Reviews

Cosmic Humanism. By OLIVER L. REISER. Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1966. xxvi+576 pages. $8.95.

Oliver L. Reiser, professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh, has been an indefatigable investigator in a type of humanism largely disavowed by other American humanists, namely, a cosmic humanism with pantheistic, transcendental, esoteric overtones for which he frankly states: "This Hindu-Stoic-Bruno-Spinoza-Einstein cosmology is the world-view here proposed as the coming World Philosophy" (p. xxvi). American humanists in philosophy and religion have derived their inspiration from John Dewey, William James, Horace Kallen, Sidney Hook, and others whose fundamental motivation is the rejection of metaphysical world views for inquiry into the solution of human problems by means of the scientific method. However, Reiser has left this type of humanism utterly behind for a soaring vision expressed previously in his works and even more so in this, his personal cosmic testament, in which we are given a summary of recent advances in physics, biology, and cosmology.

But we are given much more than this. We are given such daring, penetrating visions into the nature of the ultimate reality as are presented, for example, in the diagrams of "the atom—as seen clairvoyantly" (p. 331), "the heart of the universe" (p. 353), "making a universe" (p. 131) in which "the lens of the cosmic imagination = God" creates a universe by means of negative and positive electricity, "the Rosicrucian cosmo-conception" (p. 503). Truly the author leaves us gasping with his world-comprehending and esoteric hypotheses based on many varieties of Oriental mysticisms which his fertile imagination weaves cleverly into quantum mechanics, Einstein's theory of relativity, DNA molecules, galaxies, quasars, and so on. Never, perhaps, will American philosophy produce such a modern Pythagoras as Oliver L. Reiser. But may we not suggest that Dr. Reiser could, in the words of Antony in *Julius Caesar,* humbly state: "I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it."

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Philosophy of Science Today. By SIDNEY MORGENBESSER (ed.). New York: Basic Books, 1967. 208 pages. $4.95.

This is a book whose material, according to the dust jacket, originated in a series of Voice of America lectures. Like many of the similar little volumes of B.B.C. lectures, it seems to fulfil its purpose admirably. As a general and popular introduction to philosophy of science today, it covers many of the possible

aspects of that field. As one might expect, a number of problems arise in the various essays, but not enough to mar the generally basic explanatory probings of these various aspects. Enough varying viewpoints are presented in the several essays to give at least the flavor of the struggle and (perhaps) dissent in this field.

Unfortunately, the essays are, as one might expect with such a large number, of uneven quality; still, all in all, they are more than adequate for their subject matter and not so uneven as to be poor. Their unevenness comes in via the differing amounts of energy the reader must put into the various essays—in other words, the backgrounds required for understanding the essays are variable. I would highly recommend the essays by Nagel, Hanson, Morgenbesser, and Feyerabend. Feyerabend ought to be read, if only because his position contrasts with the other somewhat inbred philosophers of science.

I would like to look at one essay in particular now: the Scriven essay on "Science, Fact, and Value," which is probably of more direct relevance to theoretical problems in religion than any of the others.

It was, I believe, Herz who pointed out in the nineteenth century the fact that there were strong personal valuing elements in any specific scientific development and that the ultimate test was, of course, testability in the community of scientists. The personal valuing had its "value" as a personal *heuristic,* and this was not something to be denigrated. It is time for the social sciences to see this, and Scriven helps.

The main point of Scriven's article, by his own claim, is to get the "value-allergic" social scientist either (1) to show that every argument for value is erroneous, or, failing this, (2) to incorporate value judgments into his social science. It is quite clear that Scriven stands on the latter of these options, and I agree with his stance as well as his main point, though I do not find his arguments fully adequate or convincing. Scriven's demonstration of the "value" of values for the social sciences raises the question as to the grounding of these values. If it could be shown that there is a grounding for our values which can be scientifically argued for, then we would have shown that our values themselves are scientific in some sense.

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