

tioned by Grayling. But it is hard to write an introduction to a whole area of philosophical inquiry, and Grayling has done a good job. His book is informative and lucid, and it can be warmly recommended to those who want to start learning about its subject matter. It is less demanding, and yet in some ways more wide-ranging, than either Haack's *Philosophy of Logics* (Cambridge, 1978) or Harrison's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Language* (London, 1979), with which it is likely to be compared. Students and teachers of philosophy should both find it invaluable.

The same, I think, cannot be said of Nielsen's book (though having recently published a work with the same title as Nielsen's, I am open to the charge of bias). An introduction to the philosophy of religion, like any introduction, cannot be expected to cover everything. But students

turning to such a work can reasonably expect to be told about topics like the classical theistic arguments, the problems involved in discussion of particular divine 'attributes', the philosophical questions arising from notions like 'immortality', 'miracle', 'providence' and so on. But Nielsen's book is basically an extended essay on religious assertions in general. As far as I can see it adds little to his earlier works *Scepticism* and *Contemporary Critiques of Religion*. Nor is it likely to be welcomed with enthusiasm by the many theistic and non-theistic metaphysicians who are now as numerous as their verificationist predecessors of the 1950s, with whom Nielsen has much in common. Nevertheless, Nielsen has a good line on his hobby-horse of 'Wittgensteinian fideism'. He should certainly be read by those who are interested in his subject.

BRIAN DAVIES O P

THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF VATICAN II by **Rodger Charles S. J. with Drostan MacLaren O P.** *Plater Publications, Ignatius Press, Oxford and San Francisco, 1982. pp xxvi + 569. £12.75.*

This useful book is the first major venture to issue from Plater Publications, which aims to assist in the study of Catholic moral teaching. The authors work at Plater College, Oxford, and their text is the outcome of several years teaching experience both at Plater and at the Catholic Institute of Social Ethics (founded in 1972), which merged with Plater in 1979. The book can be primarily recommended as a text-book. Its expository value is considerable, for it provides analyses and commentary on the social teaching of the Council, together with numerous references to contemporary writing on social ethics, and documentation including Council statements, Encyclicals, and papal addresses. Topics dealt with include natural and divine law, conscience, marriage and the fam-

ily, and the ethics of political and economic life. The ethical judgments of the Holy See provide the principles promulgated in the text, and some readers may think that alternative principles are given less of a run for their money than the best of all possible books would allow. But the ideal implied in such a criticism is meaningless, and this book does much to defend its overall position. It also acknowledges the existence of alternatives and the way in which, at certain points, ethical agnosticism is both necessary and reasonable. Students of Vatican II will find it invaluable, as will teachers of moral theology and Christian ethics. The book is well produced and is very clearly written. It contains an excellent annotated bibliography.

BRIAN DAVIES O P

THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS Volume XX, by **Karl Rahner.** *Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981. pp 191 £14.50*

This book contains about half the essays in what Rahner himself has described as his final volume of *Schriften*. They date between 1977 and 1979. Admirably

translated by Edward Quinn, they repeat familiar themes in Rahner's repertoire. None is heavy going. On the contrary, age seems to have released him into a new luc-