Truth: Studies of a Robust Presence

PRITZL, O.P., Kurt (ed.). *Truth: Studies of a Robust Presence*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010. 368 pp. Cloth, $79.95 –

This collection of essays derives from the Fall 2002 Lecture Series held in the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America. Undoubtedly professors and graduate students were drawn to these lectures, touching as they do on truth, an idea crucial to any philosopher's self-understanding. The result, after appropriate revisions, is a volume containing eleven essays concerning different aspects of truth in light of key figures in the history of philosophy. The volume also contains introductory remarks by the editor, Kurt Pritzl, who summarizes each essay for the reader; a 20-page bibliography; a brief biography of each contributor; and an index of authors and topics.

The subtitle indicates the non-deflationary, non-relativistic stance toward truth that the volume as a whole takes. The contributors, in other words, do not reduce truth to mere coherence, nor do they articulate truth solely in terms of correspondence; rather, each strives to characterize truth as a mark of being itself whose manifoldness can be explored and plumbed especially by looking to great thinkers in the various periods in the history of philosophy. Represented in these essays, then, are Plato, Aristotle, Anselm, Grosseteste, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Pascal, Kant, Peirce, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, among others; the contributors, moreover, look at truth from phenomenological, logical, anthropological, scientific, and metaphysical perspectives. The subtitle is justified, then, in that through these essays the robustness of truth makes its presence felt as, in the words of Pritzl, "a substantial and dominant reality in the lived experience of human persons as rational agents." (2)

The essays are, generally speaking, arranged in a chronological ordering of the main thinkers under consideration, although a few essays straddle different historical periods or deal more with a topic than a particular philosopher or set of philosophers. Although the essays move from ancient to medieval to modern to recent articulations of truth, the volume's overall presentation of truth is not historicist; on the contrary, after passing through the different periods of thought by means of these essays, Pritzl's assessment in the Introduction rings true: "The essays, for all their differences, all presume a worldly or engaged point of view, where truth is seen as part of

the fabric of human experience for humans who live in the world and are drawn to understand it even in its wholeness." (2) Pritzl's description of human beings—as "drawn to understand [the world] even in its wholeness"—is particularly apt for this volume, inasmuch as each essay manifests in its own way the relation between human cognition, truth, and the wholeness of reality. Taken together, moreover, these essays reveal how varying models or conceptions of the kind of whole that reality is modify the way in which philosophical accounts of truth unfold. The following comments reflect my reading of these essays in light of this general assessment of them proposed by Pritzl.

The first essay is "Aristotle's Door" by Pritzl himself, which is an appropriate beginning insofar as it points to how human beings are immersed in truth and cannot fail to know it. Truth indeed is like the proverbial barn door that one cannot fail to hit unless one simply refuses to throw the stone. For Aristotle, then, truth is the beginning and end of human cognition; it is the entry to human knowing and its destination. Hence, in light of Aristotle, Pritzl asserts, "The life of the intellect moves between these two poles, between the foundational grasp of the basic and irreducible unities that are existing things determined by their forms and the full scientific articulation of these things by definitions of their forms." (34) Pritzl's essay thus highlights two crucial aspects of Aristotle's understanding of truth: first, that as a door into all intellectual knowing, truth is present in the initial perceptive and noetic contact with reality; and second, that such truth can grow, that is, truth can be understood according to a biological model insofar as the movement of the intellect between the two poles results in a more extensive and more profound conformity of the intellect with the formal, causal structures of reality.

Concerning this first aspect, Pritzl argues for the following: that for Aristotle human cognitive powers are chiefly passive; that the very reception of forms by such powers *is* cognition; that this reception is veridical by nature; and that the form received is the physical or metaphysical principle of a thing in the world. In a nutshell, these principles constitute Aristotelian "realism." Pritzl is aware, however, that Aristotle's story about truth and human cognition is more complicated than these principles may suggest. "Even if it is granted," he says, "that the reception of form constitutes rudimentary veridical perceptual and intellectual awareness of things, cognitive life is hugely a matter of active operation on the part of the perceptual and intellectual faculties." (23) Pritzl is led, then, to consider the second aspect of Aristotle's understanding of truth mentioned above, that truth can grow, and the remainder of the essay shows how Aristotle brings his insights into living organisms to bear on the issue of truth and human cognition, especially with respect to the teleological ordination of human cognition, its structural and

causal unity, and its being an imitation of divine life. Pritzl thus plants in the reader an understanding of the Aristotelian account of truth experientially grounded in the phenomenon of life. Pritzl manifests, moreover, a sensitivity to the details and contours of Aristotle's thought that intimates the non-mechanistic and organic understanding of truth that he sees in Aristotle's works. Hence in this essay one is led to see what *philosophia* is for Aristotle, namely, a vital process toward an intellectual encounter and conformity to reality as a whole in terms of its causes, that is, a continuous growth in truth that is the human way of living a divine life.

Now, it is often the case that despite the traditional pitting of Plato and Aristotle against each another, those who spend time with their works perceive a deep resonance and resemblance in their philosophizing. Differences exist, to be sure, and yet Aristotle the student never seems to stray too far from Plato his teacher. Mitch Miller's essay, "A More Exact Grasp of the Soul? Tripartition in the *Republic* and Dialectic in the *Philebus*," evidences this, for it too reveals "life" as a central notion in Plato's articulation of the human soul, cognition, and truth. To filter out of Plato's dialogues a teaching concerning a given issue is, of course, always a thorny task. For one thing, it simply takes time to wade through the dramatic and dialectical elements of a Platonic dialogue, let alone to compare what two or more dialogues seem to say about the same issue. Miller, nevertheless, takes on the burden of such a task, attempting to "pursue the 'truth' in a Platonic sense in a central region of Platonic inquiry" by answering the following question: "How may we win *the deepest disclosure* of the embodied soul?" (40) Unsurprisingly, Miller's essay is lengthy, running a bit over 60 pages; yet a close reading of it pays many dividends.

According to Miller, the deepest disclosure of the embodied soul is not the tripartite division of it in the *Republic*, with which the majority of readers of Plato are probably most familiar; rather, it is to be drawn from the *Philebus*, where Socrates distinguishes between kinds of knowledge and pleasure, ranging from the pleasures of a healthy body to sense-perception to arts that apply mathematics to the understanding achieved in dialectic (and other types of knowledge and pleasure in between). Miller begins by showing how the *Republic* itself suggests a longer path than the one found therein, a path leading to a more exact grasp of the embodied soul. (As one who teaches the *Republic* regularly, I have at times shied away from these suggestions by Socrates so as to focus on the inexact but more ready-to-hand tripartite division of the soul. And so, among other benefits of reading Miller's essay, a teacher of the *Republic* has in this essay some means of putting interested students on the longer path.) According to Miller, the different kinds of knowledge and pleasure articulated in the *Philebus* point to various forms of "life" (*bios*), that is, aspects of a unified, unifying, intelligible continuum that

manifests itself in acts of "nourishment" that are distinguished by the different proportions in which they feed body and intellect. Miller's analysis of the *Philebus* is not only thorough, but also exemplary; he shows the attention to detail and the dialectical wherewithal needed to do justice to a Platonic dialogue.

This essay, then, argues that for Plato truth as we experience it is a feature of life, namely, life completely and integrally lived so as to give rise to health, virtues, skills, intellectual inquiry, and all their accompanying pleasures. Such a reading puts flesh on Plato's understanding of the human soul, especially when compared to the somewhat clunky tripartite account of the *Republic*. In the *Philebus*, as Miller interprets it, Plato presents an integrated account of the embodied soul, one that indicates the unified wholeness of human life as we experience it—or at least as we see it lived integrally by those well advanced in health, virtue, skill, knowledge, and wisdom. This physical, emotional, moral, and intellectual integrity of the human being is the truth—the full manifestation—of an embodied soul.

The next two essays make clear how the medieval Christian understanding of truth differs from that of the Greeks insofar as it is situated within a metaphysics involving a Creator identified as the Truth. The medieval thinkers covered in these two essays are inclined, then, to articulate universal accounts of truth that range from God as Truth to the truth of contingent propositions and all the degrees of truth in between. In "Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility in Anselm, Grosseteste, and Bonaventure," Timothy Noone facilitates the volume's transition to the Christian understanding of truth by differentiating it from that of the Greeks. His narrative takes as a point of departure Augustine, who "leaves behind a clear line of reasoning regarding the unchangeable character of truth, namely, that its primary referent must be God." (105) Yet, Noone asserts, Augustine's corpus "contains no systematic and cohesive account of truth at different levels and, instead, tends to be more suggestive of possibilities than anything else." (105) In the remainder of the essay Noone shows how the three thinkers mentioned in the title of his essay successively fill up what is lacking in Augustine's body of works.

Noone begins with Anselm's universal account of truth in terms of *rectitudo* ("rightness"), a notion of truth applicable to speech, thought, action, the will, and even God himself. Speech and thought are true when they are "right" (or "straight" or "in line") with what exists, while a will is true when it is "right" with what it ought to will. God is "[t]he Highest Truth, that according to which all things are true," which "must itself be a 'rightness,' but a rightness differing from any of the rightnesses whereby the other types of truth are true, inasmuch as it cannot fail to be as it ought and has no external measure of its rightness." (111) As Noone sees it, therefore, Anselm

articulates a hierarchy of truth in terms of cause and effect: at the top is God, cause of all truth and the effect of no other truth; at the bottom are thought and speech as effects of both God the Truth and the truth of things and which are not causes of truth; in between are the truth of natural things, which are effects of God the Truth and causes of the truth of speech and thought. Anselm's analysis of these degrees of truth leads eventually to his concise and universal account of truth as *rectitudo mente sola perceptibilis* ("rightness perceivable by the mind alone"). When such a definition is applied to all the levels of truth, one begins to see Anselm's conception of the world as intrinsically ordered toward God, though not toward a God who is a being extrinsic to the world, but toward a God who exists immanently as the creating and unifying ground of the ordination and intelligibility—of the underlying "rightness"—of created things. God, then, is the Truth, but in a way that does not detract from, but empowers the truth of created things.

Anselm's doctrine of truth, which clearly emphasizes the unity of truth in God, becomes fertile ground for subsequent thinkers, and Noone shows this by spelling out the accounts of truth found in the works of Grosseteste and Bonaventure. Part of what becomes clear in Noone's narrative is the important role of a thinker like Grosseteste, who does not have the philosophical reputation of an Anselm or a Bonaventure. In a way this essay justifies the different standings of these thinkers; for Noone's narrative reveals Anselm's spirited originality as a thinker who aims at a comprehensive account of the whole of reality, Bonaventure's excellence as a unique and nearly incomparable synthesizer of the tradition, and Grosseteste's important (but often forgotten) role as a mediating figure. More specifically, Noone shows how Grosseteste is compelled to be more nuanced in his treatment of truth, making further distinctions in order to elucidate the plurality of truth, that is, the different modes and types of truth, which receive little sustained attention in Anselm's *De veritate*. Bonaventure, in turn, clearly benefits from Grosseteste, at times adopting the distinctions Grosseteste himself makes. Yet Bonaventure's account of truth is part of a more comprehensive view of reality, a metaphysical view that sees all creatures as signs of God. According to Bonaventure, Noone says, "Creatures are not simply placeholders for the Uncreated Truth; they are signs and expressions of that Truth that naturally point beyond themselves to their source." (123) In Bonaventure's writings concerning truth, therefore, one encounters not only a learner who has assimilated a variety of perspectives offered by thinkers of greater and lesser stature, but also a great teacher who can recapitulate with precision and innovation a metaphysical vision of the whole that hearkens back to Anselm's original aim in the *De veritate* of presenting a comprehensive and unified account of truth in light of the Truth.

In the ensuing essay, Jan Aertsen's "Truth in the Middle Ages: Its Essence and Power in Christian Thought," the focus remains on medieval thinkers—this time Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, and Nicholas of Cusa. As the title indicates, however, the essay is oriented less historically and more sapientially. Aertsen manifests an enviable familiarity with the works of medieval thinkers, but he also demonstrates its relevance to contemporary philosophical concerns. Aertsen laments, "The era of truth is past; what remains is a plurality of contexts and perspectives that cannot be integrated into a whole, so that there can at the most exist a truth-for-me." (130) Aertsen's coverage of the three medieval thinkers mentioned above, however, offers a possible antidote to the current of subjective relativism, inasmuch as Anselm, Thomas, and Nicholas are cognizant of the manifoldness of truth and yet strive for a unified account of truth that is flexibly adequate to this manifoldness. In addition, by means of the differing emphases of these three thinkers, Aertsen brings to the foreground three different aspects of truth found in the medieval reflection on truth in general: its ethical aspect (Anselm), its metaphysical aspect (Thomas), and its critical aspect (Nicholas).

The essay as a whole bespeaks Aertsen's seasoned and historically informed philosophical reflection. Indeed, he is right to say near the conclusion of his essay that he does not recall here "museum knowledge of the Middle Ages which has since become obsolete, but fundamental dimensions of truth, toward which man is intentionally directed in his life and thought." (146) Aertsen's essay thus stands out as a paradigm for this entire volume, in which one sees how historically oriented approaches to philosophical topics may best dispose one for grasping the full length, width, and depth of enduring (and thus contemporary) philosophical questions.

The essays by Noone and Aertsen make apparent the richness and the synthetic character of medieval thought as driven by the doctrine of creation by a Creator who is Truth. Immediately following these essays, the reader is faced briefly with the next era of philosophy, the modern, during which the notion of truth in its various dimensions seems less present—excepting, perhaps, its critical dimension. Unfortunately Daniel Garber's "Religion and Science, Faith and Reason: Some Pascalian Reflections" falls short in bringing out some of the more profound reflections on truth and human cognition offered by a thinker like Pascal, whose writings betray a modern thinker who is nonetheless something of a fish out of water among the moderns.

Garber is right to recognize Pascal's important contributions when it comes to thinking about truth and knowledge, and yet he clouds the issue by translating Pascal's insights into the heart and its knowledge into the vague terminology of "mind sets." Garber presents examples that point to the different ways people receive information, and from these examples he suggests

that for a human knower "there is a kind of cognitive state that inclines one toward certain kinds of beliefs and structures the way in which one sees the world." Garber continues: "It is the kind of thing that Pascal has in mind when he talks about knowledge of the heart, I think. But so as not to associate it too closely with the precise view that Pascal put forward, let me call it a 'mind set'." (157) What follows, then, are Garber's "Pascalian reflections" on mind sets, and yet these reflections fail to reach the conceptual depth of Pascal's *Pensées*.

Garber's reflections appear to be more "psychological" than "epistemological." What I mean is this: Garber seems more concerned with what is required for a person, such as a "secular scientist," to have a "conversion experience," (167) whereas Pascal is concerned with unveiling the inescapability of the heart's knowledge and reasons when undertaking any human inquiry whatsoever. In this way Garber's "mind set" is ultimately not on the same level as Pascal's "heart." Pascal does not think that the heart is ambiguous in what it knows, even though one can choose to ignore it or even proceed against its inclinations (as, for example, Descartes seems to do at the beginning of his *Meditations*). In Garber's essay, however, differing mind sets seem to be presented as equally primordial. A consequence of Garber's view, it appears, is that a move from mind set to mind set—for example, from that of a secularist to that of a believer—is not a matter of reason. But in order to understand Pascal, it is crucial to see that the heart has "reasons," that is, that there is a rationality that underlies the rationality according to which math and science proceed, and that seeing this allows one to see how modernity has focused too exclusively and superficially on a "derived" rationality. To get at the truth of things for Pascal, then, is not merely a matter of happening to adopt the right mind set; rather, it is a matter of unveiling and following through on the natural rationality of the heart that initiates and underlies all human inquiry. This may consist in something like a conversion experience, of course, but such an experience occurs with the recognition of its reasonableness. Garber's account of mind sets, on the other hand, leaves little space for this sort of rational conversion.

The subsequent essay, Sean Dorrance Kelly's "On Time and Truth," explores how our temporally conditioned experience jibes with our ability to get at the truth of things, especially the truth of something as moving. Kelly points out the following *aporia*: whereas we seem to experience a thing as moving now, nonetheless all movement occurs over time. Kelly puts two approaches to this problem into dialogue, "the method of Retention" and "the doctrine of the Specious Present." (173) The former Kelly associates with Kant and Husserl; the latter, with William James and the contemporary philosopher Barry Dainton. Over the course of the essay Kelly clearly moves

in the direction of the method of retention, mainly by showing how the notion of a specious present fails to hold water.

According to Kelly, "defenders of the Specious Present claim that we do have a direct perception of duration, that we experience the world, in other words, in temporally extended units that are taken in as a whole." (174) From that description alone, especially from the idea of taking in a temporally extended unit as a whole, the reader may already be able to perceive the difficulty of such a view—which may explain the "specious" epithet attached to the "present" here. Is not talking about a temporally extended present a contradiction in terms? Indeed, as Kelly says, "The doctrine of the Specious Present … proposes that we are at every moment in direct perceptual contact not only with what is now occurring but also with what has recently occurred and indeed with what is about to occur as well." (181) Kelly points to three patent difficulties with this solution: "how I could now be perceptually aware of something that is no longer taking place," (181) "how we could experience duration directly at all," (181) and "how I could now be perceptually aware of something that has not yet occurred." (182)

Kelly articulates the alternative by recapitulating how Kant and Husserl explain our experience of something in motion. According to Kant, Kelly says, "the experience that I am having now is always accompanied by a reproduction of the experiences that immediately preceded it." (178) What Kant means by "reproduction" is, however, vague, and Kelly does not delve into Kant's understanding of imagination enough to clarify its meaning. Instead, he turns to Husserl, who "prefers to talk of *retaining* elements of the recent past rather than of *reproducing* them." (180) Indeed, "Retention, according to Husserl, is a unique kind of intentionality that is unlike any kind of reproduction or memory." (180) Husserl's solution to how we experience something now as moving, then, may remind one of what Aristotle says in *Posterior Analytics* II.19 when describing how human beings apprehend universals that underlie reasoning: "… and the soul is such as to be capable of undergoing this." Husserl seems, then, to point to retention as a distinctive cognitive act that cannot be understood simply as a collection of momentary sense perceptions.

Kelly's essay is philosophically intriguing in that it forces the reader to come to grips with such a basic experience in which the complexity of the human ability to know is highlighted. I wish that Kelly had pursued Kant's notion of imagination further or had tried to spell out what Husserl is touching on when speaking of retention. On the plus side, however, he ends the essay by pointing to Heidegger's awareness of the connection between Dasein's temporality and the possibility of truth. Such a connection suggests that work needs to be done in spelling out how intelligence affects the way a knower experiences phenomena in the world in a way that is adequate both to

their unified character and to their temporal extendedness. In fact, by reaching further back in the philosophic tradition one may find thinkers who articulate the structure of human cognitivity in a way that addresses precisely the *aporiai* with which Kelly is concerned. For me at least, the rich anthropology and psychology of Thomas Aquinas comes immediately to mind.

Kelly's essay brings forward the issue of truth and temporality, and it concludes with reference to Heidegger. Fittingly, then, the next essay, Daniel Dahlstrom's "The Prevalence of Truth," centers on how Heidegger deals with the notion of truth and its interplay with our temporality. The title of this essay, says Dahlstrom, refers to "the very opposite of the rabid accumulation and computability of an ever-increasing cache of true assertions about states of affairs and facts of the world." Rather, for Heidegger, the prevalence of truth "demands nothing less than the concealment of being." (187) The essay makes clear, therefore, that Heidegger is aware of the *depth* of the problem of truth, a depth that Dahlstrom nicely situates between or underneath correspondence theories and deflationary accounts of truth. As usual, Heidegger's very terminology—which Dahlstrom captures precisely in his translations—compels the reader to deal in a more primordial way with the question of truth.

As Dahlstrom shows, Heidegger arrests his readers by bringing to the surface the ontological dimension of truth that grounds ontic or factual truths. The following passage should give a sense of Dahlstrom's understanding of Heidegger on truth:

> In contrast to contemporary approaches to being and truth as abstract universals and 'true' as a predicate designating a property of propositions and the like, Heidegger understands truth as the very prevalence of being, the clearing for its historical unfolding that involves both its unconcealment and concealment. Heidegger accordingly distinguishes the truth about being from truths about entities, a distinction that … also indicates both a dependence of the latter upon the former and certain parallels between them…. Someone with an understanding of being has to be there for something to present itself, just as a biologist is required for something to present itself as a virus. But that understanding of being is also a realization that being conceals itself and cannot be unlocked, like a virus's DNA, by a change of perspective. (198)

This passage indicates the ontological notion of truth to which Heidegger wants to direct our attention. The essay, of course, presents a more detailed analysis Heidegger's views on truth that I cannot fully encapsulate here, including explanations of key terms (such as the Greek *alêtheia* ("truth") and

the German *Wesen* ("essence")). Of course, anyone familiar with the discussion of truth in recent philosophy knows that Heidegger's voice is crucial, and in Dahlstrom one encounters an interpreter who is highly attuned to Heidegger's language and thinking and who refuses to put Heidegger into prefabricated hermeneutical boxes. Dahlstrom reads Heidegger in a way that respects his rhetoric as well as his careful choice of words, and that attempts to find a unity in his views over time rather than simply presuming change. The success of this essay, though, is more universal than simply a penetrating and articulate reading of Heidegger; for by means of this essay one is invited to engage philosophically with the foundation of the truth of entities that one is wont to take for granted.

The final four essays do not focus on a single author or a particular period in the history of thought; rather, two of them take a more topical approach to the question of truth, while the other two offer more sweeping historical accounts. In the first of these final four essays, "Will versus Reason: Truth in Natural Law, Positive Law, and Legal Theory," Brian Bix provides a useful introduction to the issues that surround truth in a legal context. The chief aim of the article is modest: to outline the various philosophical solutions with respect to how truth is present in law. As the title indicates, Bix sees among the basic options "a rough distinction … between justifications based on 'will' (or 'fiat') on the one hand, and justifications based on 'reason' on the other." (210) What becomes evident, however, is just how difficult it is to separate will and reason when considering truth's presence in law. From Bix, then, the reader should not expect any pat solutions to the difficulties he raises; rather, the essay's intention is to raise questions and to indicate the thorniness of articulating what it means to say that this or that law (or positive law in general, or the natural law) is true.

In certain circumstances it seems that a coherence theory of truth would best resolve the difficulties surrounding truth in a legal context, a context in which, according to Bix, "there is an effort to create, simultaneously, a coherent normative system and a decision-making procedure that can (intentionally or unintentionally) modify that system in the course of resolving disputes." (231) Truth in this context may simply mean that the parts fit together into a functional and non-contradicting whole. But even within this limited scope coherence does not seem adequate, especially if one takes seriously the notion of natural law, which suggests that certain things in principle ought to be done or ought to be avoided in order to achieve happiness or the good. Hence one surmises that a better solution to the difficulties surrounding legal truth would involve both voluntaristic and rationalistic aspects. Indeed, Bix's essay is a success insofar as it begins to elucidate the framework for such an adequate theory concerning truth in a legal context. In fact, Bix's analysis reminded me of the insightfulness of Anselm's understanding of truth as

"rightness" and its flexible application to both thinking and willing. Such a notion may be helpful toward an adequate account of truth in a legal context, where both reason and will together appear to serve as sources of truth.

The title of the subsequent essay, "Art and Truth: From Plato through Nietzsche to Heidegger," suggests a return to the question of truth from a historical perspective, but in fact Robert Wood does much more than that in his essay. For besides making connections between three major figures in the history of philosophy, which he does with enviable comprehensiveness, Wood also guides the reader to consider more deeply the nature of truth and human nature. The latter occurs especially in the concluding section, where Wood offers concise and thoughtful reflections concerning truth and human nature that develop out of the careful treatment of the works of Plato, Nietzsche, and Heidegger earlier in the essay. Consider, for example, the following pregnant passage:

> I would maintain that human existence, as an organically rooted empty reference to the whole of beings, is fundamentally bipolar. The articulation of a world for human dwelling takes place in the space between the now of organic life and our reference to the encompassing whole. This bipolarity constitutes the irremovable framework within which perspectives on the whole come to exist. In fact, that structure explains why there must be perspectives: because of the essential perspectivity of our biological grounding and the emptiness of our reference to the Whole. Such structure entails an imperative to enter into dialogue with the multiple perspectives present in the history of thought and in our contemporaries with a view toward gaining a more adequate understanding of our place in the whole scheme of things. (270)

Such a passage—and the concluding section is replete with them—should give a sense of what Wood himself is capable of seeing and articulating after putting three great thinkers from the philosophical tradition into dialogue.

In the earlier parts of the essay, Wood reveals a remarkable meticulousness in his interpretations of Plato, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, including a sensitivity to how words are used by these authors in polyvalent ways. When discussing Nietzsche, for instance, Wood articulates five different senses of "truth" that can be found in his works; soon after Wood analyzes Nietzsche's use of "art" and differentiates four senses. These are among the numerous subtle analyses that Wood offers, and when taken together, they solidify his claims about the intimate connection between truth and art in Plato, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. In light of his careful readings of other philosophers, therefore, as well as his own evident philosophical acumen, the reader

is disposed to appreciate and accept the remarks with which Wood brings his essay to a close:

> In each of the thinkers [that is, Plato, Nietzsche, and Heidegger], art's role operated at the limits of conceptuality. And it operated in such a way as to bring the whole soul into relationship with the ultimate, however that was conceived. Art is able to give articulation to the belonging of the whole soul to the character of the encompassing Whole.... Its deepest task is to create a space for human dwelling, to bring the human heart into the truth of its belonging to the Whole, and to set that upon the earth of sensibility. Its sensuousness is full of sense. Making full human sense is learning to inhabit the sensible in a way that is open to eternal encompassing. (276)

Anyone interested in the connection between truth and art will not want to miss this essay by Wood.

Unfortunately, the next and penultimate essay in this volume, John Milbank's "Truth and Identity: The Thomistic Telescope," though aiming as well for a comprehensive view of a variety of thinkers, nonetheless lacks the clarity and concision of Wood's essay. Milbank offers what may be accurately called a whirlwind tour of an astounding number of both well known and lesser known thinkers. However, the essay lacks order, and a reader may feel a bit "coerced" by it, not knowing whether one has been rationally convinced by Milbank or only affected by his rhetoric and the seemingly overwhelming amount of evidence that he brings forward. Milbank does succeed in getting his reader to see how a kind of faith or trust is at the heart of how one encounters and articulates reality philosophically. For Milbank, there appear to be two fundamental options: either a nihilistic encounter with reality or an encounter that is open to apprehending the ontological truth of reality. According to Milbank, one's recognition and acceptance of stable identities in reality, the rejection of which seems to be the mark of modernity, stands as a touchstone. In his narrative, then, nominalism is a transitional moment from which modernity and its accompanying skepticism takes its start, and Milbank clearly prefers earlier approaches that are more trusting of reality's ability to reveal its inherent order to us.

This volume concludes with a topical essay by Susan Haack called "Truth and Progress in the Sciences: An Innocent Realist Perspective." As Pritzl notes in his introductory comments, Haack "reprises the Aristotelian contours of the issues of reason and truth sounded at the beginning of the volume." (13) In a sense, then, the volume comes full circle. Haack's essay is influenced by the common-sense approach of Charles Peirce. "[A]s Peirce says," Haack writes, "'a man must be downright crazy to doubt that science

has made many true discoveries'." (312) This essay may be seen, then, as the working out of the sane view, the view that, yes, we human beings are capable of knowing what's real and of making progress in such knowledge. Such an attitude toward human inquiry and science entails a philosophically coherent view of both reality and human knowing; thus Haack intends "to articulate how the Innocent Realist metaphysics underpinning [her] Critical Common-sensist epistemology helps answer traditional questions in philosophy of science about observation and theory, generals and explanation, truth, and progress." (312)

The essay proceeds by taking up in order four concerns of the philosophy of science that Haack lists at the end of the passage just quoted. Thereby the reader is led to see what Haack means by "Innocent Realism" and "Critical Common-sensism." The latter involves a trustful and rational appropriation of the givens of sense-perception and observation, an epistemological approach rooted in the former, namely, the metaphysical view arising from a conviction that the world gives itself to us truly and in a way that, when received rationally, ultimately reveals itself to us in a trustworthy manner. The attribution of innocence to this metaphysical view of Innocent Realism is appropriate here, especially when being innocent does not mean being naïve or immature, but means doing no harm (as its Latin etymology suggests). From the perspective of innocent realism, reality does no harm, cognitively speaking. Reality does not lie or deceive; on the contrary, it offers itself—it makes its appearance to us—generously and openly, as much as it is able. The fitting response, therefore, is to be commonsensical in our reception and appreciation of it, to trust it, and to follow its leads. But to receive it successfully and in a way that leads to scientific progress means to do so "critically," especially when being critical does not mean having a kind of judgmental edginess, but rather discernment (as its Greek etymology suggests). Overall, then, Haack's essay suggests that a Critical Common-sensism based on Innocent Realism is (if I may allude to the biological analogies in the earlier essays on Aristotle and Plato) the healthy and life-fulfilling way to encounter reality and to make progress in our scientific understanding of the truth of things. And such a down-to-earth view, moreover, is not a bad way to end a volume of philosophical essays on truth.

This is not the kind of book that most will read cover to cover; rather, it is the kind of book from which one copies this or that essay for the sake of teaching or research. As a reviewer, however, I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to read the entire volume. Those who choose to read this or that essay will, generally speaking, be illuminated by the interpretations and ideas it presents, as I hope the individual assessments offered above indicate. But those who choose to read the entire volume will, in addition, be inclined toward a philosophical consideration of truth that is more traditional, more

informed historically, and oriented more metaphysically. As I see it, then, this volume will help its readers to see truth as the transcendental feature of being that medieval thinkers understood it to be, a feature that conveys how reality paradoxically loves to hide despite its constantly revealing itself to knowing eyes. Overall, therefore, I commend the authors for their stimulating essays and the editor for the coherent organization of them; for taken all together these essays succeed in presenting the manifold ways in which truth is "a substantial and dominant reality in the lived experience of human persons as rational agents." (2)

—Mathew D. Walz, University of Dallas