and the presence of God in the enemy, but she stops short of fully revealing Jesus as the innocent one beyond all victimhood who surrenders himself to a goal beyond human anger and rage.

Called "a spiritual master" by *Le Monde*, Basset writes with passionate commitment to the right of each person to own, express, and fully embody anger. She hints that this deep urgency springs from the reality of personal suffering. Her previous books indicate a highly sensitive social conscience, and a wide concern for the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized, including those struggling with AIDS.

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John F. Haught. *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2008.

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the debate between atheists and religious believers has been carried on, most often, at academic conferences. That has just very recently changed. The New Atheists (Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens) have with their books, radio interviews, and presentations at colleges and universities successfully brought the debate back into the awareness of the general public. What is new about the New Atheists is not the claim that there are natural explanations for religion – these are as old as the Sophists – but the claim that applying a cost-benefit analysis to religion demonstrates it is bad for humankind. Religion preaches love, but practices manipulative and violent hatred, and consequently we should rid ourselves of it altogether. Moreover, because it provides a space for faith, it is a breeding ground for anti-intellectual fanaticism.

Instead of religion, the New Atheists offer a thoroughgoing Darwinism in which we learn to fold in and make normative ways of being that are conducive to human survival and flourishing. Darwinism explains the rise of

religion by suggesting that our belief in God or gods is a residual hangover from the adaptive ability to imagine unseen enemies. It has now become urgent, so they would argue, to pull up the weeds of our imagination.

There are, then, two issues to consider: Does evolution explain religion? And, Is religion bad for us? In *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens*, John Haught responds to both of these issues. Haught responds to the first issue by arguing that theological and scientific explanations are not in principle opposed to each other unless one is an explanatory monist. This is the most important intellectual move to make, and it is central to any successful response to the New Atheists.

Explanatory monism is the view that there is at bottom only one account that can be given to explain a state of affairs and therefore all other accounts are in competition with it. Haught argues instead that multiple layers of understanding and explanation can exist. In fact, almost everything in life admits of a plurality of layers of explanation in which various accounts do not necessarily compete with one another. Haught's example is the page of a book you are reading. Why does it exist? One explanation is a printing press has stamped ink onto a piece of paper, but another explanation is that the author had something to say in writing. These explanations are non-competitive and in fact both are true. By extension, "you do not have to choose between evolution and divine inspiration to account for religion any more than you have to choose between the printing press and the author's intention when explaining the page you are reading" (85).

The author's response to the second issue, however, is slightly weaker. He argues that God is a God of infinite power and vulnerable love, who makes all things new and who can be approached only by way of faith, trust, and hope. This faith by which we approach God is neither simple nor anti-intellectual, as anyone who is familiar with a life of faith and reads theology knows; we are painfully aware of the misuse of the name of God. So the New Atheists are quite simply entirely mistaken in their view that God is monstrous and that followers of God are or become monstrous too. In Haught's judgment, the New Atheists are little more than fundamentalist puritans, and to engage them in discourse does not deepen faith, because their views are simplistic and their criticisms misfire. But this is where Haught could have a more generous reading of the New Atheists; yet I suspect he

cannot allow such generosity because he would have to become a pacifist in order to do so.

That is, he would have to do more than confess painful awareness of misuse of the name of God. He would have to say "No!" not to misuse but to *false* conceptions of God and ways of following God. He would stand to gain if he did so, because it would allow him to turn the tables on the New Atheists more effectively – by saying that their critique is right but hasn't gone far enough. What we need, Haught could say, is a consequentialist analysis of not only religion but scientific naturalism also. After all, we wouldn't want to take scientific naturalism on faith, would we?

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Connie Braun. *The Steppes are the Colour of Sepia: A Mennonite Memoir.* Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2008.

The suffering and displacement of Mennonites during the Russian Revolution and its aftermath has been a main theme – perhaps *the* main theme – of Mennonite literature in Canada over the last half-century. Given the scope and intensity of these disasters, the attention that has been paid to them seems natural and right (though in the dismal history of the Revolution and the Stalin era, of course, the Mennonite role is a small part). As time passes, and more and more of the survivors pass on, recording their stories becomes ever more urgent.

The Steppes are the Colour of Sepia, Connie Braun's memoir, draws most deeply and dramatically on her father's memories of his family's long struggle for survival through the revolution, the massive restructuring, collectivization, and famines of the 1920s and '30s, and the further devastations of World War II. Fleshed out with material from photographs and numerous other literary, historical, and personal sources, this book is a significant addition to this literature of memory.