

## *In the Periodicals*

The theme of process philosophy and theology with its radical reinterpretation of Christian doctrines and values to make them consonant with the modern evolutionary world view finds able defenders. Norman Pittenger (*Religion in Life* [Autumn, 1965]) writes on "A Contemporary Trend in North American Theology: Process-Thought and Christian Faith" and gives brief surveys of the philosophers and men of science who shaped this trend, such as Teilhard de Chardin, Daniel Day Williams, Charles Hartshorne, A. N. Whitehead. Pittenger states: "The central conviction of American process-thought is that the evolutionary perspective must be taken with utmost seriousness. . . . After a period in which theologians turned away from this perspective and gave their time largely to what some of us have called 'domestic housekeeping,' there has been a new concern for the dynamics of physical nature and of human personality, the social nature of man and his organic relation to the universe in which he lives, and the interpretation of mental and physical in human experience" (pp. 501-2). A similar concern is indicated in several Catholic journals. For instance, W. Richard Comstock in "Naturalism and Theology" (*Heythrop Journal* [April, 1967]) declares that modern theology "is presently shedding one philosophic skin so that it may assume another" (p. 182) and that this new skin is "the new naturalism that has appeared in the works of William James, George Santayana, John Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead" (p. 184). "The new naturalism provides us with a way of participating in the revolt against dualism that is yet faithful to the complexity and qualitative richness of the natural world" (p. 185). The philosophical background of process-thought is also ably summarized by John J. Huckle in "From Whitehead to Ogden: Possibility in Contemporary Theology" (*Dunwoodie Review* [May, 1967]). Francisco José Ayala, O.P., in "Man in Evolution" (*Thomist* [January, 1967], pp. 1-20) gives a historical and scientific account of doctrines of evolution, quoting profusely from Theodosius Dobzhansky. Most interesting is Father Ayala's references to mutations: "According to the simple rules of Mendelian heredity the number of possible human genotypes would be  $3^{200}$ , or approximately 1 followed by 95 zeros. . . . All this amounts to saying that the existing genetic variability in the human species is essentially inexhaustible" (p. 8). He concludes by quoting from Dobzhansky: "Man, if he so chooses, may introduce his purposes into his evolution. . . . The crux of the matter is evidently what purposes, aims or goals we should choose to strive for. . . . Now, I would be among the last to doubt that biology sheds some light on human nature; but for planning even the biological evolution of mankind, let alone its cultural evolution, biology is palpably insufficient" (p. 20).

Dom Illtyd Trethowan in the *Downside Review* (April and July, 1967)

gives an excellent discussion of Bergson's evolutionary and mystical approach in "Bergson and the Zeitgeist." While Bergson's biological and evolutionary views have been challenged by men of science—in details at least—Dom Trethowan emphasizes Bergson's contribution to a mystical approach: "If it can only be appreciated that it is the life of grace in which Bergson has become interested and that the popular view of mysticism (visions, ecstasies and so forth) must be resolutely put aside, then his importance as a witness to religion may also be appreciated" (p. 266). Also, he says, "In reality the task of the great mystic is to effect a radical transformation of humanity by setting an example" (p. 147).

T. A. Goudge, author of *The Ascent of Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), reviews in *Dialogue*, *Canadian Philosophical Review* (March, 1967) Hans Jonas' *The Phenomenon of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) and reminds us that "philosophers of existentialist outlook, although obsessed with the human condition, have neglected the fact that men have bodies and are members of the animal kingdom." Jonas corrects Heidegger's concept of man being blindly "thrown" into existence: "Having been flung into indifferent nature is a remnant from a dualistic metaphysics. . . . Rather should the existentialist say that life—conscious, caring, knowing self—has been thrown *up* by nature." The same issue of *Dialogue* is highlighted by George Canquihem's article "Un physiologiste philosophe: Claude Bernard" (pp. 555–72), a very interesting discussion of the French philosophical biologist who introduced concepts of patterns of organization which are still current among many philosophers of science today.

George Gaylord Simpson in the *American Scholar* (Summer, 1967 [pp. 363–77]) calls attention to "The Crisis in Biology," which is the dichotomy between the exponents of molecular biology and organismic biology. Professor Simpson does not hesitate to diagnose the problem of the molecular biologists as monomania: "Comprehension of living organisms is to come from chemistry and *nothing else*" (p. 365). The all-important perspective of a hierarchy of levels familiar to both philosophers of emergence and empirical theists is admirably expressed by Simpson: "There is a hierarchy of complexity that runs from atoms through molecules, cells, tissues, organs, individuals, specific populations, communities and comprehensive ecological systems to the whole realm of the organic and its environments in space and time. The lowest level that has all the basic properties of life is the cell, and biology, strictly speaking, covers the levels from there onward. (Since biology is the study of life, and molecules, as such, are not alive, the term 'molecular biology' is self-contradictory.) Each level of the hierarchy includes that below. Knowledge of included levels is necessary but is not sufficient for complete understanding of those more inclusive. . . . It is ridiculous to base a philosophy of science or a concept of scientific explanation wholly on the nonbiological levels of the hierarchy and then to attempt to apply it to the actually biological levels without modifications" (pp. 367–68). The danger of a too mechanistic interpretation of life is also reflected in Howard Nemerov, "Speculative Equations: Poems, Poets, Computers," in the same issue of *American Scholar*: "So if poetry did come to be written by computers, and people read and even declared

they loved that poetry, one would still have to suspect that what had happened was not so much that the machine had imitated the subtlety of the mind, but that the mind had simplified (and brutalized) itself in obeisance to its idol the machine: on the model of the programmer who was asked if the computer could think, and replied: I compute it can" (p. 414).

More technical articles are found: Kenneth G. Denbigh, "Orderliness and Freedom as Influenced by Scientific Method" (*Diogenes* [Spring, 1967], pp. 16-32); Frank L. Lambert, "Chaos, Entropy and Original Sin" (*Religion in Life* [Summer, 1967], pp. 259-69); Sir Alister Hardy, "Science and Monism" (*Hibbert Journal* [Winter, 1966-67], pp. 53-56). The last article is an extract from *The Divine Flame*, the Gifford Lectures which Sir Alister delivered at Aberdeen during 1964-65, and he emphasizes that "the living stream of evolution is as much divine as physical in nature and . . . what I am calling the divine flame is an integral part of the creative evolutionary process which man, with his greater perceptual faculties, is now becoming aware of. . . . It gives him a feeling of confidence and it generates courage in the face of adversity" (p. 56). Nolan Pliny Jacobson, in "The Cultural Meaning of Science" (*Hibbert Journal* [Spring, 1967], pp. 92-98), states: "Most of all my report is based upon the growing conviction that mankind is being transformed in depth through science, because science is translating itself into a style of life, a ruling commitment, a process of self-correcting, self-sustaining inquiry rising to dominance now upon the planet" (p. 92). Bryan Magee, "An Agnostic Looks at the New Testament" (*Hibbert Journal* [Autumn, 1966], pp. 10-18), confesses his superlative admiration for Jesus: "What remains marvellous about Jesus is his assertion of the centrality of love to all human experience (with the related doctrine that *all* human beings ought to be loved) and his assertion that real integrity is worth more than anything it can possibly cost. . . . I do not think anything more important than these things has ever been said" (pp. 17-18). He finds this judgment confirmed by modern psychology.

Studies of psychological disorders, nervous breakdowns, and personal problems in our complex age may be found in many journals too numerous to mention. The *Expository Times*, a British Anglican journal, has been carrying—on the general theme of "First Aid in Counseling"—specific articles on problems of delinquency, pregnancy, etc., in every issue in 1966 and 1967. These are written in the frank and sympathetic spirit which animates both religious and scientific studies concerned with these aspects of modern life. In the same general field is the lucid article by Mary S. Calderone, "Sex, Religion, and Mental Health," which appeared in the *Journal of Religion and Health* (July, 1967 [pp. 195-203]). The same issue contains many articles of current interest to both psychotherapists and religionists. An important editorial by Harry C. Meserve on "Mysticism and Chemistry" points up the whole problem of psychedelic drugs with special reference to LSD and its increasingly irresponsible use. Related to this whole problem is Dana L. Farnsworth's article on "Issues and Confrontation: Youth and Maturity." Sociological and historical development of states of ecstasy is discussed with a touch of humor in Philip H. Ennis, "Ecstasy and Everyday Life" (*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* [Spring, 1967], pp. 40-48). The

humor appears in such a quotation as this: "In principle it is quite easy to make an ecstasy machine. You build, in an empty lot, a high circular fence with a small door. Inside the fence, there is either a deep well that goes down to nowhere or a high ladder that goes up to nowhere. The direction is a matter of taste. Then you let people in a few at a time" (p. 42). Leo Schneiderman, "Psychological Notes on the Nature of Mystical Experience" (same journal) is more sympathetic to the experience and examines it from many aspects: "The Search for God," "Mysticism and Powerlessness," "Mysticism and Myth-making," "The Mystic's Faith." However, I do not understand the reference to "chaos" in Schneiderman's otherwise intelligible statement: "The true mystic is one who seeks to reconstitute the fragmented elements of experience, not to arrive at a conceptual synthesis, but to replace normal consciousness with spiritual chaos" (p. 91).

*Jubilee*, the liberal Roman Catholic journal, discusses the meaning and value or disvalue of LSD in two articles in June, 1967. The first is by Rev. George B. Murray, S.J.: "Pharmacological Mysticism," in which from a Thomistic background he attempts to do justice to the affirmations of those who have had a successful "trip." Jean Houston, co-author with R. E. L. Masters of *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), presents the second article, "A Different Kind of Mysticism," and affirms that "LSD . . . produces first a remarkable intensification of the sensory, then a remarkable intensification of the psycho-dynamic processes—awareness of character, relationships, memory of one's past—then entrance into an extraordinarily rich mythic realm in which one lives out the rituals of death and resurrection, of renewal and transition" (p. 13). However, Houston is aware that LSD is in bad odor just now: "There are many reasons why LSD has gotten such a bad name. Certainly the cultists haven't helped. Their antics, widely reported in the press and on television, scandalized a lot of people. . . . The great tragi-comedy of LSD is that it was presented to the public in a peculiarly American way: The result was science as show biz. With all the hoopla, the real scientific issues got lost" (p. 17). Equally forthright is Lisa Bieberman in "The Psychedelic Experience," *New Republic* (August 5, 1967): "The word 'psychedelic' is ruined; it might as well be scrapped by those who still wish to speak earnestly about their experience. Psychedelic now means gaudy illegible posters, gaudy unreadable tabloids, loud parties, anything paisley, crowded noisy discotheques, trinket shops and the slum districts that patronize them. There was something I used to mean by psychedelic, but if those posters are psychedelic, that other thing isn't. Put 'psychedelic' down along with 'community,' 'love,' 'religion' and other good words the hippies, with the help of Leary & Co., have corrupted" (p. 17). Father Bernard Häring, one of the great moral theologians of the Roman church, stated bluntly at the Fourth Contemporary Theology Institute (Loyola College, Montreal, June 1967): "The view that by taking drugs one can gain a mystical state is simply too horrible for me."

Research into the meaning of the mystical experience and the means required in order to achieve it needs to be done on a larger scale than ever before so as to distinguish true mysticism from the many varieties of pseudo-mysticism and esoteric fantasies.

Nature and science are given remarkable emphasis in Oliver Clément's "Science and Faith" (*St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, No. 3 [1966], pp. 120-27). The author, a scholar of the Greek Orthodox Church which always has had a place in its theology for the cosmos, writes: "The mystery of the living God does not place itself over against the progress of science as an interdict or a barrier" (p. 120). And again: "We do not have to be 'on the outs' with science; we can engage ourselves in it better to serve the unique Logos who makes all knowledge possible and who points the way to all knowledge" (p. 126).

Commendation for Schubert Ogden's work, *The Reality of God*, is given by John Macquarrie in the *Expository Times* (July, 1967): "We need to re-think the idea of God in a manner that will be true to whatever is important in the tradition, yet will not fly in the face of the modern scientific and historical understanding." Ogden has rethought the idea of God in terms of "the process philosophies of Whitehead and Hartshorne."

The *Monist*, April, 1967, is an issue devoted to the general topic of "British and American Realism, 1900-1930," a significant development in the history of philosophy, though it must be admitted its crest has passed. Nevertheless, the movement has significance for modern issues of science and religion in that several of its main exponents attempted to do justice to the real world of evolving matter as described by science, and from the process perspective formulated a religious orientation to the developing cosmos. Such were W. P. Montague and Roy Wood Sellars, the latter being a Unitarian humanist who taught philosophy at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Sellars represented the wing of humanism anchored to an ontology of evolutionary realism, as contrasted to the more pragmatic, semantic wing of the movement, and his religious humanism was more ontological than that of any other humanist. Norman Melchert, in "The Independence of the Object in Critical Realism" (pp. 206-23), pays tribute to Sellars' contribution: "Sellars has at various times called his ontology 'evolutionary naturalism' and 'reformed materialism.' . . . Sellars has provided an internally consistent, powerful view in epistemology. As an alternative to naïve, new, and Lockean realism, to idealism, phenomenism, and pragmatism it has, I believe, more than merely historical interest" (pp. 222, 223). Like his lifelong friend, Brand Blanshard, Sellars found behaviorism untenable, though from a different philosophical perspective. Sellars' general world outlook belongs in the category of process philosophy; it may be said that the newer theologies, such as those of Ogden, Hartshorne, and Teilhard de Chardin, cannot possibly ignore process philosophy. And they do not!

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