious thought. For Kierkegaard often gives the impression that he himself took a great deal of pleasure in his sense of his own sinfulness. It is hard, at any rate, to avoid this impression when he insists that there is 'upbuilding … in the thought that in relation to God we are always in the wrong' (235), an idea which Rae finds profound. For such a thought, like prayer, is easily contaminated by greed, obsessions, fears and self-destructive impulses. And until we understand the nature of that contamination we shall not understand what someone really wants in emphasizing sin as Kierkegaard does. Rae does not even seem aware of the problem.

CHRISTOPER HAMILTON
Twickenham, Middlesex

Roger Trigg *Rationality and Religion*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998). Pp. vi + 226. £45.00 Hbk, £14.99 Pbk.

Speaking of religious belief, Wittgenstein famously remarked 'Not only is it not reasonable, but it doesn't pretend to be'[1]. Under the umbrella of this maxim, a wide variety of what could be called non-realist interpretations of religious belief have flourished. One thinks, for example, of writers as diverse as D. Z. Phillips, Don Cupitt, or of the general postmodernist movement. It is against this trend in the philosophy of religion that Roger Trigg sets his course. He argues that theistic religious belief is committed to a robust metaphysics, realistically construed. To support its position and to fend off attacks from critics, it needs to rely on reason, again in a robust transcultural or even universal sense of the term. And implicit in both the metaphysical ontology and the rationalist methodology will be a realist and universalist conception of truth.

Within the framework provided by these general constraints, Trigg pursues a cluster of ten questions, in answering each of which he aims to show the appeal of his general approach. An opening chapter, which is in fact strangely unconnected with the rest of the book, argues that whether religion should be publicly recognized depends on whether its claims are true. Succeeding chapters then argue that religion is not merely a social fact (i.e. is not something that can be adequately explained by social science); that not all religions can be true, since they make conflicting claims; and that religion can be just as rational as science. Two chapters in the centre of the book reject a cluster of views associated with, for example, reformed epistemology, which claims either that religious beliefs do not need to be supported by evidence at all, or that any justification must be 'internal' to a pre-accepted langauge game or practice. In the concluding chapters, Trigg urges that theism weakly implies dualism, that the theist needs faith as well as reason, and that religion presupposes a transcendent God.

Trigg adduces a variety of arguments in support of these claims. But two central ones run throughout the book. The first is that his opponents are caught in a self-refuting position, and second is that they cannot do justice to what theism actually *is*. The first of these charges relies on the traditional (indeed, ancient) objection to all forms of relativism about truth, namely that relativism must regard itself as true in exactly that non-relativist sense which it declares illegitimate. This is a good opening move against a position (like some forms of postmodernism) which embraces a universal relativism. But it is not clear that it provides any leverage against positions which embed a non-realist theism within a more generally realist metaphysic.

[1] Wittgenstein *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religion Belief* Cyril Barrett (ed.) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 58. Strictly, we ought to note that the quoted words may not be Wittgenstein's own, since they are taken from lecture notes made by his students which he himself did not check.

There is nothing obviously *self-refuting* about thinking of theism as no more than, for example, a self-enclosed set of Wittgensteinian language games, or a set of social practices which require social scientific explanations. Even if such a view is mistaken, it is not open to the traditional objection of self-refutation that is made to traditional relativism.

Is it then a mistake, albeit not a kind of self-refutation, to be non-realist about theism? That takes us on to Trigg's second line of attack, that non-realism cannot do justice to what theism is. The problem with Trigg's argument here is that there is no neutral position from which it can be decided what theism really is. Various kinds of realism about theism are possible, and so are various kinds of non-realism. Some of these interpretations are metaphysically more interesting than others. But we have no reason to suppose that the metaphysically most interesting interpretation of theistic talk gives the uniquely correct understanding. To suppose otherwise would be unacceptably essentialist.

Trigg's general attack, then, on non-realist interpretations of theism fails. But it might be thought that even if he cannot show that a rational realism is uniquely correct, he can at least show how it provides one possible and indeed attractive approach to theism. But even here, his discussion is unconvincing. At the heart of his position is a conception of the open-minded enquirer investigating the nature of reality. But the conception he offers us of the nature of this enquirer is beset with well-known problems; and he provides no clear account of what the methods of the enquirer should be.

Consider first the nature of this open-minded enquirer. Throughout the book, the figure of the rational enquirer, the one who is meant to be assessing both religious belief and the attacks on it, is invoked. But as the text proceeds, Trigg's conception of a rational subject becomes more nebulous. It eventually emerges that a rational thinker cannot be a purely physical system but must be 'a metaphysical self… that can be detached from its physical and its social environment and yet remain itself' (161). Trigg's main reason for accepting this dualist position is the wildly inaccurate thought that the only positions in the philosophy of mind are either substance dualism or eliminative materialist – even though the great majority of current philosophers of mind embraces neither of these positions. Trigg's opponent here can concede that there are of course problems in understanding how to integrate reason-explanations of human activity with, for example, physiological accounts of bodily movements and processes. But Trigg gives no indication of how any of these problems would be even *lessened* let alone solved by assuming that rational thinkers have a non-physical component. Nor does he hint at any solution to traditional problems for a dualist such as the interaction between the non-physical rational mind and the reason-guided bodily movements of the subject.

What then of the methods which this enquirer is to use? Trigg is convinced

that the enquirer must use both reason and faith, both science and religion. He seems to assign equal weight to these two contrasts, but it is surely the former that is of importance. Science is one (major) form of reason-based investigation. But it is not the only sort (think of the reasoning we conduct in our everyday lives, in law courts, in historical studies, or (more controversially) in philosophy). The doubts of the sceptic about religious claims are not properly based on the charge that religion is not *scientific*, but that it is not adequately *reason-based*.

Trigg's invocation of the necessity of faith is tacitly an attempt to meet that charge. But it is an attempt that at once raises the question: Can faith give us *grounds* for accepting anything? If so, how? How, for example, is it then different from reason? And if not, why should the open-minded enquirer treat its deliverances as a reliable guide to reality? How, in other words, can the roles of faith and reason be integrated? Trigg's answer to this question is typically unclear; but as far as I can see, carries the implication that faith is redundant. On the one hand, he tells us that, as he puts it, 'faith needs a rational basis' (214), and that if an enquirer is to be entitled to rely on faith, then she has to have reasons for choosing one faith rather than another. But the question then arises as what makes something an appeal to faith, rather than an appeal to derivative reasons. I may 'have faith' that, say, my spouse will not betray me; and that is a faith that has a 'rational basis'. But in such a context, 'faith' functions as a synonym for 'belief', and gives no ground for thinking that reason-based belief needs supplementing with a quite different supra- or non-rational something called 'faith'. On the other hand, Trigg tells us that 'If reason is inconclusive, it is possible to go on trusting' (190), where the context makes it clear that the trust is based on faith. But why is it 'possible' (i.e. a good strategy for a truth-enquirer) to 'go on trusting'? The same dilemma recurs: if there are reasons for going on trusting, what role has faith to play? If there are no reasons to go on trusting, why isn't the truster at best guilty of merely wishful thinking? So whichever way we go on the issue of faith, Trigg has failed to find any satisfactory role for it, and hence any satisfactory role for something that he regards as a distinctively religious approach.

NICHOLAS EVERITT
University of East Anglia