

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.

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**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.

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