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infinite regress of events. Craig's own arguments are interesting and frequently suggestive. For all these reasons, this book should be examined by anyone seriously interested in the cosmological argument.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Russell, Bertrand, *The Principles of Mathematics* (2nd edition; London: George Allen and Unwin, 1937): 358-9.

Christopher Stead, *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), xiii + 315 pp., \$49.50.

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For Aristotle, the question "What is substance?" lay at the very heart of First Philosophy, and he struggled mightily with it in the middle books of his *Metaphysics*. Readers of Aristotle through the centuries have no doubt found his discussions of *ousia*, or substance, less than fully illuminating, but the concept of substance has still gained a foothold in the Western philosophical tradition.

*Ousia* has had a long and checkered career in philosophy, but its most notorious role has perhaps been the theological one it has played in the formulation of the Christian doctrine of the trinity. *Ousia*, at the core of both Aristotelian metaphysics and trinitarian theology, must surely rank as one of the most obscure concepts with which an intellectual historian can be confronted.

Into this field of darkness confidently strides Christopher Stead, a theologian who has written a book for an audience of philosophers and theologians. *Divine Substance* is an attempt "to review the concept of substance as developed by the ancient Greek philosophers, and especially by Aristotle; and then to consider how, when, and in what degree this concept affected the doctrine of God developed by Christian writers of the first four centuries A.D., and especially the Trinitarian concept of one God in three Persons" (p. v).

Stead's strategy is first to sharpen his analytical tools and then to move chronologically through the Greek philosophers from Plato, through Aristotle and the Stoics, to those of "late antiquity." This consumes slightly more than half of the book. The remaining pages take up the theological tradition (including the Gnostics, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, and others) culminating in the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. A concluding chapter reviews "the more general question of what is involved when we apply the term 'substance' to God" (p. 267).

The book is not intended as a "purely historical study" (p. v); rather, the author conceives of himself as dealing also with "the logical problems presented by terms like 'being', 'identity', and 'unity'" (p. v). But, as the opening chapter amply demonstrates, Stead's grasp of "modern logic" is shaky, at best, and philosophers who read this book will notice that the philosophical issues that most interest them are rarely dealt with adequately. Still, his scholarship is impressive (especially, it seems to me, in his familiar theological territory), and the philosophical reader can learn a great deal here of the complexities of early

Christian theology. How the book will be received by the theologians in its audience I will not surmise; I can say, however, that they will not learn much philosophy from it.

The opening chapter is a twenty-four page essay attempting to provide a "conceptual framework" for the remainder of the work, and deals mainly with topics in the philosophy of language. It includes a catalogue of the varieties of use of abstract nouns, a discussion of the different senses of the verb 'to be', and a summary of modern discussions of substance. Here Stead has plunged blithely into rather deep waters, and he does not always manage to stay afloat. Thus, one learns that philosophers of the "empiricist tradition" treat statements of the form 'x exists' as being about *words* (pp. 9, 11); these philosophers are then taken to task for advocating an "artificial" construal of, e.g., 'Patriotism does not exist nowadays', which is clearly not just about the word 'patriotism'. Of course, without having distinguished between singular terms and predicates, Stead is in no position to appreciate the traditional treatment, much less to criticize it. Although he tells us that "modern logic has been able to break new ground by drawing a sharp distinction between the grammatical form of sentences and their logical force [*sic*]" (p. 7), he does not see that just this distinction would demand a reparsing of the sentence, with the predicate 'is patriotic' replacing the singular term 'patriotism'. Otherwise, I cannot see why he regards patriotism and 'patriotism' as the only two candidates for the sentence in question to be "about."

Other errors abound: 'reference' is frequently used when what is intended is 'sense', or 'meaning'; '⊃' is said to symbolize "implication of predicates" and to mean "formally implies" (p. 15); although Quine's *From a Logical Point of View* is quoted on p. 6, it is not mentioned on p. 13 where Stead claims that "modern logic . . . has set up a sharp . . . distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions." (One senses that Stead's reading of Quine did not include "Two Dogmas of Empiricism.") Finally, and most peculiarly, Stead feels that it is possible, "without offending against empiricist canons of logical rigour, . . . to say that 'God exists' is a statement about the life of God which normally carries existential import, and so normally conveys the much more commonplace judgement that there is a God" (p. 18). If I understand this position, it is that 'God exists' asserts *more* than that there is a God: it entails, but is not entailed by, the latter. I am unclear how this can fail to offend against anyone's canons of logical rigor.

Stead begins his historical survey with Plato, rather than Aristotle, presumably because of Plato's influence on early Christian thinkers and his more than occasional use of the term '*ousia*'. On Stead's account, Plato's use of '*ousia*' in the early dialogues is connected to the characteristic 'What is x?' question: it is "a counterpart to the phrase 'what x is'" (p. 32). In the middle period, the term comes to mean "transcendent reality"; in the late dialogues, it has the sense of "phenomenal reality" (pp. 37, 47). Throughout, Stead's account follows standard lines of exegesis and is for the most part quite plausible. More interesting is Stead's observation that Plato's use of '*ousia*' suffers from an "imprecision" (p. 29) due mainly to "undetected ambiguities in the use of the word 'to be'" (p. 42). On the one hand, '*ousia*' can represent the predicate: the *ousia* of x is *what x is*, *ὅ ἐστιν*. On the other, it can represent the subject: '*ousia*' can mean "something that exists," *ὃ ἐστιν* (pp. 26, 29). Stead seems to be flirting with the charge that Plato's introduction of Forms (the "transcendent realities" of the middle period) is based upon grammatical and conceptual confusions. But the charge (an interesting one, although probably

unjustified) never gets made, and it is unclear what sort of conclusion Stead thinks can be drawn from his grammatical and conceptual observations.

Aristotle comes in for more detailed (55 pages) and much harsher treatment. Stead begins with the *Categories* and works his way through *Metaphysics* Z and H. Along the way he finds Aristotle guilty of “some very persistent confusions” (p. 97), including (pp. 97-98):

- (i) The confusion of names with things . . .
- (ii) A confusion in the senses of the word ‘to be’ . . .
- (iii) A confusion of species, as classes of beings, with specific forms which are thought to define those classes . . .
- (iv) The confusion of subclasses with true individuals.

What are we to make of all these “confusions”? No doubt Aristotle’s readers often find him confusing, but this is not always because he is himself confused. He can be maddeningly obscure, and since obscurity is often evidence of confusion, Stead’s assessment is a tempting one. All the same, I doubt whether Aristotle was quite so confused as Stead has suggested. For example, Aristotle is notoriously careless about distinguishing use from mention, and it is fair to say that he does not always make clear whether he means to be talking about words or things. But this hardly shows that Aristotle was guilty of the confusion that Stead alleges, rather than a failure to express himself as clearly as he might have.

In a chapter entitled “Aristotle and the Unity of God”, Stead raises some interesting questions about the connections between the trinitarian doctrine and Aristotle’s views on matter and individuation. Thus, suppose a trinitarian theologian attempts to explicate the relation among the three persons on Aristotelian lines:

- (1) they cannot be three distinct individuals in the same species, for they are immaterial and “only material things can differ numerically” (p. 94),
- (2) nor can they be three distinct species, “in view of the Nicene doctrine that they are consubstantial” (*ibid.*), and
- (3) if they are “numerically one,” trinity seems to have collapsed into unity.

This is a nice puzzle, and Stead attacks it with abandon, grasping the first two horns of the trilemma (while ignoring the third) and ultimately attempting to refute the (allegedly) Aristotelian doctrine of individuation itself. The attack, however, is not uniformly successful. He is surely right, for example, to point out that “Aristotle freely admits pluralities of identical things which are not material in any ordinary sense of that word, for instance mathematical figures” (p. 95). Thus, either some immaterial things differ numerically or the sense of ‘matter’ can be extended, as needed, to cover them. In an case, (1) is to be rejected. But (2) also comes under attack: for ‘species’ is used very loosely, and any difference at all, however slight, between immaterial beings would be a “formal” difference, a difference in species. Thus, “there seems to be no valid objection . . . to describing the three Persons as distinct species within the common genus of deity” (*ibid.*). Clearly this will not do. Is God to be identified with the *genus* of which the three persons are species? But God is supposed to be an individual, not a universal; and if God is a genus, then the three persons are no more the same God than *dog* and *cat* are the same animal, or Socrates and

Callias the same man. Is God then whatever *belongs* to the genus of deity (i.e., whatever '... is God' is true of)? If so, there will be three gods, since there are, on the proposal under consideration, three species of deity. Perhaps the three are somehow one—but now we have returned to our original puzzle. In his eagerness to show that the Aristotelian framework can accommodate the idea that while the persons are three, God is one, Stead has failed to pay close enough attention to the question of what, in this Aristotelian framework, God is supposed to be one *of*.

It is somewhat surprising that Stead, having argued that the Aristotelian notion of matter poses no special problems for theological purposes, goes on to attack (what he takes to be) Aristotle's doctrine of matter as individuator. Stead argues, against Aristotle, that "form-denoting words and matter-denoting words are used symmetrically; neither class has any special connection with universality or individuality" (p. 99). 'This *x*' can be ambiguous between 'type of *x*' and 'individual *x*' whether '*x*' is replaced by a form-word, like 'circle', or a matter-word, like 'bronze' (p. 100). But the doctrine that matter individuates (whether or not Aristotle actually held it) is surely untouched by this objection. For the objection assumes an absolute distinction between form and matter (so that, for example, some things, such as bronze, are just simply *matter*) whereas on Aristotle's conception that distinction is context-relative (cf. *De Gen. et Corr.* 320a3-6, 318b28-32). 'This bronze', then, can exhibit the ambiguity Stead has pointed out; but where it means 'this type of bronze' it designates not matter but *form* (e.g., a certain ratio of copper to tin).

Stead goes on to consider later reactions to Aristotle and to detail the various senses in which '*ousia*' came to be used in late antiquity. (His "idealized" chart lists 7 levels in 4 modes, for a total of 28 different senses!) Chapter Seven marks the transition into the more purely theological section of the book, with a discussion of the question 'What is the substance of God?' and one on the issue of the compatibility of the divine attributes. Here Stead aptly observes that conflicts on the question of God's substance may easily be illusory, due to the multivocality of 'God's *ousia*'. Instead, one lesson well learned from this book is that theological disputes were often at cross purposes for just this reason. As Stead puts it, "... our theology is avoidably confused, since answers were sought before the question itself was adequately defined" (p. 158).

The last 90 pages of the book are devoted almost exclusively to an examination of the term '*homoousios*', usually translated 'consubstantial' but more literally 'of the same substance'. The term is crucial to Stead's concerns because it is ultimately used to describe the relation among the several persons of the trinity. Stead carefully lists all of the occurrences, prior to the outbreak of the Arian controversy, of the Greek term *ομοούσιος* and of its Latin counterpart *unius substantiae*, and patiently examines most of them. '*Homoousios*' seems to have been introduced in the second century by Gnostic Christians with, roughly, the sense 'made of the same kind of stuff' (p. 190); it is not until the late third century that we find "the first tentative use of the term to formulate the Christian doctrine of the Trinity" (p. 202). Origen was apparently the first Greek writer to use '*homoousios*' to "indicate the Son's relationship to the Father" (p. 211), and it is he who was "mainly responsible for introducing the word *homoousios* into Trinitarian theology" (p. 221).

It was at Nicaea in 325 that '*homoousios*' became cemented into Western dogma. Arius had scandalized the recently converted emperor Constantine by feuding openly with his bishop, Alexander of Alexandria, preaching unorthodox doctrines, and gaining a considerable following. Arius maintained that the Son "once was not" but was "begotten out of not-being" and that the Son

was therefore inferior in status to the Father. Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea to put an end to the dispute; the Creed that was ultimately agreed upon anathematized the principal points of Arian doctrine, declaring the Son to be “from the substance of the Father” and not “from another *hypostasis* or substance (*ousia*),” but *homoousios* with the Father. The flexibility of this language was such that all but two of the several hundred bishops assembled were able to sign the creed even though most of them were from the East and had had pro-Arian leanings prior to the Council. On Stead’s assessment, the Nicene fathers achieved a “formula of compromise” (p. 242) which theologians of both sides could “develop” or “restrict” to suit their own doctrines. If this is right, then ‘*homoousios*’ not only lacked any precise sense, but was written into the Creed for just that reason.

Nevertheless, Stead endeavors to determine the meaning of this term as it occurs in the Nicene Creed. He distinguishes three “conceptual possibilities” (p. 246). Two or more beings may be said to be *homoousios* if

- (1) they are numerically identical, or if
- (2) “there is a single *ousia* to which they both belong, and of which they are aspects, parts, or expressions” (p. 246), or if
- (3) they severally have . . . a single *ousia*; that is, if they have the same generic or specific characteristics” (p. 247).

(Here Stead is just being careless. All of these “conceptual possibilities” treat the *homoousios*-relation as symmetrical, although, as Stead himself points out (p. 260), Athanasius, anti-Arian spokesman and defender of Nicaea, takes the relation to be asymmetric: the Son is *homoousios* with the Father, but not, presumably, conversely.) Stead claims that (3) captures virtually all of the pre-Nicene uses, and argues against (1) and (2) as accounts of the Nicene use. But the sense of ‘*homoousios*’ proposed by (3) is, as Stead points out, “elastic” (p. 248), and it is no wonder that even the Arian strategist Eusebius of Nicomedia was able to sign the Creed “without gloss or explanation” (Chadwick, *The Early Church* [London, 1967], p. 134).

The concluding chapters of this book contain a wealth of detail on texts of the Nicene period, and are likely to be of great interest to professional theologians. But philosophers interested in the question of the logical coherence of the trinitarian doctrine are bound to be disappointed. The trinitarian theologian is attempting to steer a middle course between the extremes of Sabellian monotheism, on the one hand, and both Arianism and tritheism, on the other. These extremes, whatever their theological shortcomings, have the advantage of the logical clarity that comes from an adherence to Leibniz’s Law: if the Father and the Son are the same God, then the Father suffers if the Son does; if the Son, unlike the Father, was begotten, then the Father and the Son are not the same God. To steer clear of these extremes while still maintaining the basic Christian conception of God in three persons requires flouting Leibniz’s Law. Stead himself puts the point quite succinctly: “. . . the basic embarrassment for Christian trinitarian doctrine derives from conflicting theological pressures to maintain that the three Persons are identical and that they are distinct. . . .” (p. 94). This book does nothing to help relieve the doctrine of this embarrassment, precisely because the logical problems themselves concerning identity and distinctness are never squarely confronted.

The volume has been beautifully produced (as would befit its high price) and is remarkably free of misprints; I noticed minor ones on pp. 43, 60, 166,

and 312. Another small slip on p. 161, however, seriously distorts the sense: the deletion of a single letter has ascribed to Plato (*Rep.* 509b) the "dictum that the God [*sic*] is . . . 'beyond being' . . . in dignity and power."

J. B. Schneewind, *Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

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Though it is apparently more often referred to than read, Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* is an acknowledged philosophical classic. Out of print for several years in the 1950's it was brought back into print in 1962 by two publishers, independently of each other, and has now been allowed, inexplicably, to go out of print again. One would think that this classic work of one of the most eminent of Cambridge thinkers would be retained in print perpetually by that university's own press. But not so, to our great loss. Now, however, the press of her sister university, Oxford, has provided some compensation by publishing J. B. Schneewind's *Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy* [9].<sup>1</sup> Let us hope that its appearance will stimulate some enterprising and conscientious publisher to make the original available once more.

Schneewind's book is superb, a model of good scholarship and good sense. In careful and painstaking inquiry, sagacious analysis, wide-ranging knowledge, and illuminating synthesis it approaches the quality of Sidgwick's *Methods* itself. As an account of British moral philosophy of the Victorian period it has no rivals, and as an account of Sidgwick it supersedes all predecessors. Schneewind speaks of "the richness of argument, the subtlety of analysis, and the wealth of minute observation which pervade the *Methods*", and points out that this has "usually been recognized", but "What has been ignored is the originality, profundity, and comprehensive scope of the underlying argument . . . If in its attention to detail as well as in its range of concern the *Methods*. . . challenges comparison . . . with Aristotle's *Ethics*, in the depth of its understanding of practical rationality and in its architectonic coherence it rivals the work of Kant himself" (421-2). I think this is a reasonable estimate, though hardly a mere echo of the one current, and that Schneewind's *Sidgwick* establishes it.

The heart of the work is a detailed commentary on *The Methods of Ethics*, the 8 chapters of Part II running to nearly 200 pages, arranged in part sequentially and in part by topic. But Schneewind's book is not just a book on Sidgwick's *Methods*. It sets the *Methods* in the context of Sidgwick's whole philosophy—his metaphysics and epistemology and his conception of method and of the nature of philosophy—and in the context of the philosophical problems he inherited from the tradition in which he worked. Thus the first part of the book, "Towards *The Methods of Ethics*", contains an account of the development of Sidgwick's thought and of his views on philosophical method and a sketch of "the history of British ethics from the time of Reid and Bentham to the time when the *Methods* was being elaborated" (vii). Thus the controversy between the utilitarian and the intuitionist schools is described in contemporary terms, as is J. S. Mill's attempt to "rework" utilitarianism in the light of objections to it that were then current. Those who know Schneewind's earlier