to Gillett, but he says nothing to convince me that there is a specific discipline of 'neuroethics' adapted to discussing them.

The point is important, I think, since it is not just philosophy but the humanities generally that are being invaded by claims made on behalf of neuroscience. My own discipline of aesthetics is now being bashed about by experts in 'neuroaesthetics', which subject has its own Institute, under Semir Zeki, at University College London, and its own journal. John Onians of East Anglia University has branded himself as a neuroart-historian, while Dartmouth College has a 'MacArthur Center for Law and Neuroscience', devoted to messing up legal reasoning by combining it with brain imaging. One by one real but non-scientific disciplines are being rebranded as infant sciences, even though the only science involved has absolutely nothing to do with their subject matter. I have no doubt that we will soon see chairs in neurotheology, neuromusicology and maybe even neurofootball and neurocookery too.

There is a very good reason to complain about this, and Gillett is well aware of it. As his argument shows, neuroscience is strictly irrelevant to understanding the nature, identity and moral predicament of the human person. Questions about the nature of the human person are in the first instance metaphysical, and no amount of brain imaging will solve them, or even help us to state them. Philosophy is a real discipline, but it is not a science. Aesthetics, criticism, musicology, law are also real disciplines. But they too are not sciences. They are not concerned with explaining some aspect of the human condition but with understanding it, according to its own internal procedures. Rebrand them as branches of neuroscience and you don't increase knowledge: you lose it. Brain imaging will not help you to analyse Bach's *Art of Fugue* or to interpret *King Lear* any more than it will unravel the concept of legal responsibility or deliver a proof of Goldbach's conjecture. It will simply propagate the newest of superstitions, which says that I am not a whole human being with both mental and physical powers, but merely a brain in a box.

Gillett's book, by a philosophically sophisticated neurosurgeon, might have helped us to understand the point, since it defends a particular kind of holism about the human being. It is all the more regrettable, therefore, that it is so atrociously written. Gillett has the vices of style that make anglophone philosophy unreadable (numbered sentences, unmemorizable acronyms, bracketed qualifications, the PC feminine pronoun etc.), backed up by uncritical borrowings from continental frauds – including the psychopath Jacques Lacan, whose intellectual credentials have been definitively destroyed by Gillett's fellow neuroscientist Raymond Tallis, as well as by Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont in their *Intellectual Impostures*. There is much to be learned from Gillett; would that he could teach it, therefore, in natural language, in his own voice, saying it straight.

ROGER SCRUTON

WHOSE GOD? WHICH TRADITION?: THE NATURE OF BELIEF IN GOD, edited by D.Z. Phillips (*Ashgate Publishing*, Aldershot and Burlington, VT 2008). Pp. vii + 173, £55.00 hbk

Perhaps the last book edited by the late D.Z. Phillips (d. 25 July 2006), this volume consists of papers delivered at the 2005 annual Claremont Conference on the Philosophy of Religion, held at Claremont Graduate University in California. Although of course very well known through his own work as a—if not *the*—leading exponent of a Wittgensteinian approach to the philosophy of religion, Phillips's contribution to the field has been latterly enhanced by a steady stream of edited or co-edited volumes consisting of the proceedings of these Claremont

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conferences—an outpouring of considerable interest from many different authors and perspectives, not just his own. While some of these conferences were focused on explicitly Wittgensteinian concerns, some ranged rather more widely, and this is one of those.

Although the title is an obvious allusion to Alasdair MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, and although the question of competing – and perhaps incommensurable – traditions of rationality is indeed discussed, MacIntyre's work on these topics is not addressed directly. Instead, as Phillips explains in his introductory essay, this volume deals with a twin challenge raised by much recent analytic philosophy of religion: namely, (i) the assumption, stated either explicitly or implicitly, that the work of prominent practitioners such as Richard Swinburne, Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Stephen T. Davis, William Hasker, and many others adheres firmly and faithfully to Christian 'orthodoxy and tradition' (p. 1), and (ii) the suspicion that in fact their work departs from that orthodox Christian tradition in many significant respects, not least in denying God's eternity, simplicity, and omniscience of free human actions (pp. 2–5). In some cases, for example with Wolterstorff, the revisionist character of their work is openly admitted and indeed insisted upon as part of a necessary programme of 'dehellenization' (see pp. 141–145). But in other cases, at least according to Phillips, such (Protestant) analytic philosophers seem largely unaware that their concept of God would be unrecognisable to their putative ancestors in the faith, including classical Reformed theologians, let alone Augustine and Aquinas. Or, rather, it would be recognised, but as a species of Socinianism or some other such heresy (see the essays by Brian Davies and Paul Helm for further discussion along these lines). And this despite the fact that such analytic philosophers are apparently more than willing to accuse Phillips and others of revising the tradition beyond recognition to suit their own philosophical predilections. As Phillips sees it, this is a perfect case of Matthew 7.3–5. And so, rather mischievously, he organised this conference to 'accuse the accusers' (p. 2), to turn the tables on his analytic colleagues and put *them* in the dock to face the charges of anthropomorphising the divine nature and thus violating what Phillips calls 'the grammar of God'.

According to Phillips, his inspiration for this conference actually begin in this very journal, in Brian Davies's 'Letter from America' (*New Blackfriars*, 84 (2003) 371–384), in which Davies – writing from a Thomist perspective – raised concerns about the anthropomorphic character of much recent philosophy of religion. This gave Phillips the idea of providing a forum for Davies and other like-minded philosophers to further express their concerns, and indeed the majority of contributors to this volume are Roman Catholics who are at least deeply knowledgeable of and sympathetic to the Thomist tradition, even if they are not necessarily Thomists themselves. Thus, after Phillips's introduction, the contributors include Fergus Kerr, Anselm Kyongsuk Min, Gyula Klima, James F. Ross, Brian Davies, and David Burrell. The two final contributors are philosophers in the Reformed tradition, Paul Helm (who writes firmly against the anthropomorphic trend noted above), and Stephen T. Davis (who provides a closing 'minority report' in defence of himself and the other figures 'accused' in this conference). In short, although Phillips provides an introduction that sets the stage and raises questions 'from a Wittgensteinian context' (p. 2), the actual content of the book is mostly Thomist or Thomist-inspired, with an ambiguous Reformed coda.

Having got this far in the review, rather than seeking to summarise the various essays, it is perhaps best to turn to the end, to Davis's response. He sets out 'two different ways of understanding the Christian God':

> *Theory A:* God is the unique, omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good creator of the heavens and the earth; God cannot fail to exist; and God is timeless, strongly immutable, impassable and metaphysically simple.

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> *Theory B:* God is the unique, omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good creator of the heavens and the earth; God cannot fail to exist; and God is temporal, weakly immutable, passable, and not metaphysically simple (p. 162)

Without going into detail on the content of each theory, it is sufficient to note that Davis says that, yes, he does indeed affirm Theory B over Theory A; that 'God is a person in at least some of the ways in which we are persons' (p. 162, note 3); that those who accept Theory A 'are inevitably drawn to compatibilist views of human freedom' which he cannot accept (p. 163); that at least in some sense it is proper to speak of God as 'an item in the universe' (p. 164); that the doctrine of divine simplicity is something he does not find coherent enough to even understand, let alone endorse (pp. 164–165); that he sees 'no philosophical or theological danger in affirming that God and human beings are both members of the set of *existing things* and the set of *individuals*'; that he rejects the view that God never passes through successive states; as well as rejecting the view that God does not experience pain; and that, in short, while he finds Theory A 'deeply intriguing and in many ways attractive,' it is 'in the end indefensible' (all remaining citations from p. 166).

It may seem somewhat perverse to spend more space in this review describing the 'minority report' than the essays that constitute 90% of the volume, but I have done so for two reasons. First, it is both fair and useful to hear directly from the 'accused' rather than to rely on perhaps unreliable second-hand sources; and second, the readers of this journal are likely to be more familiar with the tradition of Thomist or Thomist-inspired thought that animates the chapters between Phillips's introduction and Helm's paper. But these chapters are all worthwhile and illuminating in various respects, as indeed is Helm's, and I at least learned a great deal from each of them (without, of course, agreeing with everything they claim). And they all, in diverse ways, some more explicitly than others, set themselves against the sort of views articulated by Davis above.

So, just two closing thoughts. First, the subtitle of this volume is somewhat misleading: it should probably be *The Nature of Belief in 'God'*, in that the focus of most essays is the concept of God that is – or should be – believed, rather than the nature of belief itself. That is, this book is concerned with philosophical theology proper, rather than religious epistemology. Second, Davis is doubtless right that although his perspective is a minority report within the context of this particular book, it is in many ways more representative within the context of contemporary philosophy and theology (outside Thomist circles), particularly in its emphasis on God's capacity to suffer with us. As Davis says, 'in the past 100 years, not just most analytic philosophers of religion, but virtually the entire Western theological world (with the exception of those who embrace Theory A) has moved to the notion that God *qua* God suffers. It is now a virtual commonplace. (That does not make it true, of course.)' (p. 166). Although they are not all concerned with the topic of divine impassibility, the other chapters in this book present a very strong case for Theory A to be taken more seriously as, if not true, at least the normative tradition by which Christians have understood the grammar of 'God'.

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