seasons them with a pinch of humour. His schematic accounts of the six maladies fit rather loosely on the instances he gives of them. Why, for example, is Don Juan acolathic? His project of seducing as many beautiful women as possible seems no less general than Don Quixote's horetic mission of knight-errantry. Hegelian 'bad infinity', which Noica also discerns in Don Juan's enterprise, might well apply to both cases. To the suggestion that what Don Juan rejects is the *individual*, Noica replies that Don Juan himself is a genuine individual. So too was Tolstoy, but Noica does not allow that to mitigate the charge of atodetia. Such occasional arbitrariness does not, however, nullify the interest of Noica's discussions of particular cases.

Noica is renowned and respected in Romania, in part because he is a distinctively Romanian philosopher, not simply a philosopher who happens to have been born in Romania. In his concluding chapter, 'The Balance of the Age and the Romanian Spirit', he discusses, among other things, the peculiarities of the Romanian language, in particular the rich variety of its prepositions. He contrasts this with the dominance, in the acolathic Western world, of the 'conjunction', that is, the connectives, 'and', 'or' and 'if … then' (p. 164). The English language, he says, 'loses all contact with the primordial and is condemned not to permit absolutely any access to philosophical thought' (p. 135). Nevertheless, he does not claim malady-free equilibrium for himself and his fellow Romanians. He concedes that a spiritual malady may be more fruitful and creative than equilibrium. He presents a 'clinical file' on his own ahoretia (pp. 103–111). This is an apt diagnosis of his work, with its fragile links between the general schematism of the maladies and the particular case studies. It lacks the 'exactitude' which, in Noica's view, characterises analytical philosophy and formal logic, and which is a 'symptom of acolathia' (p. 152). It is nevertheless worth reading, not only to find out what philosophy is up to in a remote part of Europe, but also for its intelligence and insights. After all, Spengler had many detractors, but two distinguished admirers —Heidegger and Wittgenstein—and a similar fate may await Noica.

Trinity College Oxford   MICHAEL INWOOD

Reasoning: A Social Picture. BY ANTHONY SIMON LADEN. (Oxford UP, 2012. Pp. 283. Price £33.)

This is a rich, interesting, thought-provoking book that connects with issues in ethics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, and epistemology. It is also frustratingly diffuse, indirect, and non-confrontational. (One imagines being in conversation with Laden and finding oneself saying more and more outrageous things in an effort to extract a definitive No.) It is particularly frustrating for someone like me who is confused by the terminology of reasons and norms but thinks he has some grasp of reasoning. Below I state some of the questions to which one might expect answers that are not even tackled. The core ambition of

the book is to discuss reasoning from a new, social, perspective. A standard way of using the word makes 'reasoning' describe a kind of thinking, in which individual people solve problems by pondering them systematically, in ways that can be more or less effective or correct. Laden wants to replace or augment this usage with a different one in which reasoning is something that two or more people try to do together, succeeding only if they have had the right sort of interaction and the right sort of effect on one another. If they have not, if for example it turns out that they were talking past one another or not taking one another's words seriously, then what they were doing was not reasoning, even if each was thinking furiously about the topic and about the other. So this is a kind of externalist picture—whether a person's experience is an instance of the real thing is something she may be wrong about and may depend on factors she is not acquainted with—but a peculiar one in that the normal kinds of success do not come into it. Two people's discussion can lead to a solution to the problem that occasioned it and not be reasoning, or can be reasoning and not lead to a solution.

Or is it perhaps that though a solution be found, and each person be reasoning, the process is not one of social reasoning, of reasoning together? Much as one might like to extract a confession from the text here, none seems to be forthcoming. The question is the relation between reasoning, construed as social, and one-person thinking. Laden often contrasts the social picture with the traditional, individual-centred, picture, as if these were rival views of one process. And in terms of this he says for example that someone who is elaborating his insane delusions as if they were deep insights is not reasoning, though he thinks he is, and will only be if he can persuade others to engage with him in a norm-governed back-and-forth that aims at a consensus. So there is a strong interpretation according to which the social and traditional views are rivals; and there is a weaker view according to which psychologists studying reasoning, for example, are studying something which is also real, but different.

Social reasoning involves shared construction, or at any rate maintenance, and exploration of a space of reasons. The metaphor of a space of reasons seems to amount to the ideas that reasons must be connected to one another, must cohere, and must situate the individuals who use them with perspectives on one another and on the topic. The aim of reasoning is to find reasons for believing and doing, which do more than elaborate individuals' possible gains and losses but also show how the thoughts and acts can be defended against challenges and urged on those who do not accept them. In this way reasons are normative. They have some authority over reasoners.

The nature of this authority is unclear to me. People are governed by the structure of the space of reasons that they enter into by putting their minds together, but it is a structure that they have created and continually modify, so in the end it is up to them what it asks of them. Presumably the picture is of some kind of reflective equilibrium, but it would have helped me if the question of authority had been met head on. I think that Laden would like to count reasoning as correct as long as it adheres to the norms of the genre of conversation in question, and take most clearly fallacious or faulty thinking-out-loud as not

reasoning at all, because it violates some basic conditions on shared reason-giving. (This is my reconstruction: he doesn't say it.) Here things are complicated by the enormous range of activities that Laden includes as reasoning: negotiation, deliberation, consensus-seeking, practical problem-solving, and others. He is surely right that we do reason together to do all these things, and that we consider one another to have done so more or less well across the range of them. What is less clear is how autonomous the standards we apply to specific conversational activities are, and what could be a taxonomy that made sense of all of them.

Rudeness is a case in point. Laden discusses norms of conversation that centre on turn-taking and encouraging the discussion to continue, connecting with work in linguistics, and norms that centre on taking one another's contributions seriously, connecting with work in ethics. (There is work in feminist epistemology, such as Miranda Fricker's on testimonial injustice, which is clearly relevant.) So consider a boorish and disrespectful participation in a shared intellectual enterprise, which is for all that relevant and constructive. Less may result because of its manner, and the participants may be harmed, and it may be contemptible in one way while admirable in another. Does it qualify less as real reasoning for the norms it violates? Laden does not address the issue. I would expect him to say that there are tugs in both directions and that a lot depends on the details. But the problem is that whether or not someone is reasoning seems to be a yes or no business, though buzzing with maybees, while the selection and balancing of many cooperative and conversational norms seems to be multi-dimensional, not headed for any such summing up.

What seems boorish or arrogant or unbalanced to us will be normal conversational practice at another time and place. There is a tension between local tolerance and global ambition in Laden's discussion of this. On the one hand he wants the standards to be constructed by the people concerned, and on the other hand he wants to require respect for all participants in a proper joint reasoning interaction. Reconciling these two seems to require either an enormous optimism that everyone's norms lead ultimately to enlightened tolerant respect for autonomy, or to a sad admission that a lot of what people over the ages and across the planet have taken as reasoning is really something rather less. (When we moderns read Platonic dialogues we see a lot of bullying and manipulation that was not explicit in the original design.)

The kinds of interaction Laden is concerned with must exploit specific human social capacities. For example rules of sharing and turn-taking in conversation most likely turn on uses of volume and intonation that could work differently in another animal. It must be a multiply instantiable business depending on which activities mobilise which innate resources. This could be suggestive of the many ways in which shared human life contingently shapes the thinking of individual people. But that is not Laden's line. For him the variety of shared activity is partly constitutive of a single over-arching activity of social reasoning. Whether or not this is right, this book contains a wealth of examples and considerations relevant both to the project of exploring the links between individual cognition and

shared activity and to the project of teasing out the many-person-ness of what at first seems individual.

University of British Columbia   ADAM MORTON

Dishonest to God: On Keeping Religion out of Politics. BY MARY WARNOCK. (London: Continuum, 2010. Pp. 172. Price £16.99 h/b, £10.99 p/b)

Mary Warnock's book is an attempt to address in a short space a large theme: 'some aspects of the role of religion, and therefore the idea of God, in the twenty-first century, as it relates to legislation and politics' (p. 1). Along the way she raises many subsidiary themes, including the historical influence of religion on the law, the tension between religion and liberalism, the difficulty of providing a philosophical foundation for secularist ethics, and the problems of pluralism and relativism that have pervaded such discussions. Her approach to these timely but complex topics is through the lens of various pieces of legislation that came through the British Parliament over the past 40 years or so, including in the House of Lords, of which she was a member for more than twenty years. In particular, she discusses legislation relating to abortion, research on human embryos, homosexuality, assisted suicide, and human rights. In general, Professor Warnock does no more than identify and skim the surface with regard to the cluster of issues that surround this large topic, but her discussions will be helpful to the general reader, and will whet appetites for further reflection and reading. But the professional philosopher will find her analysis somewhat wanting.

   The book is divided into five chapters, with the first two concerned with British legislative history regarding abortion and assisted suicide, where she attempts to give a sense of the discussion that actually took place in parliament. In ch. 3, she rejects the legal positivism of Jeremy Bentham, and argues for a position that few would dispute today: that morality is independent of the law, and must be justified prior to our forming laws based on it. Chapter 4 has an ambitious task: to show that one can defend a secular foundation for morality, separating it from religion, while at the same time avoiding moral relativism. The last chapter explores the question of whether religion is necessary to human society; this chapter meanders quite a bit, and it is hard to discern her own view, though she does observe that religion is not out-dated, but the difference today is that it is no longer compulsory! As one who works in American academia, an obvious further observation concerns the reasonable and even tone Warnock adopts throughout the book. She has no axes to grind, no tendentious or controversial agendas to support, and shows none of the intolerance that one sees in the United States on this topic, especially from the left in academic settings. She never represents her own view as obvious, or portrays contrary views as irrational, never insults those who disagree with her or paints them as morally evil! This book is a model of what a reasonable philosophical exploration and