

## *Editorial*

Every year since 1954, the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS) has held a conference on religion and science during a midsummer week on the Isles of Shoals, some ten miles out from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, into the Gulf of Maine. Rather consistently its governing Council has focused the conferences upon major avenues to understanding how scientific revelations can help illuminate human values and perhaps assist in the ever necessary functions of religion. This has been in accord with its constitution, which states that IRAS "is established to promote creative efforts leading to the formulation, in the light of contemporary knowledge, of effective doctrines and practices for human welfare; to formulate dynamic and positive relationships between the concepts developed by science and the goals and hopes of man expressed through religion; to state human values in such universal and valid terms that they may be understood by all men whatever their cultural background and experience, in such a way as to provide a basis for world-wide cooperation."

The habitat of Star Island, with its vista of the dynamic dramas of the elemental forces of sun, air, sea, wind, and rocks that gave birth to life and still ordain its potential paths, has been a symbol for those who have gone there each summer to wrestle with the everlasting problems of what is the meaning of life and how we may adapt to the necessities that are imposed upon us by the sources of our being. The harsh impact of the sciences on traditional views sometimes incenses us. Perhaps the cool water of the Gulf of Maine that prevents the air temperatures from getting too hot helps cool the spirit. Perhaps the power of the elements engenders humility and the hardness of the rocks helps man adjust his values to the hard evidence that often underpins scientific reasoning. Perhaps the presence of fog smooths the sharp forms of reality and soothes the spirit. Perhaps the presence of the variety of life forms is suggestive of new forms of human life. Sometimes, between the effects of sun and fog and isolation from mainland traditions, we see new visions.

In any case, these conferences have been the source of nearly a quarter of *Zygon's* papers, and here in this issue are four more that came out of the summer of 1971.

R. W. B.