

of Priesthood,' is mainly concerned with the old testament; the second, 'Women's Status and Function in Ministry,' chiefly revolves around the new. Hayter uses what she calls 'culture-critical' methodology to examine the biblical texts, not with a view to dismissing culturally-determined passages but in order to understand and interpret their meaning fully. The old testament section is particularly strong in its breadth of treatment, originality and clarity of expression; her explanation of the interrelation of social and religious concerns, and the parallels she draws between understanding of God and the conception of priesthood, are especially useful. The second section on christianity, is more derivative but treats particular difficult passages very fully, with proper regard for recent opinions.

Hayter is sometimes guilty of over-simplifying alternative viewpoints, particularly when she is trying to summarize the thoughts of a group as opposed to an individual. Her presentation of the views of non-Christian feminists, for instance, is frequently stereotypical, so that she argues against positions which do not exist as she delineates them. Nevertheless, this book is a fine synthesis of the study of women and ministry, and an original contribution to biblical scholarship in general. For anyone wishing to read or recommend an introduction to the tenets of christian feminism *The New Eve in Christ* would be an excellent choice.

KATE MERTES

THE CONCEPT OF REALITY by Edo Pivcevic. Duckworth 1986 ix + 296 pp. £19.95 hb.

A discussion of the concept of reality is a discussion not of one but of a whole cluster of concepts, all of them centrally important to philosophy. Among the chief of them are existence, individuation, pluralism, experience, time, objectivity, realism and truth. In this clearly written and absorbing book Pivcevic deals with them all. He has a sharply defined aim in view; it is to show that because, as he argues, the treatment accorded to existence claims in recent analytic philosophy will not bear scrutiny, and because its collapse involves the fall of allied views about truth and reality, it is therefore necessary to reexamine the basis of the concepts by means of which our thought about objects, reality and truth proceed. The bulk of the book is devoted to this task. In it Pivcevic advances a conception of reality as a function of structural interdependence between the concepts we employ in our epistemic activities. In one good sense of the label Pivcevic is therefore an anti-realist, and his book is a new contribution to the perspectives from which anti-realism, as a thesis capable of positive articulation, can be understood.

The book is divided into two parts of unequal length. In Part One Pivcevic investigates three connected themes, each of great importance. The first concerns the concept of an 'ontological existent', which Pivcevic examines in relation to the categories of identity, individuality and plurality. This exploration leads Pivcevic to the conclusion that our possession of criteria of identity for existents can only be explained if we look at the nature of the experience which takes them as its 'targets'. This constitutes the second theme. Pivcevic conducts us through a phenomenological analysis of the modalities of experience, showing how such an analysis clarifies the matter of *reference* and, further, that it is a necessary condition for reference that experience should involve a unity of biographical time. Discussion of problems about the individuation of existents leads, by a series of logical dependencies, through the issues of pluralism, relations and the conception of a 'subjective-objective' distinction. This introduces the question of *error*. Put thus summarily, the relevance of error may not appear obvious; but in Pivcevic's view a 'subjective-objective' distinction presupposes a plurality of logically independent selves, and this demands that in order to conceive the possibility of experience which I will never have, it is required that I should in principle be capable of mistaking facts about the biography of another. But this, in turn, in requiring that there should be means for identifying and correcting error, connects with the conceptions of objectivity and truth; and these form the third of the three themes Pivcevic discusses.

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The second and shorter part of the book is devoted to giving a sketch of a framework for understanding the structural interconnectedness of the concepts identified, in Part One, as all equally fundamental to our understanding of ontological existents. Among the discussions here there is a chapter-long analysis of truth, in which Pivcevic argues that truth has to be understood through an analysis of assertion; for the proper task, in his view, is to get clear about the nature of truth-claims, a matter far different from trying to establish what it is for a proposition to be true independently of the truth-seeking activities of cognitive agency. The overall conclusion in which the book issues is that reality is a *structure* generated by the activities of epistemic agents, and that the conception of the existence of things independently of any thought of them—'metaphysical realism'—is incoherent.

There is too much closely interlinked argument in Pivcevic's book for a critical discussion of it to be possible within the confines of a short notice like this one. It suffices to say that, inevitably, given the large amount of material constituting this wide-ranging book, various readers will doubtless find occasion for disagreement; I can see ways in which even those sympathetic to its argument may wish to redistribute emphases or redraw connections—and there are matters of detail which invite controversy. But the book is refreshingly ambitious in scope, and the treatment it gives of the issues addressed is instructive and highly interesting. Pivcevic's knowledge of the relevant literature is both ample and insightful, and a feature deserving mention is the seamless way he brings together considerations from phenomenology in the tradition of Husserl and the technicalities of analytic philosophy. Even those who might oppose the conclusions of this book, or who might be hostile to the very project in which it consists, are therefore sure to learn something from it.

A.C. GRAYLING

A CONVERSATION WITH PAUL by Wolfgang Trilling. SCM 1986, pp. x + 116. £4.50.

The author is an East German scholar who aims to persuade his fellow Catholics that there is much to be gained from grappling with Paul's ideas. He suspects, no doubt rightly, that they are reluctant to do so, and he himself partly shares this reluctance. Nevertheless he thinks it is to be overcome, and he explores Paul against his cultural and religious setting, while at the same time making apt comments about the relevance of the Pauline teaching to our contemporary situation.

There are a few endnotes, but no general bibliography, which is a pity, as some readers will surely wish to know where to go next. For a book that is aimed at a non-specialist audience this is not as easy to read as one might have expected, but it is considerably helped by 'The Argument of the Book', covering 3 pages and replacing a Table of Contents. Thus after the initial chapter which considers why Paul seems so alien to us, Chapter 2 is headed 'Then we look for a standpoint from which the whole of his life ... and his unique thought ... can be understood. We find a divided life in which there is a "before" and an "after": *I have seen the Lord*'. Similar pithy statements follow, on Chapter 3, 'Two Eras', Chapter 4, 'An Old Adam and a New Adam', and so on. Readers will be well advised to make frequent returns to these pages to keep a grasp on the direction and stages of the journey they are making.

The title, and these pages on the argument of the book, lead one to expect a somewhat chatty presentation. This expectation is not fulfilled. Nevertheless the progress through Paul's thought in a thematic way is logical and coherent and should prove illuminating for those who tackle it, so long as they are prepared to give it close attention. A great deal is packed into a short book.

Inevitably one looks to see if a Roman Catholic writer, in these ecumenical days, has fallen victim to the too-long prevalent practice of reading Paul on justification and the Law through Lutheran-tinted spectacles, just at the time when scholars like Stendahl, Sanders, and Räisänen have been teaching Protestant scholars of their error. On the whole Trilling comes out quite well, and certainly does not labour the idea that Paul was opposing Jewish self-righteousness and merit-centred salvation.

All in all, this is rather a good book, and should do the job for which it was designed.

JOHN ZIESLER