

Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks. Nicholas Wolterstorff, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1995. x + 326 pp.

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Regardless of whether one agrees with the content of Wolterstorff's *Divine Discourse*, it is clear that it is a ground-breaking and philosophically powerful piece. In this book, based on his 1993 Wilde Lectures at Oxford, Wolterstorff brings together themes from speech act theory, Biblical interpretation, religious epistemology, theology and philosophical hermeneutics. At the intersection of these fields lies a claim Wolterstorff sees as fundamental to Judaism, Christianity and Islam (p. 8): the claim that God speaks. More specifically, the claim that centers Wolterstorff's book is that God performs illocutionary acts. *Divine Discourse* is devoted to a defense of this claim. Wolterstorff's defense involves three projects. First, he seeks to establish that God, despite lacking a physical body, *can* literally be said to speak; that is, it is logically possible for God to speak. Second, he hopes to show that given his analysis of what it is to speak, God is in fact the kind of being who can speak. Finally, he argues that the claim that God speaks is plausible. As a corollary to these projects, Wolterstorff also provides some guidance for interpreting scripture for divine speech. Due to the immense number of research areas Wolterstorff brings together, to do full justice to his book would require treating it from varied perspectives. I do not pretend to be able to do so. Given my own interests and background, I will be evaluating Wolterstorff's book primarily as a piece of religious epistemology. I hope to be as just as possible, though recognizing that there is far more to be said than can be said here.

Due to the non-physical nature of God, it has been widely believed that God cannot *literally* speak in the way that you or I can (p. 10). God, after all, has no physical organs by which to speak. On what I'll call the traditional view, talk of God's speech must be

taken metaphorically. The end result of the traditional view is that divine speech becomes subsumed under divine revelation (pp. 9-10). This, Wolterstorff notes, is why the topic of divine speech, despite its fundamental role in western theism, has received such little attention. On the traditional view, God "speaks" to us through revelatory acts. These revelatory acts can be of many different types: scripture, history, personal religious experiences, etc. But God does not speak in any *literal* sense in these acts. Such acts (at least the latter two) are probably just as much *showings* as they are *sayings*, if not more so. Wolterstorff argues that recent developments in speech act theory can provide us with an intelligible, and ultimately preferable alternative to the traditional view. God can indeed literally speak.

It is in this critique of the traditional view that Wolterstorff's first project lies. Wolterstorff takes up Austin's distinction between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Wolterstorff notes that the three are logically separable (p. 13). What this means for divine discourse is that it is logically possible for illocutionary acts to be performed without any *locutionary* act; thus it is logically possible for God to literally speak even though God lacks a physical body. Half of the traditional view has been quickly dismantled. Wolterstorff could be content to rest on his laurels, having established that God can literally speak, but he is unhappy with the rest of the traditional view as well. Wolterstorff sees as objectionable the reduction of divine speech to divine revelation. Once we treat divine speech as an illocutionary act, this reduction is blocked. Wolterstorff, following Swinburne, claims that revelation involves a dispelling of ignorance concerning something that is hidden (p. 23). As an example, consider the homosexual who decides to "out" him/herself. A feature of this person which was once hidden from us, of which we were previously ignorant, has been disclosed. Revelation, as described, involves a transmission of knowledge. The outed homosexual has provided us with knowledge about this specific aspect of his/her person. We should beware, however, of overly anthropomorphizing revelation. An item of knowledge can be hidden and then revealed without its being hidden or revealed *intentionally*. The background radiation from the Big Bang was hidden for millennia without its being intention-

ally hidden by any agent, and its discovery came about largely by accident. However, since we are interested in *divine* revelation, we can treat revelation as intentional. In our context, divine revelation is God's intentional transmission to us of some piece of knowledge which was once hidden, something of which we were previously ignorant. Wolterstorff distinguishes between Manifestational and non-Manifestational (or Propositional) revelation (p. 28). Manifestational revelation involves a natural sign for what is revealed. To use Wolterstorff's example, a husband's snapping at his wife is a natural sign of anxiety. Propositional revelation involves non-natural signs, primarily linguistic signs, and involves someone (the revealer, the one revealed to, or both) having propositional knowledge. If divine speech is a form of revelation, surely it is a form of Propositional revelation. But can we carry out this reduction? Wolterstorff thinks not. His reason is straight-forward and (at least so it seems to me) obvious: revelation is knowledge-transferring, though not all illocutionary acts transmit knowledge (p. 32). More specifically, while revelation transmits knowledge concerning what is revealed, illocutionary acts do not necessarily transmit knowledge of what is illocuted (my apologies for the ugly term). The outed homosexual's revelation transmits knowledge about what s/he reveals: his/her homosexuality. But consider now one of Austin's favorite illocutionary acts, my promising to meet you tomorrow. My promising may be said to reveal something, but what it reveals is something like my intentions, *not* my promising itself. The same goes for commands. My requesting that you shut the door may reveal something about my desires, but it does not reveal my request itself. Commands and promises may be revelatory, but what they reveal are not commands and promises (p. 35). Thus, at least *some* divine speech (and I suspect those speech acts which are of the most importance to us) cannot be reduced to divine revelation.

Wolterstorff's second project is to show that God is in fact the kind of being who can be said to speak. The first step in accomplishing this is to provide an account of illocutionary acts. On Austin's account of illocutionary actions, what makes an illocutionary act what it is is convention. It is because certain conventions have been established and are accepted that my uttering

the words “I will” under certain circumstances constitutes the act of marrying. To put it in another way, illocutionary acts are what they are because of established institutions, both social and linguistic. Wolterstorff does not find Austin’s account complete:

One reason this will not do—it’s a point which has been made by several writers—is that often our speaking just doesn’t follow the linguistic rules. ... Yet we really do say something—do really perform the speech act. As when I request someone to pass the salt with the sentence, “Could you pass the salt?” The response of the whipper-snapper teen-ager who replies, “Yes, I suppose I could” and then does nothing, highlights the difference between what was asked and what the rules of the language would tell us was asked. (p. 79)

We sometimes really do perform illocutionary actions even though we violate established rules or conventions. Wolterstorff also rejects Austin’s account on the grounds that we do in fact have an institution-independent conception of some illocutionary acts:

... though on first glance it seems promising to understand asserting, commanding, and similar, as institutional facts, rather like hitting a home run and committing a balk, the promise proves illusory. For whereas the action of hitting a home run is *constituted* by a particular set of rules, surely an action like assertion is not so constituted. There are many different ways of asserting; there could be more. If, in a given situation, we are for one or another reason dissatisfied with the standard ways available to us of asserting something, we can devise a new way. We have a concept of assertion which is, in that way, rule-independent. (p. 81)

If I may expand Wolterstorff’s criticism a bit, it seems to me that the problem is that we have to have an institution-independent con-

ception of some illocutionary acts in order to be able to establish or revise our institutions and conventions.

Now if convention isn't the answer, what exactly is? Wolterstorff's answer is that what makes an illocutionary act what it is is that it takes up a specific normative standing (pp. 82-5). Illocutionary acts have attached to them normative requirements. My promising to meet you tomorrow comes with a *prima facie* obligation to do so. We are *morally responsible* for our illocutionary acts; to perform an illocutionary act is to embroil oneself in a normative endeavor.

This has consequences for the requirements a being must meet to be a speaker. Since to perform an illocutionary act is to adopt a certain normative position, only a being which is a moral agent can be a speaker. Beings which are not moral agents can perform locutionary acts (and perhaps perlocutionary acts as well), but they cannot perform illocutionary acts. God must be a moral agent, a *person* (p. 95). At this point Wolterstorff embarks on a path he is best served, I think, by not taking. He spends a good deal of time discussing the divine command theory. Wolterstorff likes the divine command theory because it *requires* that God be part of a community of speakers (pp. 99-100). But, paradoxically, the divine command theory rules out the possibility of God being able to speak because traditionally the divine command theory claims that God's commands do not apply to Godself (pp. 99-100). Since God's commands are what determine right and wrong, and God's commands are not applicable to Godself, nothing determines right and wrong for God. God is not in the position of being a moral agent—God cannot adopt a normative position. Thus, on the divine command theory, God cannot perform illocutionary acts. Wolterstorff, however, quite rightly notes that there is no good reason for the divine command theory to saddle itself with the claims that God's commands don't apply to Godself (p. 107). Many supporters of the divine command theory (most notably William of Ockham) have *claimed* that this independence is necessary for God to be truly sovereign, but no good arguments have been advanced for this position, and there is no good philosophical or theological reason to hold it. Thus, we can jettison such a claim, leaving us with a purged version of the divine command theory which will require

that God be part of a community of speakers and allows for God to be so. But such a roundabout way is unnecessary, and accomplishes little save to inform us of what moral theory Wolterstorff accepts (especially since he doesn't argue for the divine command theory here). All he really needs to claim to place God among the community of speakers is that (1) in order for any being to qualify as God it must be morally perfect, and (2) moral perfection requires being a moral agent. If both of these are true, then God can take up the normative position required by illocutionary acts. (2), I take it, is uncontroversial and almost surely analytically true if anything is. Thus, Wolterstorff would need to defend only claim (1). Such a claim, I think, could be defended on the grounds that 'God' serves as a title denoting a being which is worthy of total devotion, and only a morally perfect being could be worthy of such—though moral perfection is surely not *sufficient* to qualify as God, it is, I think, necessary. Following this route allows Wolterstorff to avoid invoking a moral theory which is widely considered false, which would make his case more convincing.

Wolterstorff then takes up the issue of whether it is possible for God to cause those events which are generative of discourse. There is a relatively straightforward way to argue that the answer to this question is 'yes'. God, being the creator, created the world in such a way that divine speech is built into the fabric of the world from the very beginning. That is to say, at creation God already knows when God will speak, what God will say, etc. Divine discourse is, so to speak, accomplished at the moment of creation. But Wolterstorff is not satisfied by such a defense. This defense, he points out, assumes that there are true counterfactuals of freedom. Wolterstorff himself does not believe that there are, though not wishing to bog his readers down with the debate over this (a wise choice), he does not argue for this claim. If Wolterstorff is correct, and there are no true counterfactuals of freedom, then God cannot impose divine discourse on the world at creation; God must intervene in worldly affairs to speak (pp. 122-3). The question then becomes whether God can causally intervene in worldly affairs. The prominent reason for thinking that God cannot is the alleged causal closure of the physical world. Physics, so the argument goes, presupposes that the world is causally closed—no external influ-

ence can exert itself on the physical world. But does contemporary physics, or any other science for that matter, really require this? Wolterstorff is skeptical. Natural laws, he points out, are always *ceteris paribus* laws (p. 125). No natural law rules out the possibility of an outside influence, a case where *ceteris* is not *paribus*. Since this is the case, we cannot rule out the possibility that the world is causally open. Thus, God's intervention does not violate any natural law (p. 126). God's intervening in worldly affairs to speak is scientifically and philosophically acceptable. Wolterstorff's argument, though powerful, is not entirely convincing. Certainly *individual* natural laws are *ceteris paribus*, but this won't resolve the issue at hand. What strikes me as being the crux of the issue is whether the entire *system* of natural laws is *ceteris paribus*; that is, whether all causal influence must come from *within* the physical world. The mere fact that natural laws are *ceteris paribus* does not automatically permit God to have a causal influence; the physical world can still be causally closed. Thus, Wolterstorff has not entirely succeeded in defending the claim that God can cause the events constitutive of speech acts.

Wolterstorff's third project is to make *plausible* the claim that God can speak. It is worth noting here that Wolterstorff is involved largely in internecine warfare. He works from the assumption that God exists; it is not until almost the end of the book that he takes any effort to make plausible to the non-believer that God speaks. In most of the book, he is concerned with providing fellow believers with an intelligible account of how it is that God speaks. God speaks through what is called 'double agency'. Double agency is discourse through words not uttered or written by oneself (p. 38). We can think of this as an illocutionary act performed through the locutionary act of someone else. While the idea of double agency looks odd at first, reflection shows that it is actually fairly commonplace. A song dedicated to one's beloved is an act of double agency; *I* say something to my beloved through the medium of someone else's musical performance. One can also see double agency in the literary example of *Cyrano*. Examples abound in the political arena; political leaders often speak through their representatives. Wolterstorff identifies two modes by which double agency occurs: deputization and appropriation (pp. 41, 52).

Deputizing occurs when one person is, in certain specified circumstances, authorized to speak for another. Madeline Albright, for example, is authorized to speak for President Clinton. Through Albright's speech, it is *Clinton* who demands of Saddam Hussein that he comply with U.N. weapons inspectors. Consider also a secretary's typed memo to the office: it is through the secretary's memo that *the boss* speaks; the secretary has been authorized to deliver memos on the boss's behalf. We can also put this by saying that Albright speaks *in the name* of President Clinton, the secretary in the name of the boss. We can see religiously significant examples in the Old Testament's prophetic writings (p. 45). Prophets, like oracles of old, are said to speak in the name of God. When Moses delivered the Decalogue to the Israelites, it was *God* who was making commands. (Consider, for example, the First Commandment, which begins "I am the Lord thy God...". How else are we to make sense of this except as Moses delivering a commandment in the name of God; that is, God's commanding through Moses?)

Appropriation occurs when one agrees with the discourse of another. Seconding a parliamentary motion, for example, is a case of appropriating discourse. It is to accept as true the discourse of another. This need not, however, involve agreement on all elements—rather, agreement need only be on the essentials, the main point or message. Thus, one who seconds or co-sponsors a motion need not agree with everything put forward in the resolution nor approve of the exact wording of it; friendly amendments are possible. This, Wolterstorff argues, is all that is needed for scriptural authority—scripture is appropriated in its essence by God (p. 54).

Wolterstorff prefers the appropriative model of divine discourse to the deputizing model (p. 186; though note that he does not entirely reject the deputizing model—p. 187). While the western theistic traditions are rich in prophetic tradition, deputizing has attendant ambiguities (cf. pp. 46-7). It is not always clear which speech by the deputized is done in the name of the deputizer. We can see this in the many Biblical passages which seem to move back and forth between deputized and one's own discourse. Wolterstorff provides the following example from Hos.9:11-17 (quoted from p. 46):

Ephraim's glory shall fly away like a bird—
 no birth, no pregnancy, no conception!
 Even if they bring up children,
 I will bereave them until no one is left.
 Woe to them indeed when I depart from them!...
 Give them, O Lord—
 what will you give?
 Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.
 Every evil of theirs began at Gilgal;
 there I came to hate them.
 Because of the wickedness of their deeds
 I will drive them out of my house.
 I will love them no more;
 all their officials are rebels.
 Ephraim is striker,
 their root is dried up,
 they shall bear no fruit.
 Even though they give birth,
 I will kill the cherished offspring of their womb.
 Because they have not listened to him,
 my God will reject them...

Some parts of this are clearly Hosea's voice alone: "Because they have not listened to him, my God will reject them". Others, like "I will bereave them until no one is left" is clearly meant to be God speaking. But other parts are ambiguous. In whose voice should we hear "Ephraim is striker, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit"? These problems don't arise for the appropriation model. God appropriates the main message of the passage. God cannot in this case appropriate the letter of the passage; for it contains much that could not rightly be attributed to God, such as God's hating the Ephraimites. But God *can* appropriate the essence of the passage: the Ephraimites will be bereaved because of their rejection of God. This does not, however, make discerning divine speech an easy task; it still remains to interpret the essence of appropriated discourse. All this assumes that there is *an* essence to the passage; it requires authorial-discourse interpretation. Many contemporary hermeneutic philosophers, most notably Derrida and Ricoeur, have

argued against just such a possibility. Wolterstorff devotes two chapters to a defense of authorial-discourse interpretation against their criticisms. Against Derrida and Ricoeur, Wolterstorff argues that (1) since texts are the products of illocutionary acts, we can practice authorial-discourse interpretation by discerning the author's illocutionary stance (p. 149), and (2) Derrida's arguments against authorial-discourse interpretation rely on his unsupported and perhaps incoherent rejection of metaphysics (pp. 164-9).

Wolterstorff also prefers the appropriative model on the grounds that the Apostles and the Gospel writers are not described as speaking in God's name (p. 53). In any case, there is no real conflict between the two. Perhaps, as Wolterstorff suggests (p. 187), some of the prophetic writings are indeed handled better by the deputizing model. There is no need to proclaim the two models inconsistent, though presumably the text as a whole must be considered divine discourse by appropriation.

Wolterstorff has now led us to the way in which we should think about divine discourse: God speaks through appropriating the essence of scriptural writings. On the traditional view, God is often said to speak through scripture, but this speaking has been meant in a metaphorical sense; Wolterstorff's analysis allows God to *literally* speak through scripture. God doesn't *inspire* scripture, rather, God *appropriates* scripture as his own (or perhaps God does both). One advantage this view has for religious believers is that it simultaneously allows us to view scripture as fallible while not threatening its divine authority.

Scripture, however, does not wear divine discourse on its face. In order to discover divine discourse, we need to interpret scripture *as a whole* (pp. 204-6). Just like with human discourses, we cannot accurately capture what is being said unless we view scripture as a whole. For Wolterstorff, interpreting scripture for divine discourse is not fundamentally different from interpreting human discourse. In order to interpret scripture correctly, we must make some assumptions about God and about what God would say (p. 206). We have seen an example of this earlier, in the passage from Hosea. We cannot attribute the claim that God hates the Ephraimites to God in any literal sense; such an interpretation runs counter to the idea of God as a perfectly loving being. Thus, we must look for

the aforementioned essence of the Hosea passage. What we ought to accept as the content of divine discourse depends on what we believe God would say, given God's nature. We must also interpret scripture for divine discourse in light of God's purposes in speaking to us (pp. 207-8, see also p. 224). Presumably, God's purpose in speaking to us is to bring us into a loving relationship with God; to reconcile us with God. No interpretation of scripture that is contrary to such a purpose could truly be the content of divine discourse. We should also note that the intended message of the human author may differ from God's appropriated message (pp. 209-11) and that God's discourse, like our own, may carry multiple meanings (p. 216).

But this raises a serious worry for Wolterstorff. If we must interpret scripture based on our beliefs about God, scripture threatens to become a "wax nose", able to be molded and shaped however we so choose; where "interpreting for divine discourse is directly at the mercy of the vagaries of human belief" (p. 226). It is always possible to revise our beliefs about God, or about other things, such that we can declare our interpretation the correct one. Take again the passage from Hosea. One can always modify one's beliefs about love and morality such that the entire passage can be read literally and declared divine discourse. Interpretation, Wolterstorff notes, raises the dual menacing possibility of (1) scripture being interpreted in such a way as to reinforce our already extant beliefs, and (2) missing what God has really said because of our own inaccurate beliefs (pp. 226-7). While Wolterstorff does think that there are ways to minimize "wax-noseishness" (pp. 236-9), he does not believe that the dual menace is completely eliminable (p. 236). Nearly 1/3 of the book is devoted to issues of scriptural interpretation for the purpose of discerning divine discourse, making it clear just how concerned Wolterstorff is with the wax nose problem.

What for me was the most interesting part of the book were the last two chapters, which deal more directly with religious epistemology. They were also, unsurprisingly, the parts of the book I found the least convincing. In Chapter 15, "Are We Entitled?", Wolterstorff addresses the question of whether we are ever entitled to believe that God is speaking to us. He alleges that we are.

Wolterstorff's defense of this claim has its roots in his adherence to reformed epistemology. According to the reformed epistemologists (besides Wolterstorff, notable adherents include Plantinga, Audi, and Alston), religious belief can be properly basic; that is, justified solely on the basis on non-propositional evidence. (Although they claim that religious belief *is* properly basic, their arguments only support the weaker claim that it *can be*; and in any case the claim that religious belief is *properly* basic appears presuppose that the religious beliefs in question are true—at least I get this impression from Plantinga's early work—and thus begs the question against the atheist.) Reformed epistemology is opposed to evidentialism, the view championed by Locke and Hume that the strength with which one's belief is held ought to be proportional to the support lent to it by the overall evidence. I wish to note here that it is unclear how it is that reformed epistemology and evidentialism are opposed; as stated, one could consistently hold both—the reformed epistemologist, to the best of my knowledge, need not commit himself to a denial of evidentialism, but rather only to traditional forms of foundationalism. But, for purposes of exposition, I'll allow Wolterstorff his opposition. Reformed epistemology is also opposed to foundationalism about justification, though they differ amongst themselves as to what theory of justification they hold to. Alston, for example, is one of the developers of reliabilism, which Plantinga is critical of (though his own theory is similar in many respects); and Wolterstorff's earlier book, *Reason within the Limits of Religion* seems at times to advocate coherentism. In *Divine Discourse*, Wolterstorff appears to be speaking from the "proper function" position advocated by Plantinga. While clearly from within the fold of reformed epistemology, *Divine Discourse* presents some modifications to the view which in many cases constitute a backing off from reformed epistemology. For one, Wolterstorff does not appear recalcitrant about talk of epistemic obligations, the very thing found so distasteful about evidentialism. However, for Wolterstorff, what we are epistemically obligated to are not (as in evidentialism) degrees of evidential support, but rather doxastic practices (p. 271). Which doxastic practices we are obligated to depends, Wolterstorff claims, on our other obligations (pp. 272-3). Beyond this it is not entirely clear what

Wolterstorff's argument is. He appears to argue that so long as one is entitled to hold one's religious belief-system, one is entitled to believe that certain experiences are God's illocutionary acts. So long as one is warranted in one's theistic belief, one is obligated to doxastic practices which warrant belief that God speaks. Speaking about a specific case, he says:

Let's assume that Virginia was entitled to her framework of basic Christian belief. I know, of course, that some will contest that assumption. But in considering issues of entitlement, one always has to take for granted that a great many—indeed, most—of the person's beliefs are entitled beliefs; otherwise we can't even get going on determination of entitlement. (p. 276)

It is significant that when discussing whether we are ever warranted (or entitled, to use Wolterstorff's terminology) in believing that God has spoken, Wolterstorff immediately retreats back to the issue of whether Christian belief is warranted. Presumably, so long as one is entitled to one's Christian (or Jewish, or Muslim) belief-system, one is entitled to believe that certain experiences constitute God speaking. Wolterstorff notes that some will "contest that assumption"; I am one. Supposing that Wolterstorff is right, in order to decide whether we are warranted in believing that God *does* speak, we must determine whether Christian (etc.) belief is warranted. Wolterstorff notes, in a Davidsonian vein, that we must assume that most beliefs others have are warranted. But even if we grant this point, this is not itself a reason for thinking that others are warranted in their *Christian* (etc.) belief. I can surely grant that Christians are entitled to most of their beliefs and consistently deny that they are entitled to their *Christian* beliefs. To truly support our entitlement to believe that certain events constitute God speaking, Wolterstorff would need to do one of two things. First, he could argue that Christian (etc.) belief is warranted. Second, he could attempt to support his claim that God speaks independently. Wolterstorff does make some motions toward the second route. At

one point (pp. 275-6), he seems to be advocating an abductive argument—that God has spoken is the (or is part of) the best explanation for a certain experience. This, I think, constitutes a step in the right direction, though it is a direction that points away from reformed epistemology. He appears to be allowing in explanatory considerations, the exclusion of which in the past has prevented any satisfactory response by reformed epistemologists to the Great Pumpkin objection. The problem is that allowing explanatory considerations into the picture may cut out the heart of reformed epistemology. It is not clear that one can have it both ways. If the claim that God speaks relies for its warrant on antecedent warranted Christian belief, then no abductive argument of the type Wolterstorff hints at can get off the ground—appeal to God’s speech would become question-begging. On the other hand, to give the abductive argument its due seems to require an abandonment of reformed epistemology. Thus, while Wolterstorff intends to explicate a non-evidentialist epistemology of religious belief grounded in divine discourse (p. 15), he has not, in my opinion, done so. When push comes to shove, it appears that it is rather the other way around—divine discourse is grounded in the non-evidentialist epistemology; and what independent support he hints at for divine discourse does not look to be non-evidentialist at all.

Wolterstorff gives one last shot at it in the Afterword. There, he attempts to argue that we are justified in taking the *Bible* to be divine discourse. After rejecting Calvin’s “secret testimony of the spirit” justification (pp. 286-7), he goes on to provide his own argument. The problem is that his own argument isn’t any better. Wolterstorff argues that it is the apostolic tradition which justifies reading the *Bible* as divine discourse. Wolterstorff has, I fear, retreated back into a position where he is preaching to the converted. His argument will convince no one of the divine authority of the *Bible* (specifically the New Testament) who is not already convinced; the support for his conclusion is as controversial as the conclusion itself. This problem is indicative of a lack of concern for issues of religious pluralism that permeates the entire book. Given Wolterstorff’s adherence to reformed epistemology, this lacuna is not surprising. And given Wolterstorff’s claim that the wax nose problem, while reducible, is not eliminable, this lacuna is

unfortunate. The Great Pumpkin still lurks in the shadows, grinning at us like a perverse Cheshire Cat.

Before closing, I would like to proffer two suggestions for further lines of research on the topic of divine discourse. First, divine discourse appears in this book primarily in the form of *monologue*; it would be interesting to see how Wolterstorff's view would treat divine *dialogue*. Second, the issue of whether God is *obligated* to speak, and if so what the specifics of this obligation are, is worth pursuing. This project has the potential of going some way toward resolving the problem of divine hiding.

The strengths of *Divine Discourse* are many. Wolterstorff does an excellent job of discarding the traditional view and bringing divine discourse into its rightful role as an important topic in religious thought. Wolterstorff has, I think, made a very convincing case that theistic believers ought to accept divine discourse. The book's weaknesses, though significant, are few. My main complaints are that it pays insufficient attention to religious pluralism and has little to say that would convince the non-believer. What argument there is for theism from the phenomenon of (alleged) divine discourse runs counter to Wolterstorff's adherence to reformed epistemology. He does, however, manage to raise a serious issue that theists and atheists alike need to take seriously.