

## Reviews

The following review is reprinted with permission from *Main Currents in Modern Thought* 28 (1971): 71-72.—EDITOR

*Zygon*: [*Journal of Religion and Science*], published quarterly by the Joint Publication Board of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science and . . . [Meadville/Lombard Theological School] [at the] Univ[ersity] of Chicago Press [Vols. 1-5, 1966-70], institutions \$12 per vol., individuals \$9, index.

Because of the usefulness for interdisciplinary and integrative studies of *Zygon*, we are devoting the space usually reserved for book reviews to an overview of the last five years (1966-70) of this science and religion journal.

*Zygon* has focussed on several themes of significance to our culture through the publication of papers from conferences of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS), as well as other conference reports and papers. The topics include epistemology, philosophy of physics, philosophy of biology and evolution, philosophical anthropology, and the problem of the foundations for an ethics of our time. This venture has been coordinated by R[alph] W[endell] Burhoe, a member of IRAS and the editor of *Zygon*. Born of an intense awareness of the cultural crisis of the Western world, particularly as it manifests itself in relation to our Judaeo-Christian heritage, *Zygon* has sought to illumine the basic issues which relate theology to the natural and anthropological sciences, and more recently has begun to lay the foundations of a creative, contextual theology for an ethics of the human environment.

A statement from Burhoe (1970) suggests the philosophical background of *Zygon's* enterprise:

At the present moment in history, many poets and prophets are so out of touch with the new pictures of the proper nature and meaning of the scientifically validated models or pictures of "reality" and their potential relevance for a new vision of human values and destiny, and so many of the scientific and scholarly world have shut themselves off from serious concern with these problems that our primary task is to build a new community of minds in which the new knowledge or information about facts in general is connected with the basic facts about life's values ["Potentials for Religion from the Sciences," *Zygon* 5 (1970): 119].

The journal has included many excellent essays by notable scholars, among them George Wald, Theodosius Dobzhansky and Clyde Kluckhohn. In spite of this, no clear background against which to view man and his values within the realms of nature has yet emerged. This may be due to the pragmatism and seeming eclecticism which stand behind the program of the journal. Out of a great toleration, no position has yet emerged which

correlates the natural and social sciences with an effective ethics grounded in a renewed theology. A good deal of groundwork has been done towards identifying a philosophical cosmology and anthropology, but it is not clear that what has been gained is being conserved. Some of the essays seem to suggest great possibilities for a creative new theology that could take into account current epistemological and ethical questions, and relate these to fertile elements in Judaeo-Christian heritage. It is in the few instances where this has begun to be done that the greatest hope seems to lie.

We shall briefly review the situation with regard to epistemology, biology and evolution, anthropology and ethics.

*Zygon* began with the publication of a symposium on Theological Resources [from] the Sciences. The most relevant issues were brought forward by F. S. C. Northrop and John R. Platt—in particular, the distinction between theoretical constructs and percepts. As Platt commented: “. . . the atoms and the bonds are only a secondary reality that we have derived, or invented—a reality that must take its evidence, its confirmation, and its meaning from the true primary reality of our experiences, our manipulations, and our changing human choices and linguistic formulations” [“Commentary on Theological Resources from the Physical Sciences,” *Zygon* 1 (1966): 37].

This, together with Northrop’s well-phrased statement that “radically empirical immediacy does not warrant belief in a substance of any kind” [“Commentary on Theological Resources from the Physical Sciences,” *Zygon* 1 (1966): 26], should have shifted the focus from speculative cosmology to deeper explorations of man’s knowing, and more searching criticisms of dualisms like those of mind/body or spirit/matter. No such explorations have yet appeared in *Zygon*, nor any development of a sense of the unifying concepts which allow us to order any domain of experienced reality. It is difficult to shift our focus to epistemology and to man the knower, and to abandon the dualisms and substance orientations of the Western tradition, but this will almost certainly be necessary. Also, as Herbert Feigl noted in the [second] issue, “We have to live—and get used to living—with an unfinished view of the world” [“Is Science Relevant to Technology?” *Zygon* 1 (1966): 198].

This may not seem to be a major problem if we note the unusual degree of attention which *Zygon* has paid to evolution, and through it to cosmology. What we find here, though, is the adoption of a substance cosmology in slightly different form, with the emphasis on transformation. The return to the social epistemological foundations of this knowledge has not yet been undertaken.

In the domain of evolutionary biography, there has been a strong emphasis on the problem of physical reductionism, as with publication of the AAAS Conference of 1967, “Do Life Processes Transcend Physics and Chemistry?” which included [Michael] Polanyi, [Ernest] Nagel, [John R.] Platt and [Barry] Commoner [*Zygon* 3 (1968): 442–72]. There have been many useful discussions of the concept of selection, such as Stephen [C.] Pepper’s expansion of the biological concept into the realm of ethics [“Survival Value,” *Zygon* 4 (1969): 4–11]. The difficulty with the selection concept as it is presently formulated (as has been noted by Marjorie Grene and Noam Chomsky) is that it is tautological. This has not been brought clearly

to the surface in *Zygon*. Further, the importance of the question of the self-expression of organisms even through their forms, as exposed by Portmann and Plessner as well as Grene, has not been adequately noticed in the journal.

Work on behavioral change preceding genetic change in evolution, some of which has been done by Dobzhansky, offers indication of the great potential of individual organisms as active agents in the process of evolution. *Zygon* has presented excellent reviews of present orthodoxy, without engaging in essential criticism. There is also a profound question that should be raised, concerning the idea of an "evolving God." Endless paths may be traced by evolutionary processes, but our present optimality theory leads us to believe that the basic forms and actions of all organisms are deeply grounded in fundamental properties of matter/energy and space/time—a grounding which could provide foundation for an integrative view of the world. The IRAS does not seem intent on identifying the kinds of intellectual syntheses that would lead us beyond our "loss of center." At some point judgments need to be made about the projects which must be undertaken to move us beyond our anomie. Rather than simply combating reductionism, we should work toward an understanding of the place of man and of all living beings in nature. This requires a return to epistemology, and careful phenomenology of perceptual reality.

Several articles in the area of anthropology have appeared, among them Kluckhohn's "The Scientific Study of Values and Contemporary Civilization" [*Zygon* 1 (1966): 230-43], J[une] K. Singer's "Religion and the Collective Unconscious: Common Ground of Psychology and Religion" [*Zygon* 4 (1969): 315-32], and J[ohn] F. Hayward's "The Uses of Myth in an Age of Science" [*Zygon* 3 (1968): 205-18]. Kluckhohn quotes E. R. Dodds with a remark that aptly introduces the importance of the sciences of man in our cultural crisis:

Once before a civilized people rode to the jump—rode to it and refused it.

Was it the horse or the rider? . . . The men who created the first European rationalism were never—until the Hellenistic Age—mere rationalists. They were deeply and imaginatively aware of the power, the wonder, and the peril of the Irrational. But they could describe what went on below the threshold of consciousness only in mythological or symbolic language; they had no instrument for understanding it, still less for controlling it; . . . Modern man, on the other hand, is beginning to acquire such an instrument [*Zygon* 1 (1966): 243].

The article by L[awrence] K. Frank, "Man's Changing Image of Himself" [*Zygon* 1 (1966): 158-80], may be taken as an excellent attempt to refocus our understanding and ethical view on what we presently acknowledge human nature to be. Yet even here, and in the fine discussion by Hayward and Singer, the enterprise reveals its limits: there is no effort to envision or evoke the form that mythological thought may take in our time, no efforts like those of Ricoeur and Elizabeth Sewell to engage the mythic as a creative form of thought. In spite of Hayward's quotation from Emerson, "Man is a myth-bearing tree," there appears to be little continuing effort to explore the means by which religion may again turn to a concern with "ultimate things," and the means whereby "new symbols must be found to express them." This is a serious problem, not only for *Zygon* but also for all interdisciplinary efforts. We must begin to expose or evoke the symbolic

unities, as well as the conceptual principles, which give meaning to human life.

In the area of ethics, papers from an exciting symposium [on human values and natural science] edited by Ervin Laszlo were published in 1969 [*Zygon*, vol. 4 (March 1969)], along with many interesting commentaries [*Zygon*, vol. 4 (September 1969)]. The comment by Roy Wood Sellars merits special attention: "Man's claim to knowing is a remarkable claim, . . . Valuation is another kind of claim and deserves study" ["A Possible Integration of Science and Philosophy," *Zygon* 4 (1969): 297].

With exceptional vision, *Zygon* has exposed many of the important issues which indicate research directions to be taken. The philosophical clarification of the issues in valuation is one of these. This is particularly important when questions in ecological and medical ethics are raised, such as the modification of man's gene pool, or the treatment of the environment. The resources are present, in *Zygon* and elsewhere, but they must be probed more deeply and extended further. The remarkable paper by D[avid] E. Engel, "Elements in a Theology of Environment" (1970) [*Zygon* 5 (1970): 216-28], is perhaps the single most useful review of the theology of the environment yet to appear in the literature, and deserves to be widely circulated. In his exploration of the theological and biblical notions of *dominion* and the *master-servant* relationship, Engel suggests real and symbolically rich directions in which a deepened theology and ethics may find their way.

*Zygon* has thus been treating some of the most fundamental and exciting issues which confront our cultural life today. It [has] weaknesses [like] those of almost all interdisciplinary efforts; they consist in a partial or imperfect identification of the total context of each issue, particularly the fundamental principles or symbolic unities which underlie the issue. The effort *Zygon* is making is an important one, a deeply valuable one, but if all the riches are not to be lost, they must be conserved and directed toward the future. We hope that the IRAS may become more consciously determined in these directions, and thus fulfill its purpose as one of the centers of genuine unification.

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*Main Currents in Modern Thought*

*The Invisible Pyramid.* By LOREN EISELEY. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970. 173 pages. \$6.95.

*The Night Country.* By LOREN EISELEY. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971. 240 pages. \$7.95.

With these two books Loren Eiseley, the well-known physical anthropologist, continues his poetic exploration of man's place in the universe which he began about fifteen years ago with *The Immense Journey*. Although *The Night Country* is the more recent of the two books, some of the essays it contains were written as far back as 1947; so that *The Invisible Pyramid* which appeared earlier might contain a more current reflection of the author's development. Both volumes are composed of chapters that, although con-

nected by a common theme, are self-contained essays in which reflection on a scientific fact prompts the author to embark on far-ranging speculations concerning the past and the future of mankind.

Many critics have faulted Eiseley with mysticism and vagueness. But such objections have missed the point, since for the most part Eiseley is not trying to develop an empirical or a rational argument. He is trying to do something much more difficult: take the facts of science, and squeeze out of them a meaning which will be meaningful to human beings. Obviously such a task requires a method of analysis and exposition which is different from those used in the sciences or in philosophy. Appropriately enough, Eiseley has chosen the method which deals with issues of human Being, namely, poetry.

"The poet, like the lightning rod, must reach from a point nearer the sky than all surrounding objects down to earth, and into the dark wet soil, or neither is of use." It is clear why Eiseley would quote this definition of Emerson's in *The Invisible Pyramid*: he must feel that the definition fits his own work. In fact, as far as form is concerned, it fits all too well. As long as it must be said, it might be said right now: The solution of the problem of poetic form has eluded Eiseley in these two last works. The way he presents his material is too mechanical, the style almost too refined; inspiration blazes here and there on some of the pages, but more often than not its fires purr in a well-controlled way.

A typical chapter from one of his works begins: "The French dramatist Jean Cocteau has argued. . . ." Two paragraphs later the second theme begins: "In Brazilian rivers there exists a fish. . ." After musing on the mysteries of aquatic life, the third theme, which usually consists of some personal memories, is introduced: "It was somewhere at the edge of the Absaroka range. . . I had come down across a fierce land of crags. . ." Now that literature, philosophy, natural science, and personal experience have all been tied together, it is time for a generalization: "I am one of the world eaters in the time when that species has despoiled the earth and is about to loose its spores into space. . . I know only that I speak from the timeless country revisited, from the cold of vast tundras and the original dispersal, not from the indrawings of men."

After the third or fourth time, this sequence begins to look a little too schematic, too self-consciously arranged to achieve true poetic effect. But can we blame Eiseley for not being successful in finding a form commensurate to the greatness of his subject? Dante was probably the last man who has tried to incorporate the full range of available knowledge into his poetic work.

If the form leaves quite a bit to be desired, the method Eiseley uses is quite effective. The poetic method, as the quote from Emerson suggests, consists in fusing into a single utterance the past experience of man, his present, and the future which he dreads and hopes for. Because the Being of man is a simultaneous awareness of one's "nature" given in genes and past experience, of one's present entanglements and commitments, of one's future choices, at each given moment we can be conscious of all three of these facets of Being. Past, present, and future influence each other at every moment in our consciousness: we keep changing the content of our past in terms of present needs, we change the shape of our future as a result of reflecting on the past, we experience the present differently depending on

how we perceive the future. And, as Heidegger adds, what keeps these three dimensions of Being together is *care*: the implicit assumption underlying our awareness that experiences must mean something, and that we must make choices.

So the poet, if he is to deal with what is central to the Being of man, must reflect past and future in present experience. No one else could perform this feat: science and philosophy are unable to deal adequately with such a complex process. Even the poet can only approximate it; hence he is accused of being vague and perhaps mystical.

Eiseley faces the poetic task squarely. Part of his writing deals with the evolution of life: amoeba, fish, spores, saurians, primates, hominids, ancient civilizations. The theme of origins alternates with the theme of destiny: expanding galaxies, comets circling the skies, spaceships leaving to colonize the planets. But the being of mankind is not reviewed in a systematic way; rather it appears only as reflected in the Being of the writer. Phylogenetic observations take their cue from memories of childhood, and the somber auguries about man's future are intertwined with the prospect of the author's own death and lack of descendants. Empirical reality and possibility are screened for meaning in terms of the events of a rich human life. Like Emerson's lightning rod, Eiseley becomes the catalyst which fuses that which is above and beyond with that which is below and beneath human experience.

But what is the meaning that Eiseley extracts from this immense array of facts? Obviously that is the crucial question. In trying to answer it, one again has to bear in mind the characteristics of the poet's task and hence the limitations within which he must work. If the Being of man consists in the coexistence of an ever-changing past and future at a given present moment, it follows that no unequivocal answer can be given to the analysis of factual reality.

The poet can only give a glimpse of a particular historical Being in its whole structure of care that encompasses a past and a future in a momentary present. In a flash of light and energy, he can link for an instant the sky with the depths of the earth.

In more prosaic terms, what Eiseley tries to do is remind the reader that he carries within himself the heritage of a long line of animal forms. The roots of life are in biotic slime. (Eiseley's reminders of this fact often border on an almost embarrassing *nostalgie de la bue*.) The future of civilization and of the specifically human form of life depend on our awareness of this fact, and on our maintaining the links of kinship with the rest of the living environment. If we fail to develop an ethic extended to the living world around us, we will extinguish ourselves and our world in a spasm of blind self-centeredness. Not a very new message, perhaps, but one that the author delivers with force and grace.

What solutions does he present? Here again, we must remember that it is not the poet's job to come up with a recipe for the resolution of man's Being. He illuminates with a flash; it is the reader's task to find his bearings and plod along till the next light comes.

The only disappointment is that the landscape revealed in these two books is rather familiar. Few new landmarks appear in the darkness to guide the wayfarer. We are told, for instance, "that the spaces within stretch as far

## ZYGON

as those without." It is true that if we were to act on this belief our lives would take on a whole new dimension, and half our worries would disappear. But how is one to travel those inner spaces? The oracle is silent. Or we are told again and again that "inventions of power without understanding have been the bane of human history." Certainly true; but where are we to seek for understanding? The cold glimpses into the past and the probable future of life cannot help us here; and the author gives almost no clues from the world of men. We are told that "a greater sacrifice is demanded, the act of a truly great magician, the man capable of transforming himself." But how? The closest one can come to a clear suggestion is in sentences such as: "There is no remedy upon earth except as is to be found in the enlightenment of the spirit—some ability to have a perceptive rather than an exploitive relationship with his fellow creatures." And those who are still wondering what this implies in concrete terms are gently referred by the author to the great "axial thinkers," those who like Buddha and Jesus have created "transcendent values . . . the world of universal thought that is our most precious human heritage."

Even if one were to agree with this conclusion, it still seems somewhat disappointing. The axial thinkers of two thousand years ago might have laid down the groundwork for the kind of universal thought that man needs to achieve a true integration with the rest of life and to escape the finiteness and the deadly quirks of his animal nature. But we need to build on those old foundations: we have to rephrase that "universal thought" in terms of the present, in terms of what we know *now* of our past, of what we can foreshadow of the future.

To reformulate convincingly the truth of man's kinship to man, to his environment, to the cosmos, is the foremost task of our time. It is essentially a religious task, but all men of good will can contribute to it. It needs the specialized knowledge of the scientist as much as the poet's insight. Eiseley's work is a sometimes moving, always thought-provoking challenge for those who are ready to face the problems of existence in all their chilling immensity.

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*In Defense of People: Ecology and the Seduction of Radicalism.* BY RICHARD NEUHAUS. New York: Macmillan Co., 1971. 315 pages. \$6.95.

"What must we do to be saved?" This question, which many see as the fundamental starting point of all soteriological religions, is also the question of the ecology movement surfacing with vigor in the midst of our technological society. Organic models of life and of God's relationship to the world that predominated, in different forms, in tribal and medieval society and that were dislocated by modern society, thought, and science, are making an unexpected recovery in neonaturalistic, religious, and philosophical sensibilities. And the recovery is accompanied by a nascent mass movement sustaining itself by the mass consumption of "scientific prophecies" and exploitation of the senses of frustration and alienation that the

last decades have brought. It is no accident, therefore, that theologians, preachers, and chaplains who try to stand at the precarious interface of the Judeo-Christian traditions, intellectual integrity, and social relevance have been raising the question of the meaning of the new ecological sensitivities for the relationship of God, Mankind, and Nature. One thinks immediately of Frederick Elder's *Crisis in Eden*, Ian Barbour's *Science and Secularity*, Norman Faramelli's *Techmethics*, Robert Hamill's *Plenty and Trouble*, or Paul Santmire's superb *Brother Earth*. Reclarifications of "what we must do to be saved" are clearly required by our situation.

But for many the ecology movement is not yet convincing as a bearer of a decisive perspective that should evoke reconstruction of fundamental theological-ethical commitments. And it is not yet clear whether this lack of conviction is obdurate blindness to the seriousness of the situation, healthy skepticism toward the latest fad in an age of theological faddism, judicious weighing of the claims of these motifs as they are critically and selectively absorbed into the theological mainstream and religious sensibilities of contemporary man, or a proper resistance to new paganisms that threaten the biblical-humanist traditions and the possibilities of more profound answers to the decisive questions.

Richard Neuhaus has written a much-needed critique of the proclamations of the ecotheological movement from the last-named perspective. Its form is an extended "countersermon" to the sermonic polemics of the movement's advocates and high priests. In spite of the sometimes chatty and anecdotal style, this volume could well increase the resistance of those skeptical of the ecological prophecies and force the true believers to become more careful and more articulate in stating their case.

Neuhaus's principal argument is that the ecological movement is fundamentally a seductive diversion from the hard sociopolitical tasks of our day. It is a diversion based on a superficial understanding of the ways in which institutions work in the society, a shoddy and sloganeering use of scientific evidence, and especially a transformation of values that could destroy the more profound insights of biblical-humanist ethics, without which the prospects of a just, humane society are less likely than even at present. The movement gives, therefore, a set of false answers to the question, "What must we do to be saved?" because it fails to identify the critical sources of modern society's dilemmas. While acknowledging that he is not, in a technical sense, a sociologist, a scientist, or a theologian, he poses sometimes denuding and sometimes merely ticklish questions in those directions that are as yet unanswered by the movement—even though the movement acts as if the situation is perfectly clear.

The touchstone of any valid mass movement in the context of the genuine issues confronting our society, suggests Neuhaus, is how it deals with the dispossessed and the despised. In spite of occasional noddings in that direction, the ecological movement is not basically impassioned about the structures of injustice that dominate the lives of many. Indeed, many of the policy suggestions that it proposes are intentionally or functionally contrary to the interests of the poverty groups domestically and around the world and protective of the prerogatives of the wealthy. Instead of focusing on, or even accenting justice and mercy, love and responsibility under God as decisive virtues by which to judge men and societies, several "new" salvific



## ZYGON

visions of the human condition are asserted involving recovery of man's organic rootage in the cosmos, under the divine tutelage of nature.

One of the "new" doctrines of salvation, for example, is a neomystical gnosticism rampant among those who hold that the true revolution to bring sanity to the world is to be found in countercultural consciousness. The Charles Reich-Theodore Roszak generation is, however, merely constructing a fantasy world that systematically avoids anything that is tough. By declaring that the pathological patterns of the contemporary world are no longer potent because one has reintegrated his psyche with the spiritual vibrations and primordial harmonies of the universe, this generation presumes that they are defeated. But, claims Neuhaus, the real world is still out there, unaltered. Hence the neomystical gnostics are not prophetic at all. Rather, they have to be seen as psychedelic forms of Norman Vincent Pealism.

It is one of the ironies of the ecology movement that these neognostics find common cause with another group, the "preservationists." The old-fashioned conservationist and political reactionaries who have been for more than a century antiinstitutional, antitechnological, antiurban, and anti-bigness are reasserting their naturalistic (and sometimes cryptonazi) philosophies against the "Dirty Institutions of Men." Man in his natural state, expressing his natural urges, and in communion with the instinctual vitalities is perennially corrupted by human artifacts. Human historical, intellectual, and sociopolitical ways of understanding life are pretensions that corrupt and destroy the heroic savage. Those holding this view are trying desperately to break through the crusts of rational organization that, they believe, inevitably distort the orders of creation. The task is to depose the human pretensions and illusions of social-political fabric built out of man's hubris. Nature is of God; but the capacities of man to transcend nature are illusion, and the construction of the covenants of civilization are of the devil.

The convergent pieties of the gnostics and the preservationists are unwittingly bringing a group of technoecological managers to the fore. If neither of the above groups can, because of their antisocial and antipolitical stances, carry the day, there are those in the wings ready to capitalize on the sensibilities. Antimystical and anti-ideological, the "Commissars" are always ready to engage in "tough-minded" planning, to identify the "hard questions," to develop the "realistic means" to solve them, and to carry through the unpleasant task of "doing what must be done." Such a group is especially eager for such an opportunity, since they have been swept out of social honor and visibility by being discredited in Vietnam. But if "survival" no longer depends on confronting communism, but on confronting the ecology crisis, they are just as willing to serve. Neuhaus holds that the apocalyptic scenarios of these planners, as they ask, "What must we do to be saved?" are not unlikely to be similar to those which we have employed to save Southeast Asia. Hence, "the skepticism with which the American people are learning to respond to the militarists must now be extended to the ecological apocalypticists" (p. 115).

Neuhaus sees these divergent groups with divergent orientations actually introducing a loose, if socially consistent, constellation of views that portend danger if allowed to become dominant in social policy. To be sure, we do need to teach corporate America something about toilet training; and we

cannot tolerate the rapacious treatment of our natural resources to continue unabated; and there are latent dimensions of our value system involving respect for life that need compelling rearticulation and radical accent. But in their present forms the notions of the ecology movement spell danger as profoundly as does ignoring the above problems.

In the final analysis, the present cluster of images and sensibilities that are the driving force of the ecology movement involve, as they claim, a revolution of values. It involves an antihumanist, antipopulist set of preferences that, in the name of preserving life, threatens the most profound human values. Hence, the title, *In Defense of People*. And when these values are identified, lifted up, and compared, we see that they are inconsistent internally (advocating, for example, reverence for all life while urging extensive abortions), in conflict with deeply rooted principles of democracy (a technological managership of all ecosystems might have to be established), and contrary to the vision of economic justice (the "third world" should not be industrialized, for that adds to the ecological burden of the planet). Moreover, argues Neuhaus, the factual basis employed to document the necessity of such moves are at certain decisive points false, misleading, or in serious dispute. Still, presumed "facts" are repeated uncritically by those most often given to saying "science proves" that we must return to nature. And this demagogic use of "facts" is coupled with a decisive relocation of the divine as primarily, or even exhaustively, immanent in the cosmos. Failure to obey this god of the gonads and groves is sin. Thus, suggests Neuhaus, one can understand why the "facts" are selected and believed; for it is not validity that is at stake, but conversion.

Neuhaus concludes the volume by presenting an alternative picture of the world that should convince the most enthusiastic ecologist that the critique of the movement does not come from a defender of the status quo or someone unconcerned with the quality of life for the future. But he is perfectly clear that disgust with Mammon need not lead one to Baal.

It is my conviction that the cautions that Neuhaus calls to mind are important, pertinent, and packaged in a light style that can, as they should, have maximum impact on the public to whom the book is directed. But it is also at points a frustrating book. Is there not an implicit contradiction between a defense of populism and an almost unrelieved sharpness in a critique of a mass movement? And are there not ways by which one could instruct those committed to the movement to enrich their vision of ecology so that it includes urban ecology as well as birds and fish, strategic sociopolitical analysis as well as romanticism or cynicism? We know that profound awarenesses of necessary social and political change often appear in the guise of foolish looking religious-ethical sensibilities. Thus, equipping the citizenry for a profound instead of a superficial social-political view would seem to be the chief responsibilities of a mind such as Neuhaus's, yet only his last, brief chapter deals with this. Further, if the scientific dimensions of the discussion are often foggy, and the situation is not so dire as the pop-priests of the ecology movement paint it, how bad is it? By what standards? Frankly, we do not know, and that ought to be more candidly admitted. But in such a situation, why is it not the better part of wisdom to try to develop the tools whereby the layman can discern what is more and what less valid, and what is at stake in apparently esoteric technical evi-

dence? And, theologically, is it not incumbent upon us to consider seriously what revisions might well have to be made in our ethics and our doctrine, not only to preserve and extend justice, but to allow for the possibilities that the modern Judeo-Christian sense of dominion over the world under the command of God could lead to an irrevocable breakdown of any viable ecosystem? In short, the useful polemic of Neuhaus may not have met all the arguments of the ecology movement. But it has demolished the many soft ones, hopefully, thereby clearing the way for next steps in the debate. It should be read by every ecologist.

Finally, when it comes to placing one's priorities and commitments, this book convinces me that modern hagiography need not displace Martin Luther King in favor of Rachel Carson. Indeed, if the movement brings about such a substitution in the popular mind, Neuhaus is quite correct in fearing that something precious will be lost in our society, our science, and our theology. We would then be able to give only a humanly constricted answer to the question, "What must we do to be saved?"

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*The Patient as Person: Explorations in Medical Ethics.* By PAUL RAMSEY. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970. 283 pages. \$10.00.

Anyone who has worked in medical ethics will completely agree with the words, cited by Dr. Paul Ramsey, of Dr. Paul Bruns at the first of the series of Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale University: "These lectures will ask more questions than they will answer, will pose questions that may be unanswerable, will answer questions seldom asked and particularly questions physicians never thought of asking, and won't answer the questions doctors did ask." To take up these questions and to probe into medical ethics is for Ramsey "to engage in the greatest of joint ventures: the moral becoming of man." His interpretative principle is the biblical norm of fidelity to covenant, with the appropriate meaning it gives to righteousness between man and man. One such covenant is the practice of medicine, and some of the names associated with the moral quality of attitude and action owed to all men by any man who enters into a covenant with another man are *justice, righteousness, canons of loyalty, the sanctity of life, hesed, agape or charity*. The seven chapters of Ramsey's book explore the meaning of *care*, discover the actions and abstentions that come from adherence to *covenant*, plumb the meaning of the *sanctity* of life, spell out the demands of steadfast *faithfulness* to a fellow man. Ramsey asks this question: "What are the moral claims upon us in crucial medical situations and human relations in which some decision must be made about how to show respect for, protect, preserve, and honor the life of a fellow man?"

The questions raised by these chapters are crucial ones in the epistemology of medical ethics, the mode of reaching responsible moral decisions in medical practice. The first chapter considers the problem of consent as a canon of loyalty, with special reference to children in medical investigations. The consent must be reasonably free and adequately informed; and, in the concrete existential medical situation, this is the work of prudence or prac-

tical wisdom in the evaluation of cases and specific individual situations in which physicians find themselves. Ramsey, at the very outset, takes issue with the proponents of situation ethics who would suggest in the application of concrete medical cases that their own understanding of moral principles is the more viable. For Ramsey, situation ethics "proposes that our moral reasoning and practice should be based on a readiness to violate some moral requirement or set it aside in the face of wholly unique situations that call for exceptions to be made." The ethicist is not of much assistance here unless he also happens to be a physician-investigator with considerable knowledge of the specific case in question. It would appear that if ever this combination is found of ethicist and physician-investigator, the plausibility of situation ethics in medicine is not *eo ipso* ruled out of consideration in the resolution of the case. This appears to be the very purpose of ethicists and medical practitioners dialoguing as much as they are doing at the present time. Some medical schools are now thinking in terms of offering courses not only in the history of medical science but also in the philosophy and ethics of medicine. The most desirable and necessary product of such training is the doctor who is ethically sensitive to the patient as a person and who resolves his agonizing medical-moral situation with a keen awareness of all the factors that enter into the situation. It appears that the more ethically and morally mature the medical decision becomes, the more situational, and not less, will his decision be characterized.

What the specific meaning of an informed consent is, in practice will of course become more evident to doctors as they learn more and more. It is impossible to demonstrate that there could be no exceptions to this requirement of an informed consent, but for the unforeseeable future possibilities or apparently unique situations that medicine may face, Ramsey proposes "this rule-assuring, principle-strengthening, and practice-upholding rule to be added to the requirement of an informed consent: In the grave moral matters of life and death, of maiming or curing, of the violation of persons or their bodily integrity, a physician or an experimenter is more liable to make an error in moral judgment if he adopts a policy of holding himself open to the possibility that there may be significant, future permissions to ignore the principle of consent than if he holds this requirement of an informed consent always relevant and applicable." For Ramsey, then, this would mean regarding the consent principle as closed to any further morally significant alteration or exception. This will assure, he contends, respect for the person as patient while he is under his care.

To appreciate in all its depth Ramsey's example of Christian ethics, which holds to general rules and is therefore largely an ethic of rule agapism, the reader should consult his *Deeds and Rules in Christian Ethics*. His concern is with developing a Christian ethic which here in medical situations will meet the canons of consistency and validity, and, in the book cited, he does score points in showing that Fletcher in his situation ethics cannot completely avoid slipping into some summary or general rules. The question of the status of rules is what precisely separates Paul Ramsey from the position of situation ethics. As has been pointed out, the difference in viewpoint regarding the place of love or concern in Christian ethics resembles that discussion that goes on between teleologists and deontologists in philosophical discussions of normative ethics. The teleologists maintain that the rightness or

wrongness of an act is determined by the consequences of the act, whether it produces the greatest amount of good possible for that particular situation. The deontologists, on the contrary, hold that there are some acts which are always right independently of the possible consequences of these acts in the particular situations producing or not producing the greatest amount of good. In our consent situation, Ramsey therefore appeals to the general rule as one among others which should always be maintained, and he is by that reason more deontological than teleological in Christian ethics.

Both the situationist and Ramsey himself maintain the primacy of *agape*, or Christian concern, as the fundamental criterion of Christian ethics. Both insist that the starting-point in all ethical decision making is the person and concern for the person, and that in the light only of all the facts in the situation should a moral decision be made. Ramsey, however, has attempted to make fruitful use of John Rawls's "Two Concepts of Rules" by asking himself the cardinal question whether Christian ethics should not make its fundamental task the evolution of some general rules which should always be maintained. Ramsey puts it this way: "The question is whether there *are* any general rules or principles or virtues or styles of life that embody love, and if so what they may be." Therefore, we can understand that he agrees with the situation ethicists that the Christian ought always to seek to act in such a way as to fulfill what loving concern requires, but he denies that from the demands of loving concern no general rules for human behavior can be found. The situationist would admit that some very cautious generalizations can be formulated but that in practice the mature decision maker will be the one who in the concrete situation might, in all probability, find an exception even to this cautious generalization.

Space is devoted to this difference, so fundamental between Ramsey and the situationists, because the rest of Ramsey's book is directed to the discovery of general rules in medical-moral concerns which will structure a viable ethic. In successive chapters, Ramsey discusses the questions associated with death, the updating of procedures for stating that a man has died, the challenge to old-fashioned death, the Harvard report on the definition of death, the distinction between death and the cessation of extraordinary means, and between death and organ-donor eligibility. In this matter, the exchange between Robert S. Morison (*Death: Process or Event?*) and Leon R. Kass (*"Death as an Event: A Commentary on Robert Morison"*) could be very helpful (*Science* 173 [1971]: 694 - 702). Ramsey cites the growing number of physicians who, like Dr. J. Russell Elkinton of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, entirely agree with the distinction made by ethicists between *direct killing* (*euthanasia*) and allowing a patient to die with comfort and dignity. Elkinton accepts also the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary means and refers to a respirator in a given case being an extraordinary treatment which, if stopped, is an *action* that is "an invisible act of omission." It is decisive for Elkinton that "the patient dies not from the act but from the underlying disease or injury." The discussion here points up the viability of the distinctions between *direct killing*, *indirect killing*, and merely *permitting a person to die*. It is a serious question to determine whether these distinctions are viable in cases where the intention to omit a means is *eo ipso* associated with the death of the person. In other words, the

viability and validity of the distinction between omission and commission comes seriously into the picture and compels the ethicist to consider, not only the effect of his act of omission, but the intentionality which accompanies this act. The guidelines that Ramsey would offer are these: "Never abandon care of the dying except when they are irretrievably inaccessible to human care. Never hasten the dying process except when it is *entirely indifferent to the patient* whether his dying is accomplished by an intravenous bubble of air or by the withdrawal of useless ordinary natural remedies such as nourishment. Always keep officious treatments away from the dying in order to draw close to them in companying with them and caring for them; never, therefore, take positive action to usher them out of our presence or to hasten their departure from the human community *unless* there is a kind of prolonged dying in which it is medically impossible to keep severe pain at bay."

There are chapters on the donation of vital organs and the present state of the question among Roman Catholic and Protestant ethicists. It is interesting to note that the interpretation of the principle of totality stated by Dr. J. E. Murray in the CIBA Foundation Symposium brings in both spiritual and material good, and that for Murray it means that "spiritual good is better for an individual than material good and even though the donor has lost something materially he has gained something spiritually which is greater." Ramsey considers that whether the courts appeal to psychological benefits (or the prevention of psychological injury) or the moralists' appeal to what they call "personal" or to "spiritual benefits," both are strange apologies for the donation of organs. In concluding chapters, Ramsey offers a caveat on heart transplants and raises the agonizing medical-ethical problems of patients and sparse medical resources, the decision to let the better man live, the use of the human lottery, the just distribution of these sparse medical resources. These are just a few of the problems that are found in medicine, and others were raised at the Kennedy Foundation Symposium that met in Washington in October and brought together scientists, ethicists, theologians, lawyers, philosophers, physicians, and communicators. This symposium seemed to pick up where the Ramsey book stops—"Who Should Survive: Is Survival a Right?" "Who Should Be Born: Is Procreation a Right?" "The Human Rights of the Retarded (An Inquiry into the Personal Freedom of the Retarded in Sexual, Educational, Social, and Political Activities)"; "The Use and Misuse of Labeling Human Beings (The Ethics of Testing, Tracking, and Filing)"; "Why Should People Care?"; "How Should People Care?" "Fabricated Babies (The Ethics of New Technologies in Beginning Life)"; "The Modification of Human Behavior (The Ethics of Human Control)."

The Kennedy Symposium, like the Ramsey book, is most fruitful and revealing when the presuppositions of the participants are on the table, all the nerve ends in medicine, philosophy, theology, law, and anthropology exposed. Ramsey has disclosed his own in this book and has done so with interest and great competence.

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