> so, it is possible to ask philosophers to make an extra effort to diagnose more fully the defect in question of which he is already half aware in order to articulate it explicitly. Then, of course, one stands a good chance of dealing with the real issue, which may lead to a genuine solution that will indirectly eliminate the possibility of counterexamples as well. (171)

To this I say, Amen.

Castañeda's views concerning counterexamples are somewhat more radical. According to him,

> counterexamples by themselves refute *nothing*. Counterexamples are *counter*examples only because certain assumptions have been taken for granted. Thus, part of the value of the proposed counterexample is to allow focusing criticism on some of those underlying assumptions. (256)

This view is part of Castañeda's larger thesis that "Philosophical theories, at least the comprehensive ones, cannot be refuted" (240).This in turn entails that attempts to refute philosophical theories—which attempts, Castañeda tells us, make up more than 80 percent of analytic philosophy—are misguided. What, then, should philosophers spend their time doing, if not refuting philosophical theories? They should devote their energies to developing philosophical theories and comparing them with other philosophical theories. According to Castañeda, there *is* a role for "refutations" in philosophy, but it is to "force the development of the theories attacked," not to refute them (257).

It is worth noting that both Schlesinger and Castañeda, in telling us what philosophers should and should not do, are really making, in a sense, axiological claims. We can appropriately ask them *why* philosophers should act on their recommendations, and the ensuing debate will be a debate, I suspect, over the goal of philosophy. This last topic is certainly one that deserves more attention from philosophers than it has received.

Among the other articles in the book are Jaakko Hintikka's "Questioning as a Philosophical Method," David H. Sanford's "Infinite Regress Arguments," J. J. C. Smart's "Ockham's Razor," Michael Scriven's "The Argument from Ordinary Language," and George Schlesinger's other contribution, "The Verifiability Principle." At least some of these essays will be of interest to anyone investigating the principles of philosophical reasoning or anyone teaching a course on the subject.

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Experience, Explanation and Faith: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, Anthony O'Hear.

Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, 266pp. $10.95 pbk.

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One expects a book with the subtitle *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* to include discussions of the topics that have traditionally been considered to be the basic ones for that field, and, on the whole, O'Hear's book does fairly well in this regard. It contains extensive and detailed discussions of traditional arguments for the existence of God: the ontological, the cosmological, and the teleological arguments (in the lengthy Chapter 4); the argument from religious experience (Ch. 2); and the moral argument (Ch. 3). There is a section on the problem of evil (Ch. 5), and some issues regarding religious faith are discussed (Chapters 1, 4, and 6). Over and above these traditionally crucial topics, as a sort of bonus Ch. 3 also gives detailed consideration to claims to the effect that "our cognitive activity requires the existence of God" (a view argued in various ways by Rahner, Lornergan, Kolakowski, and others), and Ch. 4 includes consideration of process theology as it is developed by Hartshorne. Although O'Hear's major concern is with the rationality of western theism, Indian thought is brought in in some places—such as Buddhist and Hindu approaches to the problem of evil. O'Hear's conclusion, as he tells us at the outset, is that "religious beliefs, at least in the forms...examined..., are not rationally acceptable....[R]ational men should look beyond religion for the fulfillment of their spiritual needs" (xiii).

As an "introduction" to philosophy of religion *Experience, Explanation and Faith* is a relatively big book. It is at least a third again as long as William Rowe's *Philosophy of Religion* (Dickenson, 1978) and probably twice as long as John Hick's *Philosophy of Religion* (even in its third edition: Prentice-Hall, 1983) or Brian Davies' *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1982). O'Hear, however, discusses fewer topics than Hick, Rowe, or Davies. The greater length of his book is the result of the fact that the topics he does consider are discussed at considerably greater length. I take this to be a virtue, since excessive brevity all too often leads to superficiality. (For instance, as clear and sensible as Hick's discussions are, one often has the feeling that his format dictates that they must end just when the issues begin to get interesting.) On the other hand I take there being fewer topics to be a defect. This is not just because there are other things that might well be discussed (e.g., Pascal/James sorts of view of faith, "Freudian" challenges to the rationality of religious belief). It is because there are some particular topics that are so basic to the western philosophical/theological tradition that they really should not be ignored (e.g., miracles, the meaningfulness of religious language). Certainly it seems nearly unconscionable to write an *introductory* book whose central question is the rationality of belief in the existence of the theistic God without beginning with any exposition at all of what is meant by *God* in the theistic tradition. (Rowe's Ch. One, "The Idea of God" and Hick's Ch. One, "The Judaic-Christian Concept of God" are excellent examples of what is needed.)

In a book that purports to be an introduction to a field of study one expects not only that standard topics will be discussed but also that the traditional issues regarding them will be presented. This is just what happens in O'Hear's section on the ontological argument. First, he gives the "original" version of the argument, the version found in Ch. 2 of Anselm's *Proslogion* and in Descartes' *Fifth Meditation.* He goes on to ask whether the concept of a being than whom none greater can be conceived is a coherent notion and whether existence can be regarded as a perfection. He then considers the two most famous objections to the argument: Gaunilo's contention that the principles of the ontological argument could be used to prove such absurdities as the existence of the greatest conceivable island and Kant's claim that existence is not a predicate. This encompasses some seventeen pages. The remainder of the section, another twenty-five pages, is taken up with consideration of, first, the version of the ontological argument developed by Hartshorne and Malcolm, and, second, the one given by Plantinga. The choice of all of this "mainstream" material for discussion is what one would expect in and what is appropriate for an introduction to the philosophy of religion.

Unfortunately, some of O'Hear's other discussions are much more idiosyncratic. The first part of his section on the design argument centers around Paley's version that takes off from "the ordering of means to ends" in nature. This version of the argument is generally taken to have been disposed of by evolutionary theory. O'Hear notes this and then discusses the plausibility of evolutionary theory at some length (124-32). The rest of the section is devoted to Richard Swinburne's formulation of the argument from design, a formulation which takes it that what is in need of explanation is the very orderliness of the universe, the fact that the universe conforms "so well to 'formulae recorded in the scientific laws formulated by men'" (132). Against this version, O'Hear argues (132-43) that something like Hume's "Epicurean" account may be correct, i.e., that it may be that the present order evolved from "an initially random shaking out" (141). Whatever the worth of all of this may be in itself, one comes to the end of the section wondering what happened to the traditional analogical version of the design argument, the version that has it that the universe is, as Cleanthes puts it, "one great machine." And if the claim is that the universe is a great machine, is the analogy close enough to allow any inference to a designer? If some inference is drawn, should it be to an infant deity? a senile deity? a corporeal deity? Whatever sort of being we might argue to, must it also not have a cause for its orderliness and so is anything gained by the inference? The classic analogical formulation and such Humean questionings of the design argument are simply passed over (with a brief reference on p. 123).

Thus, the ontological argument is discussed in traditional terms; the design argument is not discussed that way at all. Most of the other topics are discussed in ways somewhat in between. In most cases, I, at least, would want more "orthodoxy" in the material presented in an introduction to a subject. This, however, is not my most important objection to this book as an introduction to the philosohy of religion.

The most basic question that must be asked about this book has to do with its intended audience. In my comments above I have taken the subtitle at face value and have commented on the appropriateness of the content of the book considering it as an introduction to this sub-field of philosophy. If we now look at the way the content is presented, it becomes extremely difficult to see just what sort of person might be "introduced" to the philosophy of religion through this book. Here are a few brief, entirely typical passages:

> The very general empiricism of the previous sentence is not a purely arbitrary dogma. Since Kant, at least, the epistemological status of the unexperienceable thing-in-itself has been rightly regarded as highly problematic, precisely because of the way it fails to impinge at all on our experience. Strawson has summed up the difficulty.... (25)

(What is empiricism? epistemology? a thing-in-itself? Who is Strawson? Is he a friend of Kant?)

> Apart from examples from outside Christianity altogether, one finds the feeling in the German mystical tradition of Meister Eckhart and Jacob Böhme and its prolongation in Hegelianism and Paul Tillich. (147)

(Tillich? Hegelianism? Böhme?)

> It is surely significant that in cases where religions have become too public and impersonal for the faithful and too much bound up with state ritual, the people have gone elsewhere for personal inspiration. One can think in this context of the Panathenaia being balanced by the cults at Eleusis, or John Wesley's impact on eighteenth-century Anglicanism, of Christianity itself in the Roman Empire. (3)

(Well, those are certainly the things I think of right away.)

> It would be contradictory to think of God, and to think of him as not existing, in the same way as it is contradictory to think of a triangle's angles not adding up to two right angles. The reference in the last sentence is, of course, to Descartes' *Fifth Meditation*. (149)

(Of course it is. No student of mine would have failed to catch that right off.)

Perhaps there is a cultural difference here. O'Hear is from the British tradition. Hume completed the *Treatise* at twenty-three. Most American students do not seem to be quite like that. In American terms only a bright second or third year graduate student would be at all likely to have the background necessary to understand O'Hear's references. If these references were dispensable, this would not be a serious matter. But they are an integral part of O'Hear's exposition and discussion. Nor are they the sort of things that a professor might explain briefly so as to make the text of O'Hear's book intelligible. Explaining them would be more difficult and more time-consuming than presenting the material from scratch. In short, the sort of background knowledge and general philosophical sophistication that is required to understand this book makes it inaccessible to all but those who are not likely to be looking for an "introduction" to the field. More important, it makes it nearly impossible to imagine what use it might be for teaching purposes on any level.

Finally, I find this book to be extremely difficult in a way not yet mentioned. When I first began to read it I was a few pages into Ch. 1, "Faith and the Religious Life," when I realized that I did not know what I was reading *about*. The chapter begins with the observation that "anyone who studies religion, or who has been religious at one time and then has ceased to be, cannot fail to be struck by the fact that for the religious believer religious belief is a personal commitment..." (1). Before long we have moved to what would appear to be a significantly different claim, "religions give transcendent significance to people's lives and efforts..." (3). Shortly thereafter we have a long quote from Tolstoy about faith and meaning (5-6), then the statement of the view that says that "the meaning of any sentence of a given language...can be given by stating its truth conditons.... 'La neige est blanche' is true if and only if snow is white" (7), some exposition of Frazier's *Golden Bough* (8ff.), discussion of some of Wittgenstein's views (10ff.),...and on.... While the individual sentences and paragraphs made good enough sense to me, as I went along I just did not know why what was being said was being said, how any new thing fit with what was said before, what was at issue. When eventually the conclusion is drawn that the believer does not just conceive his faith "as a set of formulas to direct his life," but rather "he thinks that what it says is true" (17; 24), I was surprised. "So *that* is what was at issue all along!" Looking back again, however, from the later perspective of this conclusion still gives little apparent point to much of what is said.

Unfortunately, my experience with the first chapter was repeated over and over with other parts of O'Hear's book. It is very sophisticated philosophically. It occasionally makes discernably good points. But most of the points that it might make fail to be made because of a meandering style that involves neither carefully framing questions nor formulating arguments so that it is apparent what is at issue. Insofar as the book has a style, that style is like the life of the farmer who in successive years suffered through flood, fungus, drought, locusts, erosion, and foreclosure: "it looks like it's just one damn thing after another." And this is too bad. With better writing *Experience, Explanation and Faith* might have been a really good book for advanced students and professional philosophers.

Earlier I mentioned several other "introductions" to the philosophy of religion, none of which is as lengthy as O'Hear's. Yet another recent book is J. L. Mackie's *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). It is as substantial as O'Hear's book, and it is at least as sophisticated. And Mackie writes with clarity, style, and purpose. Anyone looking for an advanced level book on philosophy of religion would do well to look to Mackie.

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Philosophy: Theory and Practice, Jacques P. Thiroux.
Macmillan, 1985, 563pp. $30 cl.

RAYMOND S. PFEIFFER

As the main text for an introductory course, Thiroux's presentation of some of the main